

**THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES  
AND THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE:**

**The Living Tradition of the Commedia dell'Arte in Theatre for Young  
Audiences, with Specific Reference to Selected Original Texts and  
Performances.**

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**ABSTRACT:****THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES AND THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE:**

**The Living Tradition of the Commedia dell'Arte in Theatre for Young Audiences, with Specific Reference to Selected Original Texts and Performances.**

The thesis affirms the relevance of "Theatre for Young Audiences" as a valid and distinctive genre; a performance genre that should entertain, educate and provide meaning in terms of its creative interaction with personal, social, artistic and cultural issues. The practice of playwrighting is removed from the assumption that it relies exclusively on inspiration, intuition and spontaneity; it is placed within a creative, experiential and discursive mode in which dramatic, theatrical, performance and structural issues can be researched, analysed and evaluated culminating in the crafting, making and presentation of innovative and challenging theatre.

The research component of the thesis attempts to identify the social and moral responsibility of the playwright writing for young audiences. It is asserted that knowledge about the maturation of young people is crucial in the creative processes of writing plays and making theatre. The second chapter in Part One of the thesis, asserts that knowledge about the physical, emotional and intellectual maturation of the intended audience should clearly impact on the delineation of plot, action,

character, language, audience participation, ethics and morality. The thesis clearly identifies the importance of this knowledge for the Arts Educator.

However, "Theatre for Young Audiences" does not function solely in the realm of education. The thesis distinguishes this genre from those of "Theatre-in-Education" and "Drama-in-Education". The thesis firmly supports this distinction and affirms the status of "Theatre for Young Audiences" as a performing art. This argument is given further credence by the creative interaction of original scripts with the "living tradition" of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The *Commedia dell'Arte* is examined from an historical perspective; pertinent features are addressed, selected, utilised and transformed into a dynamic theatrical experience for young audiences in contemporary South Africa.

The *Commedia dell'Arte* serves as a theatrical model and becomes a creative device for further and renewed innovation. The inclusion of three original plays in Appendices 1, 2 and 3, plus numerous references to selected, original texts and performances provide an illustration of the concept that playwrighting for young people can effectively and imaginatively transpose theoretical inquiry into imaginative and challenging theatre experience.

The thesis attempts to utilise a clear conceptual basis for the development of argument - the educational and psychological perspectives provide a foundation for ideas and critical writing. The theatre heritage becomes a catalyst for innovative and pertinent theatre that affirms the status, purpose and nature of "Theatre for Young Audiences" in contemporary South Africa.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Natal, Durban.

It has not been submitted previously for any degree or for any examination in any other University.

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## PART ONE

### THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

#### INTRODUCTION

A study of the documented history of Theatre for Young Audiences in South Africa, reveals a lack of clarity and definition both in respect of terminology and concept. Frequently the term "Children's Theatre" is used to describe a variety of theatrical activities for young people including Puppet Theatre, productions of Shakespeare's plays for school audiences, ballet and educational theatre and drama. Peter Slade, who has been responsible for pioneering work in the field of "Child Drama" in England, asserts that many different concepts are frequently grouped under the one heading of "Children's Theatre":

1. Children acting to children, in the proscenium form.
2. Children acting to adults, in the proscenium form.
3. Adults performing plays for children:
  - a) Big plays, big productions, in large theatres to large numbers - acting at them.
  - b) Small plays, small productions, in small rooms - amongst and with children, not at them.
4. Children acting in "productions" in the arena form, watched by large or small audiences.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Slade, CHILD DRAMA, University of London Press Ltd., Fifth impression 1965, p.265

The term "Children's Theatre" is also used in a variety of academic, literary and bibliographic contexts, as a non-specific term embracing the general field of theatre as applied to children. However, in any study of this genre, where exactness of meaning is necessary, more specific terms with clearly defined parameters are essential.

In 1956 a special committee of what was then called the Children's Theatre Conference of the American Educational Theatre Association, published "Drama With and For Children: An Interpretation of Terms"<sup>2</sup> Further committees were appointed by the Children's Theatre Association of America in 1976 and 1977 to produce a comprehensive statement on terminology. The essence of the two committee reports is reflected in the following clearly defined terms which will be applied in this thesis:

**THEATRE FOR CHILDREN**

"Theatre for Children" indicates theatrical events specifically designed to be performed for young persons typically of elementary [primary and junior] school age, 5 to 12.

**THEATRE FOR YOUTH**

"Theatre for youth", indicates theatrical events specifically designed to be performed for young persons typically of junior high school age, 13 to 15.

**THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES**

"Theatre for young Audiences" is a term encompassing "Theatre for Children" and "Theatre for youth", the distinction being the age range of the intended audience. Even though adults frequently attend Theatre for Young Audiences, either as teachers accompanying classes, as parents with their children, or merely as interested patrons, the focus of the performance remains on the young people in the audience.<sup>3</sup>

According to the study, Theatre for Young Audiences, consists of the performance of a largely predetermined theatrical art work by living actors in

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<sup>2</sup>Ann Viola, DRAMA WITH AND FOR CHILDREN : AN INTERPRETATION OF TERMS, Educational Theatre Journal, vii, 2 (May, 1956), 139-142.

<sup>3</sup>Children's Theatre Review, xxvii, 1(1978), pp.10-11.

the presence of an audience of young people, either children or youth as defined previously. It embraces the following characteristics:

- i) The performance may be based on written scripts of traditional form, or adapted, devised, or developed improvisationally by directors, directors and actors in co-operative effort, or by actors working in ensemble.
- ii) The dramatic material of the performance may be a single story line designed to engage the full empathetic commitment of the audience in a succession of events, or it may be a series of shorter, separate or thematically related stories or sketches. In either case the product is constructed to communicate emotionally and intellectually with the audience members, individually and collectively, and to provide an entertaining and meaningful theatre experience. Preferably highly skilled adult actors are engaged for the performance, with trained young actors in child roles.
- iii) The full spectrum of theatrical arts and crafts may be called upon to enhance the actor's performance: costumes, make-up, lighting, scenery, properties, sound and special effects. It must be noted however, that many successful performances make only minimal use of these elements of production.
- iv) The audience may be assembled in any configuration utilizing a variety of spaces described by any number of theatrical forms, from proscenium to open field. Since all theatre strives for communication among all parties, an intellectual and emotional participation by the audience is essential. Participation may extend

to limited direct physical and vocal involvement from the seats or may extend onto the acting area itself.

This thesis is concerned with Theatre for Young audiences as defined above, as distinct from Theatre in Education or Drama in Education. According to Tony Jackson, the universally expressed goal of TIE groups is "to harness the techniques and imaginative potency of theatre in the service of education."<sup>4</sup> Educationalists in this field, are concerned with an exploration of the theatre's potential both as an educational medium and as a force for social change. Performers involved in TIE frequently refer to themselves as actor-teachers:

The TIE programme is not a performance in schools of a self-contained play, a 'one-off' event that is here today and gone tomorrow, but a coordinated and carefully structured programme of work, usually devised and researched by the company, around a topic of relevance both to the school curriculum and to the children's own lives, presented in school by the company and involving the children directly in an experience of the situations and problems that the topic throws up. It generally combines elements of traditional theatre (actors in role and the use of scripted dialogue, costume and often scenic and sound effects); educational drama (active participation of the children in improvised drama activities in which ideas are explored at their own level); and simulation (highly structured role-play and decision-making exercises within simulated 'real-life' situations).<sup>5</sup>

Jackson's analysis of the predominant characteristics of Theatre in Education encompasses "educational drama"; although the parameters of this thesis excludes both Theatre in Education and Drama in Education, it is necessary in the context of this study, to understand the difference between the two forms.

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<sup>4</sup>Tony Jackson, ed., *LEARNING THROUGH THEATRE: ESSAYS AND CASEBOOKS ON THEATRE IN EDUCATION*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1980, p.viii.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, pp.viii-ix.

In recent decades, the recognition of the importance of drama in helping children to understand, and operate in the world in which they live, has led to drama becoming an integral part of the school curriculum in many countries.

The introduction to the syllabus for Speech and Drama in High Schools in Natal, states:

A clear distinction needs to be drawn between Theatre, which is concerned with the performance of plays in front of an audience, and Drama as an integral part of education. Like the other arts, Drama is concerned both with the workings of the imagination and with the discipline of craftsmanship - a part of every child's life, not the privilege of the gifted few picked for a special occasion. For much of this work an audience is not needed at all, and it does not necessarily involve teaching children how to act. It is concerned with opportunities for invention and expression; with an understanding of human situations and behaviour through movement and speech; with a bringing to life - in a way that adds to personal experience - of much that has merely been imparted information. Speech, movement, music and song, the visual arts, poetry, technical skills, history, literature, religion - these can all contribute to drama which may develop in many different forms.<sup>6</sup>

The fundamental distinction between these two manifestations of drama, which both have a strong educational bias, is that Theatre in Education requires the pupils to become the audience, even though role-play and participation may form part of the process, whereas in Drama in Education, the focus is on the process itself, in which the pupils participate, and in which the presence of an audience is largely irrelevant.

Part One of the thesis is concerned specifically with Theatre for Young Audiences as distinct from Theatre in Education and Drama in Education, as defined above. Since it is the argument of this thesis that Theatre for Young

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<sup>6</sup>An extract from the Natal Education Department syllabus for Speech and Drama, Standards 8,9 and 10, Standard Grade and Higher Grade, date of issue: September 1985, p.2.

Audiences has very specific and unique parameters which are necessarily related to the physical, emotional and intellectual development of the child, the major focus in Part One embraces the criteria for evaluating Theatre for Young Audiences as a specific theatrical genre, in terms of content, form and manner of presentation.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES AS A DISTINCTIVE GENRE

Plays for young people form a distinctive cultural category and are worthy of serious attention. What distinguishes them is the fact that, in content and in style, they consciously address themselves to an immature and less sophisticated audience, or at least an audience of a young age range.<sup>1</sup>

The perception that Theatre for Young Audiences is no more than a simplified version of adult theatre is no longer tenable. Yet there are still critics and scholars who believe that there should be little or no distinction between the two and that "the best theatre is that which adults and children can enjoy simultaneously". In an article in the Guardian, Michael Billington expresses this point of view:

I begin to doubt the whole notion of a special ghetto area called 'Children's Theatre'. That belongs to a fast-fading, stratified culture in which serious things were for grown ups, and children, supposedly innocent of the world, had to be fed an anodyne substitute devoid of sex, violence, death and harsh reality.<sup>2</sup>

Billington is, of course, reacting against the reduction of Theatre for Young Audiences to the level where audiences are insulated against the realities of life.

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<sup>1</sup>Alan England, *THEATRE FOR THE YOUNG*, Macmillan Modern Dramatists, 1990, p.14.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Billington, in the *GUARDIAN*, 3 December 1982.

His reference, in the same article to the state of Children's Theatre in Britain, and his assumption that "furry animals, fairy tales, glove puppets, gingerbread men, dwarfs, giants and audience participation", are synonymous with "an anodyne substitute" for reality, is perhaps an indictment of unimaginative and unchallenging scripts, rather than a valid observation on the nature of Theatre for Young Audiences.

Elaborately staged fairy tales and pantomimes, for example, it is true, offer little more than spectacular escapist entertainment, which may have little relevance to "the harsh reality" of life. However, the contention of this thesis is that Theatre for Young Audiences at its best, should be relevant to, and in tune with the child's growing awareness of the world around him/her, and his/her intellectual, emotional, physical and moral responses to it.

It may be true, as Billington asserts, that the best theatre is that which adults and children can enjoy simultaneously, but this generally occurs when adults are drawn into the active, creative energy generated by imaginative performances for young people, rather than the reverse, which frequently take the form of relatively static, verbal scripts.

Chapter Two considers the cognitive development of the child, and attempts to establish parameters for Theatre for Young Audiences, by relating the stages of the child's development to appropriate dramatic stimuli. It also attempts to establish a profile of the age range which may be considered particularly suited to Theatre for Young Audiences.



## 1. THE ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP

The contention that "plays for young people form a distinctive cultural category" or genre, needs to be clearly qualified. This can best be accomplished by identifying those characteristics which are peculiar to the genre and which are central to the form and structure of Theatre for Young Audiences.

One of the fundamental features that distinguishes theatre as a performance art, is the presence of an audience. From the earliest recorded evidence of dramatic performance in classical Greece during the fifth century BC, to examples of community and folk drama in many countries in the eastern and the western hemispheres, or examples of formalised and structured drama presented in specifically designed venues, a pre-requisite is the presence of an audience.

A theatrical event designed for young audiences contains many performances in one. Each member of the audience will see something slightly different from his neighbour, depending on the unique qualities and perceptions he brings with him. This is true, of course, of all theatre experienced by composite audiences. However, the contention of this thesis in respect of Theatre for Young Audiences, is fundamentally different, namely that the developmental level of the child is a major factor in determining the level of response to the theatrical event. At least part of what is experienced by different audience members is related to their particular developmental level. Even adult audiences encompass a wide variety of emotional responses. As T.S.Eliot observes:

For the simplest auditors there is the plot, for the more thoughtful the character and conflict of character, for the more literary the words and phrasing, for the more musically sensitive the rhythm, and for auditors

of greater sensitiveness and understanding a meaning which reveals itself gradually. And I do not believe that the classification of audience is so clear-cut as this; but rather that the sensitiveness of every auditor is acted upon by all these elements at once, though in different degrees of consciousness. At none of these levels is the auditor bothered by the presence of that which he does not understand, or by the presence of that in which he is most interested.<sup>3</sup>

Individually and collectively, the assembled members of an audience respond to a performance on various levels; physical, emotional and intellectual, and through engaging the emotions, the intellect and the physical being, the playwright, the director and the performers are able to develop a process of empathy during the performance which makes the performance meaningful to the spectator. Empathy has been defined as "the power of projecting one's personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation."<sup>4</sup> As will be argued in the next chapter, an empathetic response depends on the playwright's ability to evoke identification, and unless the child's cognitive capacities are sufficiently developed so that he is able to see himself in the person of a character in the play, empathy cannot be evoked. The level of development at which such identification becomes possible, has been identified by Piaget as the Intuitive Sub-stage of the period of Concrete Operations (from 4 - 5 years of age).<sup>5</sup>

It is important to establish at the outset whether there is a significant

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<sup>3</sup>T.S.Eliot, *THE USE OF POETRY AND THE USE OF CRITICISM*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1933, pp.152-153.

<sup>4</sup>The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, Fourth Edition, 1951.

<sup>5</sup>See Chapter Two, "Stages in the Intellectual Development of Young People".

difference between young audiences and adult audiences, in relation to the nature of the identification process, and the consequent level of participation.

The response of adult members of an audience to a theatrical event generally remains internalised; laughter, tears and like emotional responses may be externalised, but adults generally maintain an aesthetic distance, despite inner involvement and identification. What has been termed "a willing suspension of disbelief" enables adult audiences to identify with events and characters in performance.

The response of young members of an audience to a theatrical event, on the other hand, is frequently externalised, at least up until the early teens when they have entered what Piaget has termed, the stage of Formal Operations.<sup>6</sup> Participation in the dramatic moment may extend from a vocal level, in the form of shouted advice, encouragement and songs, to actual physical involvement. The range and extent of this participation will be examined during the course of this chapter, however, it is important at this stage to focus on the reason for this externalised response.

Davis and Evans in their study on Theatre, Children and Youth state that almost all theatres for children and youth report that perhaps a majority of their audiences are in the age group of Six-, Seven-, and Eight-Year-Olds. They observe that this age group is delightful to play for since their response is enthusiastic and uninhibited, creating an atmosphere in the theatre akin to that which must have prevailed in Shakespeare's time, or in the music halls and opera houses of the old West.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>J.H.Davis and M.J.Evans, THEATRE, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, Anchorage Press, 1982, p.62.

As will be established in the following chapter, some young people of this age group are in Piaget's Intuitive Substage, while some are entering the sub-period of Concrete Operations. What this means in terms of participation and response, is that the young person *believes* in what is occurring on the stage. There is a tenuous dividing line between illusion and reality, and although the young person is able to remember he is in a theatre, it is only by the age of eight that he is able to perceive the reality or improbability of stage occurrences. He becomes emotionally involved in the aspirations of the play's hero, delighting in his triumphs and fearful for his danger. But more important, because of his belief in what is occurring on the stage, there is a corresponding belief in his ability to affect the possible course of events by his intervention. This fact establishes at once a significant premise in considering child participation and constitutes the substantive difference between the participation level of adults and that of young people. It is also extremely important for playwrights, directors and performers to understand this level of participation if they are to exploit the creative possibilities which it offers.

### **1. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Brian Way, a leading figure in the field of Theatre for the Young, favours participatory theatre, and in his book *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION* he distinguishes three kinds of participation: spontaneous, stimulated and directed. In spontaneous participation, he asserts that the children are so emotionally involved that they bombard the actors with advice; in stimulated participation actors provoke the audience by word or deed to make suggestions; and in

directed participation the help of the audience is actively sought in making decisions which will move the play forward. There are therefore three dimensions of participation to be considered: the spontaneous response of the audience, which may be vocalised; certain moments in the performance when the audience's collaboration is deliberately sought by the actors, and when their collaboration is deliberately sought by the playwright.

Way's exploration of participatory theatre has done much to free Theatre for Young Audiences from the limitations of pantomime and fairy-tale artificiality which encumbered the genre for a long period. In the canon of his plays, and notably in those which he described as being suitable for "family" viewing,<sup>8</sup> he applied his theories, reinforcing his concept of stimulated and directed participation through explicit stage directions.

However, Way's fairly rigid strictures on the nature and extent of participation tend to limit the creative possibilities of audience involvement. He recommends, for example, that the audience remain in their seats; for children from nine to twelve, he suggests that some of the audience might join the actors on the stage to enact, for example, a journey; teenagers, he maintains, are ready for "conscious theatre" and can be rehearsed for participation in crowd scenes.

As will be demonstrated through examples of stimulated and directed participation drawn from productions of plays for young audiences, controlled participation during which young people leave their seats and become involved in the action on the stage, or in the auditorium, is not only possible but desirable. A pre-requisite for such participation, however, is easy access from

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<sup>8</sup>Way's "family" audience scripts include PINOCCHIO, A CHRISTMAS CAROL, SLEEPING BEAUTY and TREASURE ISLAND.

the stage to the auditorium; rigid proscenium theatres or raised stages militate against the flow of traffic and ideas between the stage and the auditorium. A separate section of this chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the physical theatre (pp.49-55, "The Design Concept") but what is necessary to stress in the immediate context, is the importance of the proximity of the audience to the action; an unencumbered view of the action; avoidance of a formal "end-on" arrangement; and the conceptual reality that the auditorium is an extension of the stage.

The assertion that "teenagers are ready for conscious theatre and can be rehearsed for participation in crowd scenes" needs to be questioned. As will be established in the following chapter which focuses on developmental stages, teenagers have entered Piaget's stage of Formal Operations where the level of understanding of dialogue, character motivation and moral complexity provides for a breadth of responsiveness. The contention that they are ready for "conscious theatre" is not in question. What is debatable is Way's contention that their integration into "rehearsed crowd scenes" constitutes participation. For the purposes of this thesis, "audience participation" will encompass only those responses of the audience which are unrehearsed and in that sense spontaneous, whether stimulated or directed, since the rehearsal process seeks to order and select appropriate emotional responses, thereby imposing form and structure.

It is necessary to make one further distinction before examining examples of different types of participation. It is the contention of this thesis that stimulated

or directed audience participation, as defined by Way, should be an extension of the action of the play, and not an end in itself. There is a perception that Way's precepts can encourage the use of the "exercise" as an end in itself, so that the action or activity is considered of central importance, while the reason or purpose for the action is of secondary value, being merely the excuse for the participation. This type of "educational" participation could occur, for example, at a point in a play where a character is brushing his teeth; members of the audience would then be required to demonstrate how they brush their teeth, with appropriate directions and suggestions.<sup>9</sup> This attempt to stimulate participation has very little to do with the progress of the play. In fact, it illustrates very clearly the difference between "Theatre in Education" and "Theatre for Young Audiences". The primary aim of the former is to educate or teach, using the resources of drama and theatre, while the latter is primarily concerned with the dramatic experience, out of which may flow involvement, illumination and understanding. In both genres, balance, in aesthetic terms is a dramatic necessity. As Alan England says: "It is when the desire to provide the young with food for thought overrides the concern for artistic truth that the context fails to convince."<sup>10</sup>

The examples of audience participation which follow, are drawn from productions of original plays, as indeed are many of the examples cited in this

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<sup>9</sup>In Brian Way's PINOCCHIO, the young audience is required to help Pinocchio learn to brush his teeth and wash his hands.

<sup>10</sup>A.England, THEATRE FOR THE YOUNG, Macmillan Education Ltd., 1990, p.12.

thesis, since these plays form the basis of empirical research to establish clear parameters for Theatre for Young Audiences as a specific genre. Moreover, as the thesis title clearly indicates, the consideration of Theatre for Young Audiences and the Commedia dell'Arte is undertaken in relation to selected original texts. Some of these texts are included as appendices for reference purposes.

One further point needs to be clarified; frequent use is made in this thesis of "block quotations". The reason for this is inherent in the methodology which has been adopted, namely a detailed consideration of text and performance to establish specific parameters for Theatre for Young Audiences. In order to illustrate the implications of the dialogue in relation to character and action, it is frequently necessary to use "blocked" passages of dialogue for detailed appraisal.

## **2.1 SPONTANEOUS PARTICIPATION**

According to Way, spontaneous participation occurs when the young members of the audience become so emotionally involved that they "bombard the actors with advice". As has been asserted earlier, this vocalised response arises out of a genuine belief on the part of the audience, that they are able to alter the course of events by their intervention. Typical examples of such spontaneous participation occur when sympathetic characters are in danger; when the villain approaches, unseen behind; or in a chase when the audience will attempt to mislead the antagonist by giving the wrong advice, pointing in the



the wrong direction, or inviting the sympathetic character to hide amongst the audience. These devices have been frequently used in THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS, when the villain, Mr. Big, has attempted to chase, abduct, or otherwise wreak his vengeance on Pappa Mario's circus troupe.<sup>11</sup>

Situations which encourage spontaneous participation, as described above, may be purposely integrated into the text by playwrights who are aware of the likely audience response. However, spontaneous participation may be evoked through a variety of stimuli, and may result in responses other than the vocalised advice, as stated by Way.

## 2.2 MUSICAL PARTICIPATION

Songs may be effectively integrated as a stimulus for spontaneous audience participation. At the simplest level this will take the form of the audience "singing along" with the characters in the play. This type of simple musical participation has the function of releasing energy, relaxing the audience and promoting a group response. A pre-requisite, however, is the use of simple, catchy tunes and a clear rhythmic basis. Familiar songs or songs from known stories such as TREASURE ISLAND (Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum)<sup>12</sup> will invariably stimulate the audience to sing. More demanding for the actors, is the task of evoking a musical response with an unknown song or melody.

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<sup>11</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS, EST Publications, 1992. The first play in the series, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET, is included in the appendices.

<sup>12</sup>R.L.Stevenson: TREASURE ISLAND.

Resistance can be overcome by repetition, with the chorus sung repeatedly until the audience has become familiar with the words and the melody, or by stimulated participation, when the actors invite the audience to sing and run through the song or chorus several times.

An example of a song which evoked spontaneous participation, is the introductory song in SAMANTHA SEAL, when the audience is introduced musically to Samantha, and the chorus, which is repeated several times, is an invitation to the audience to enter into the magic world of the play:

SEAGULL: Would you like to climb an ice-cream mountain  
Gaze in wonder at a crystal fountain  
Do you want to see the snow fall  
Drifting in a slow fall

*The actors enter singing*

COMPANY: Follow, follow-follow  
Oh yes, follow, follow-follow  
Follow the whisper of the breeze  
Follow the echo of the seas  
And meet Samantha Seal, if you please.<sup>13</sup>

The musical introduction was reinforced visually with a white cloth which was manipulated by the cast into various evocative shapes, adding another dimension to the participation.

An example of musical participation that is stimulated by the actors, is evident in the play TAMBOOTIE'S TYROLEAN ADVENTURE when one of the characters draws the cast and the audience into the rollicking participation of a German "Bierfest".

HERR PUMPERNICKEL: Each year ve haf a bierfest, ve drink bier,  
ve sing songs, ve celebrate, ve laugh. Is gut ja? Ve sing happy

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<sup>13</sup>Production of SAMANTHA SEAL written and directed by Pieter Scholtz, first presented in the University Open-Air Theatre on 4 April, 1987.

songs. Ve sing oom-pah-pah songs. I vil teach you, zen you can join ze bierfest. Achtung! Repeat after me.

*Herr P. rehearses them, swaying, holding their mugs aloft etc.*

Eins...zwei...gsuffa.

Now, every time I give you ze sign, you must sing ...eins...zwei...gsuffa, ja? And you must svay ven you sing. Das ist sehr gut. Now I start.<sup>14</sup>

The two examples of spontaneous and stimulated musical participation, which have been cited, are at a fairly basic level; the audience is simply required to sing along. However, songs can also be exploited for artistic purposes; to further the progress of the play. An example of such advanced musical participation is evident in what I have termed "the Travelling Song", during which the cast and the audience are transported musically from one locality to another:

*The scene-change is accompanied by the sound of a jet engine, loudly amplified. Trudie shows Pappa Mario and the children to their seats. The scream of the jet engines changes to a strong musical beat. The company sings "The Flying Song", and the audience is invited to join in with the chorus. The verses are interrupted by announcements over the microphone.*

COMPANY: Fasten your seatbelts  
Are you ready, get set,  
We're flying to Rome  
In a big jumbo-jet.

*Chorus*  
We're going to fly  
High-high  
Up in the sky  
High-high  
Oh-me-oh-my

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<sup>14</sup>Production of TAMBOOTIE'S TYROLEAN ADVENTURE, written and directed by Pieter Scholtz, first presented in the University Open-Air Theatre on 12 August, 1989.

High-high  
 We'll fly so high  
 Bye-bye.

TRUDIE: South African Airways welcomes you aboard Flight 101 to Rome. The flying time to Rome Will be approximately to the end of this song. The reading lights and air-vents are in the panel above your head. Kindly read the safety instructions which you will find in the seat-pocket in front of you.

The lyrics, the instructions and the participation all give the young members of the audience the sensation of air travel, acquainting them with many of the experiences and procedures related to it. The song thus has an educational value in addition to its artistic function of conveying the audience through space and time. By the end of the song, after several verses and choruses, with the audience miming the instructions, the play resumes in a new locality:

TRUDIE: We are about to land at Rome airport. Please fasten your seatbelts and do not smoke until the no-smoking signs have been extinguished. Captain Pienaar and his crew wish you a pleasant stay and we trust you have enjoyed your flight.

*The scene changes rapidly. The main sign now reads "Rome Airport".<sup>15</sup>*

This is a musical device which has proved extremely successful in a number of productions yet one which is unfortunately not readily exploited by playwrights writing for young people. In each of the TAMBOOTIE plays the audience is introduced to a different mode of travel, such as a double-decker bus in TAMBOOTIE'S LONDON ADVENTURE and train travel in PAPPAMARIO'S GRANDE CIRCUS ADVENTURE, and at the same time conveyed to a new locality.

The final example of musical participation which can stretch the mind and

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<sup>15</sup>Production of MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN written and directed by Pieter Scholtz, first presented in the University Open-Air Theatre in 1980

imagination of the audience, is from a play entitled THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA. In this instance the song accomplishes the added function of taking the audience back in time, to the Egypt of biblical times. The song is sung as a ritual with the sacred feather plucked from Da, the hadeda:

#### THE SONG OF THE SACRED FEATHER

iNkankane high in the thorn tree  
 iNkankane lord of everything you see  
 You spread your wings and fly  
 You spread your wings and cry  
 I travel, I travel, I travel afar  
 Ngyahamba, ngyahamba, ngyahamba, wozani.

Now everytime we come to that chorus: 'Ngyahamba, ngyahamba, ngyahamba' you must sing with me. That way you will all travel with us to <sup>T</sup>gypt. Are you ready? I'll give you a sign when the chorus comes around.

Now close your eyes and come with me  
 Ascend the skies and come with me  
 Ngyahamba, ngyahamba, ngyahamba etc.

Here is a feather to wing you through time  
 Wish with this feather and sing with this rhyme  
 Ngyahamba, ngyahamba, ngyahamba etc

Like a glimmer of light, or the breath of a sigh  
 Ten years, a hundred, two thousand fly by  
 Ngyahamba, ngyahamba, ngyahamba etc.

And lo, we've arrived, a new scene for our play  
 We're in Egypt you see, now there's no need to say  
 Ngyahamba, ngyahamba, ngyahamba, wozani  
 Ngyahamba, ngyahamba, ngyahamba safika. 16

The previous extracts have all been examples of what Way has termed "stimulated" participation, when the actors initiate the participation through suggestion or invitation. However, the most demanding, and the most challenging form of participation is when the help of the audience is actively

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<sup>16</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA, EST Publications, 1989, p.21.

sought in making decisions that will move the play forward. This creative participation which Way has termed "directed" participation, is frequently the conception of the playwright and becomes an integral part of the action. It is demanding and challenging for the performers for a number of reasons:

- i) the performers frequently have to move from scripted to unscripted performance
- ii) it is highly likely, as a consequence, that the participation will require the performers to improvise
- iii) the performers will be required to make decisions about when and how to lead the action back into the scripted format
- iv) members of the audience may be invited, or may choose to participate physically on the stage
- v) if not carefully controlled, creative participation may lead to undisciplined responses

The element of improvisation requires especial consideration, since it is one of the major characteristics of the Commedia dell'Arte, with which Theatre for Young Audiences is being equated in several respects. It is also one of the reasons why the training for performers specialising in Theatre for Young Audiences is longer than conventional theatre training in some countries, and more specifically in what was, until recently, known as the U.S.S.R.<sup>17</sup>. Improvisation at this level is not the exploratory process that frequently forms

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<sup>17</sup>M.Morton (Editor), *THROUGH THE MAGIC CURTAIN: Theatre for Children, Adolescents and Young Adults in the U.S.S.R.*, The Anchorage Press, Inc., 1979, p.v.

an integral part of the rehearsal process or the drama training programme; it is an extension of the script by actors, creating action and dialogue, with the stimulus provided by the playwright, in a performance situation with an audience present. This form of improvised theatre, which is frequently the outcome of creative audience participation as defined earlier, is extremely demanding since it requires the actors to extend the life of their characters beyond the secure parameters of the written text. As in the scenarios of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, this process is frequently facilitated in Theatre for Young Audiences through the creation of characters who have distinctive traits and an appropriate repertoire of "lazzi".<sup>18</sup>

### 2.3 DIRECTED PARTICIPATION

The first example of participation where the help of the audience is actively sought in making decisions that will affect the course of the play, is drawn from *SAMANTHA SEAL*, a play which focuses on the conflict between an ingenuous young seal called Samantha, and Captain Bludgeon, a callous seal-hunter who makes a living from culling seals. The climax of the play is reached when Samantha Seal decides to appeal to the World Court to prevent the culling of seals. After hearing lawyers present arguments in favour of culling seals to preserve an ecological balance, and Samantha pleading for seals on humanitarian grounds, the judge makes the following decision:

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<sup>18</sup>Chapter Two in Part Two of this thesis is devoted to the "lazzi" or comic routines of the *Commedia dell'Arte*.

SAMANTHA: Your honour, I have an extraordinary request to make.

JUDGE: I don't like the sound of that. What is it?

SAMANTHA: I would like the audience to speak for me. Those who want to. I am content to put my life in their hands.

LAWYER: Your honour, I object ...

JUDGE: Sounds like a reasonable request to me. You've only had one minute, they can have the other two.

LAWYERS: We object, your honour ...

JUDGE: Objection over-ruled! What are you frightened of? I want to know what they think... First, the children. You have one minute. Why not kill, or cull the seals? That is the question. *(The judge should encourage young members of the audience to respond, and repeat their responses.)* And now the adults. Keep your answers simple. I can't stand long-winded replies. *(After a few responses, the alarm-clock rings.)* Right, that's enough! And now I'll deliver my judgement... *(To the audience)* You are going to be the jury, and I am now going to ask you for your verdict. All those who believe that Samantha and all other seals should be protected, put up your hands. And all those who believe that we should go on killing seals to keep their numbers down, put up your hands. <sup>19</sup>

What the audience decides is, of course, critical for the play; the possibility exists that the decision may go against Samantha. It would be dishonest to claim that the issue has not been dramatised by the playwright from a committed viewpoint, but such a viewpoint can at least challenge a response. However, if the characterisation and the issues inherent in the action are presented with conviction and sincerity, it is highly unlikely that the audience will vote in favour of culling.

Two further examples of audience participation which do not require the participants to leave their seats, but which are interesting variations, occur in

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<sup>19</sup>P.J.Scholtz, SAMANTHA SEAL, pp.44-45.



THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA and THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT.<sup>20</sup> In the former play, Mkhulu, the wily, old grandfather, has stolen a sack of mealies from Goma-Goma the Sangoma and hidden it under some reed mats:

MKHULU: (*To the audience*) We will need your help. We must make Goma-Goma believe that this is a beehive.

JABULANI: A beehive?

MKHULU: Yes, every time she comes near the sack, you must all buzz. Will you do that? Like angry bees.

JABULANI: Hey, that's quite clever. It might just work.

MKHULU: Let's try it. Wait 'till I give the signal. Every time she goes near the sack I'll say 'Passop, izinyosi!' Then you buzz. Passop izinyosi! That's very good.<sup>21</sup>

The deception was enthusiastically supported by the audience, and reinforced by the canny old grandfather who pricked her with a pin when her head was covered, to simulate the stinging bees.

In THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT, each member of the audience is given a programme which has a mask imprinted on it, with removable eye- and nose-holes. During the course of the play, a poisonous gas is released (in reality a smoke-machine billows smoke across the audience) and the audience is required to use the gas-masks as a protection:

MUSICANT: (*To the audience*) Do you each have a programme? Its absolutely essential that you each have a programme. Now listen very carefully. Printed on your programme is a mask. I am going to fold my mask and I want you all to do it with me, step by step. Its not difficult at all.

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<sup>20</sup>The examples cited are from productions of plays written and directed by Pieter Scholtz.

<sup>21</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA, p.12.

*(He leads them through the process until the masks are ready.)*  
 These masks have been designed by our top scientists. If and when the gas starts you should immediately place the masks over your noses and breathe deeply. Shall we have a try-out? Ready? Gas-masks on! Breathe deeply. Good! Now we're ready.<sup>22</sup>

In the previous examples members of the audience have not been required to move out of their seats during the participation. The final example illustrates a situation where members of the audience are required to move onto the stage and assume specific roles during the participatory process. In the following extract from *DINAH THE DINOSAUR* members of the audience are selected for participation and instructed by Dinah:

DINAH: Right, now what we need first, are six dummies. We need volunteers with great self-control and discipline, volunteers who can stand perfectly still in a frozen position for a considerable length of time.

SUZIE: Do you think Dr. Autopski will believe they're dummies?

DINAH: Well, he's no fool. We have to be absolutely convincing. And that's why the dummies will have to wear these rubber heads I saw earlier. Here they are.

*(She fetches six latex heads which are caricatures of recognizable people.)*

Remember, he'll be in disguise. *(To the audience)* When he enters, if you recognise him, you must all stand, and clap your hands, and shout "Bravo". That will be our warning.

SUZIE: O.K., let's try it.

DINAH: Wait, there's still the second part. Remember, when he's about to grab me, at the last moment, you must all boo. Then the six dummies will come to life and grab him.<sup>23</sup>

In this participatory episode the six volunteers and the remainder of the audience have to co-operate to thwart the villain, Dr. Autopski.

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<sup>22</sup>P.J.Scholtz, *THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT*, P.37.

<sup>23</sup>P.J.Scholtz, *DINAH THE DINOSAUR*, p.43.

The dichotomy that sometimes exists between scholars and practising playwrights writing for young audiences with respect to audience participation, has its origin in the division between those who persist in viewing drama as literature, and those who view it as a performance art. Edwin Wilson examining the role of the audience in his study of "The Theatre Experience", adopts just such a literary perspective when he draws a clear distinction between participatory drama and what he calls 'observed' drama:

In participatory drama, theatre is a means to another end: education, therapy, group development, and the like. The aim is not public performance, and so there is no emphasis - in fact, quite the reverse - on a carefully prepared, expertly performed presentation before an audience. In observed drama there must always be a separation between the actors and the audience.<sup>24</sup>

Wilson concedes that at times "spectators go on stage to be part of the action", and that at other times "actors come into the audience to engage in repartee with a spectator", but concludes that at those moments the "observer" has changed roles and becomes the "presenter". Wilson's distinctions arise out of a traditional, yet dramatically limited concept of the role of the audience, and are exclusively focussed on adult theatre.

Active audience participation is potentially one of the most exciting yet under-exploited areas of Theatre for Young Audiences. Playwrights and directors who fail to recognise the value and the artistic possibilities of active audience participation, have failed to understand the mind and the imagination of the young person.

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<sup>24</sup>Edwin Wilson, THE THEATER EXPERIENCE, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1980, p.23.

### 3. FANTASY

Perhaps one of the most distinctive features of Theatre for Young Audiences is the use of fantasy. Of course, fantasy is not peculiar to Theatre for Young Audiences; Shakespeare in *THE TEMPEST* and *MACBETH*, Noel Coward in *BLITHE SPIRIT* and many other playwrights writing for adult audiences, have exploited fantasy in their plays. However, what is unique, is that fantasy in Theatre for Young Audiences is an extension of the imaginary but real world of the young person, whereas in adult theatre it is accepted as a dramatic convention.

In an extensive study of fantasy in children's literature, Huck, Hepler and Hickman observe that some educators and parents have questioned the value of fantasy for today's child. They argue that children want contemporary stories that are relevant and speak about the problems of daily living. However, as the authors point out, children themselves have denied the truth of these statements by choosing many books of fantasy as their favourites.<sup>25</sup> Martin Esselin, writing about Theatre for Young Audiences, reinforces this contention:

...theatre for young people must be presentational, must be able to confront its audiences with the full range and vocabulary of styles, from Commedia dell'Arte to classical verse drama, burlesque comedy, Brechtian alienation, or grotesque expressionistic acting. The subject matter of the domestic drama and comedy for which the naturalistic style is best suited is simply too uninteresting, too drab for children, with their vivid imagination, their capacity for fantasy and romance.<sup>26</sup>

Fantasy, it will be argued, helps the young person to develop imagination. The

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<sup>25</sup>C.Huck, S.Hepler, J.Hickman, *CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL* (Fourth Edition), Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., p337, (Chapter 7).

<sup>26</sup>M.Esslin, *THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: A SENSE OF OCCASION*, (Foreword), Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983.

ability to imagine, to conceive of alternative ways of life, to entertain new ideas, to create strange new worlds, to dream dreams are all skills vital to the survival of humankind, for as Paul Fenimore Cooper writes, "it is imagination that walks hand in hand with vision."<sup>27</sup>

The scope for magic and fantasy in Theatre for Young Audiences is endless, ranging from contemporary fairy tales, stories of living dolls or puppets, talking animals and Lilliputian worlds, to extraordinary quests and adventures. It is not surprising that playwrights have intuitively or consciously tapped these diverse fantastical sources, for they are rooted in earlier sources; in folk tales, legends, myths, and the oldest dreams of humankind. The ultimate source of all fantasy - the tap root - according to Huck, Hepler and Hickman, is the human psyche. They contend that like the ancient tale-tellers and the Medieval bards, modern fantasy writers "call up the images of our deepest needs, our darkest fears, and our highest hopes."<sup>28</sup> This contention is supported by Bruno Bettelheim, in his book *THE USES OF ENCHANTMENT*. Bettelheim is an advocate of the Freudian view that fairy tales concern themselves with those deep guilt-filled wishes and fears which a child dare not discuss with anyone.<sup>29</sup>

The use of fantasy in plays for young audiences does not provide license for loose and unstructured plays. On the contrary, the fantasy world created, requires a scheme; a logical framework, an internal consistency within the rules

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<sup>27</sup>P.J.Cooper, *THREE OWLS* (Third Book), Annie Carroll Moore, ed. (New York: Coward-McCann, 1931), pp. 56-57.

<sup>28</sup>C.Huck, S.Hepler, J.Hickman, *CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*, p.339.

<sup>29</sup>Bruno Bettelheim, *THE USES OF ENCHANTMENT: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Alfred A.Knopf, 1976), p.145.

that the playwright has developed, that will make it credible and acceptable to a young audience:

Characters must appear plausible in their own setting, and the writer must go along with the inner logic. Happenings should have logical implications. Details should be tested for consistency. Shall animals speak? If so, do all animals speak? If not, then which - and how? Above all, why? Is it essential to the story ...<sup>30</sup>

Like realistic plays, fantasy plays should have a well-constructed plot, convincing characterisation, a worthwhile theme, and an appropriate style. However, one of the playwright's primary concerns, highlighted in the above quotation, is the way the author (playwright) makes the fantasy believable. A variety of techniques may be used to create belief in the unbelievable. One of the most effective techniques is for the playwright to ground the story in reality before gradually moving into fantasy. This technique may be observed in all the examples of Theatre for Young Audiences that have been cited in this thesis. In *THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT*, for example, there is nothing unusual in the opening dialogue, or in the behaviour of the two characters, Teek and Musicant, until it becomes clear to the audience that they are, in fact, ants.

### **3.1 ANIMAL FANTASY**

Storytellers have long imbued animals, birds and other small creatures with human characteristics. Animals have been given the power of speech, thought, emotional responses, and in fact have been identified at all levels with human society. Michael Bond's Paddington series and Kenneth Graham's adventures

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<sup>30</sup>L.Alexander, "The Flat-Heeled Muse" in *CHILDREN AND LITERATURE* by Virginia Haviland (Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman and Co., 1973), p. 243.

of Toad are just two examples of the imaginative exploration of animal fantasy. Paddington Bear, found in a London railway station and taken by the Brown family to their home, earnestly tries to help the Browns, but invariably ends up in difficulty. Toad, the incorrigible hero of Graham's stories, with his friends Ratty (the Water-rat), Mole, and Badger, are involved in many humorous adventures.

Animal fantasy forms a particularly appropriate subject for plays created for young people, since acceptance of animals with human attributes, extends from Piaget's Preconceptual and Intuitive substages to the sub-period of Concrete Operations (from four- and five-year-olds to eight-year-olds, and even beyond).<sup>31</sup>

It is important, however, that the rule of "inner-logic", as defined previously, is consistently observed. An example of animal fantasy which follows this pattern, may be seen in PRUNELLA PENGUIN. Prunella's extraordinary abilities are explained in the following terms:

PRUNELLA: When I was just a little Prune, I mean a little penguin, I realised I had some extraordinary abilities. I could understand and speak any language as soon as I heard it. When I was hatched I spoke words even my mother couldn't understand. "Prunella", my mother said, "you're a very precocious penguin." But I wasn't really. You see, it was just this gift. When seals barked at me, I understood what they were barking and I barked back. When a seagull squawked, I squawked back. And so, you see, when you talked your language, I understood and answered you.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, in DINAH THE DINOSAUR, there is a clear justification for Dinah's extraordinary abilities; Dinah drinks from a vial which contains a very special potion:

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<sup>31</sup>See Chapter Two, "Stages in the Intellectual Development of Young People".

<sup>32</sup>P.J.Scholtz, PRUNELLA PENGUIN, EST Publicatins, 1989, p.23.

PROF FOSSIL: Do you realise what this means? I may have discovered the formula at last. For ACT!

SUZIE: ACT?

PROF FOSSIL: Animal Communication Transfer. This little vial could change the world.

SUZIE: I beg yours?

PROF FOSSIL: Don't you understand? If it works we might be able to understand animal communication.

SUZIE: You mean they could talk to us?

PROF FOSSIL: In a manner of speaking, yes.<sup>33</sup>

When Dinah drinks the contents of the vial it is no surprise to the audience that she is able to speak fluently.

This chapter will also encompass a consideration of design in Theatre for Young Audiences. However, it is appropriate at this juncture to consider the extent to which costume design for animal characters may militate against or reinforce the element of fantasy. The significant fact to emerge from differing approaches to costuming animal characters in the plays previously mentioned, is that young audiences do not necessarily require realistic animal costumes in order to sustain their belief in the fantasy world. Costumes that have varied from a realistic, shaggy fur coat and detailed facial make-up for the dog Stinkwood in the TAMBOOTIE plays, to an evocative design for Ali-cat, comprising strips of spiralling fur applied to a body-stocking in MANTI'S MIRACLE, and severely stylised costumes for Samantha Seal and Prunella Penguin, in the plays of the same name, have drawn young audiences into the fantasy worlds of the

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<sup>33</sup>P.J.Scholtz, DINAH THE DINOSAUR, EST Publications, 1991, p.4.



characters with equal facility. Clearly, the power to evoke an imaginative response through "suggestion" may be exploited in the designer's approach to Theatre for Young Audiences. This concept will be explored further when considering design in the context of Theatre for Young Audiences.

### 3.2 TOYS AND DOLLS PERSONIFIED

In the same way that animals have been endowed with human characteristics, so too have toys, dolls and puppets been personified by storytellers and playwrights. One of the best known stories for young people, *THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO* by Carlo Collodi, is about a puppet carved out of wood by old Geppetto, that comes to life. Young people, up to the age of nine, and even beyond, believe that toys, dolls and teddy bears have a life of their own. Witnessing them come to life on the stage is an extension of this belief.

All the members of Pappa Mario's Circus Troupe, in the *TAMBOOTIE PLAYS* are puppets. In the first play of the series, *THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET*, Pappa Mario describes how they came to life:

**PAPPA MARIO:** Do you know that each one of my puppets was hand-carved. Each character grew out of the wood, as if my chisel was uncovering a sleeping figure and freeing it. But I've had to sell them one by one, my own children! And with each one a spark was lost and my eyes grew dimmer. Except for my favourite, my little Tambootie. I couldn't bear to part with her. Oh ho! She gave me a lot of trouble. So stubborn! She wouldn't wake up out of the tambootie log. Just lay there. Until I carved a little turned-up nose for her. I even imagined I heard her complain as I whittled away, "My nose is too big! How dare you put a potato where my nose should be !" And then her legs.

Mamma Mia! "I want to dance," she said. "How can I dance with legs like bananas!" And so I chiselled and carved, I filed and sand-papered until she was satisfied. "About time!" was all she said when I introduced her to my other children.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.3 EXTRAORDINARY WORLDS

Children's literature abounds with stories of fantastical worlds; environments that are extravagantly fanciful, capricious, eccentric, grotesque or quaint. When Alice followed the White Rabbit down his rabbit hole she entered a world that grew "curioser and curioser". Whatever wonders these fantasy worlds hold for the young person, they are seen as unusual, strange or comic in relation to the known world. They are usually places where anything can happen, albeit according to an inner logic, as previously stated.

Fantastical worlds are, of course, ideal material for Theatre for Young Audiences, since the visual dimension lends spectacle and optical proof for the young playgoer. Dramatisations of such stories as C.S.Lewis' THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE, one of seven fantasies about the land of Narnia, in which four children find their way into the land of Narnia through the back of a huge wardrobe, or J.R.R.Tolkien's THE HOBBIT, L.Frank Baum's THE WIZARD OF OZ and Roald Dahl's tongue-in-cheek morality tale, CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY are immensely popular with young audiences.

But fantasy worlds need not be confined to the wholly imaginary.

The TAMBOOTIE plays, for example, are set in the real but illusionary world of the circus ring. In an interview published in the journal SIGHTLINES, the

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<sup>34</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET, (Appendix 1).

world of the circus was defined:

...the circus encapsulates the world of the young person. The circus ring is not just where we perform but where we live. The dividing line between illusion and reality in this ring is tenuous, difficult to perceive. It is the knockabout world of the clown, the sawdust jungle of the wild beast, the rarefied air of the trapeze artist. It can become anything and everything.<sup>35</sup>

This is not simply a matter of a stage convention; it is a stretching of the imagination. A revolving sign attached to the central post of the circus indicates a variety of localities, from Durban beach to the Grande Canal in Venice. This indicator, together with appropriate details or suggestions is sufficient to stimulate the imaginations of the young members of the audience, through the evocative world of the circus.

In *MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE*, Miranda is able to explore the wonderful world under the sea with the aid of a magic sponge that enables her to breathe under the water. The weird and wonderful creatures she encounters form part of a real but fantastical world:

MUSICIAN: (*to the audience*) We're going under the sea - deep down into that unknown, mysterious world where the light gleams from another sky. We're going to follow Miranda and her selfish uncle and all the others who are chasing them. I hope you're all good swimmers!

MIRANDA: ...it's just as I dreamed it would be. Even more magical. I passed a school of porpoises having such fun with their teacher, they were describing circles and loops in the water. If only our classes were as free and exciting. And the starfish, twinkling at each other - and the Rainbow fish ...<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>SIGHTLINES, Volume 2 (1980), Edited by M.McMurtry, Multicopy, University of Natal, Durban, p.27.

<sup>36</sup>P.J.Scholtz, *MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE*, Durban Theatre Workshop Co., Durban, 1975. p.38.

The Lilliputian world, so imaginatively created by Jonathan Swift in GULLIVAR'S TRAVELS, taps the belief of young people in worlds that are a microcosm of the real world, peopled with fairies, goblins, leprechauns and little people. The Lilliputian world was given a real dimension in THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT, a play in which the characters regard the world from the perspective of ants. The directions for the play require the setting to be constructed on an enormous scale: a "Lion" matchbox with one match in it has to be large enough to accommodate a person, while a giant aerosol cannister of "Doom", the size of a truck, dominates the stage. The Music-ant comments on this magnified environment during his opening monologue:

MUSICANT: (*Sings*) I'm a Musicant, a Musicant  
 And I'll tell you a little tale.  
 Or better still I'll sing a song  
 And cut you down to scale.

Perhaps you're wondering what the second part of that song means: 'cut you down to scale'? Well, I'd better explain. You see, this tale, this story, this play is about ants. Oh yes, I assure you it is. But as I said before, don't be deceived by appearances. You'll find they behave just like human beings. Only if you want to enjoy the play, you'll have to come down to their scale, and that's where I come in, with my song.<sup>37</sup>

The fantastical world, in all the above examples, is simply an unexplored extension of the real world. In the final example, drawn from a play entitled THURKAARI, DEMON OF THE CURRY POWDERS, the real world only becomes the fantastical world at night, when spirits, dreams and other manifestations of the fancy hold sway. Darkness and night have always

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<sup>37</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT, EST Publications 1987, p.2.

provided young people with the stimulus to evoke fears and the imagination. In the play, Sammy, a poor but hard-working young stall-holder, tells Kali, a beautiful and vain young girl, about the spirits in the market place:

**SAMMY:** ...And this market which you think is so common, is really filled with the most wonderful spirits. It's just that you don't see things as they really are. When you look at me, all you see is a ragged market-boy. When you look at this red-pepper, all you see is a vegetable. But that's because you haven't looked through the mist in your eyes. This red-pepper is quite a pompous chap really. Even your joss-sticks can dance and sing, if you look properly.<sup>38</sup>

Kali becomes initiated into this magical world when she sees the spirits dance; when she watches the dance of the Poppadums, whose "skins are tight", as they "drum through the night", with an infectious rhythm: "poppadum, poppadum, poppadum dum dum"; when she watches the parade of the Sweetmeats, who are "soft and heavy," and "sweet and heady"; and finally when she hears the song of the Joss-sticks, "light, ethereal maidens, whose song is like the wind sighing and like glass chimes."

## 2.4 MAGICAL POWERS

One of the most striking manifestations of fantasy in plays for young audiences, is the use of magical powers. The resources of the theatre provide playwrights and directors with endless possibilities for creating convincing magical effects, from dramatic explosions to ethereal effects, when characters are bathed in Ultra Violet light. But perhaps a more creative method, is to use the

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<sup>38</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THURKAAARI, DEMON OF THE CURRY POWDERS, Theatre Workshop Company 1972, p.11.

conventions of drama, without relying on spectacular effects. An example, of what may be termed a more organic approach to stage magic, occurs in the play TOKOLOSHE, in which the sprite of that name possesses the magical power of becoming invisible:

TOKOLOSHE: O-ho! I have a magic pebble, and when I rub my magic pebble or pop it in my mouth, poof! I disappear ... but I'm still here. First you see me, then you don't.

THANDI: I don't believe you.

TOKOLOSHE: You really are the most disbelieving girl. But I like you in spite of that, so I'll show you.  
*(He takes out a smooth stone the size of a ping-pong ball.)*  
 Pebble of the Tokoloshe  
 When I rub, then you must hear  
 And quickly make me disappear.  
*(He rubs)* There!

THANDI: But you're not invisible.

TOKOLOSHE: Oh yes I am. Just because you can see me, *(Pointing to the audience)* and they can see me, it doesn't mean everybody else can see me. I have many ways of being invisible, and this is one of them. Nobody else can see me now.<sup>39</sup>

Of course, the dialogue alone is not sufficient to persuade the audience that Tokoloshe is invisible; the idea then has to be reinforced in dramatic and visual terms. This is achieved in a variety of ways: first through other characters speaking, looking and moving as if unaware of his presence, when the actor is physically present, and then through a range of "stage business" when the actor is not physically present, to persuade the audience that the invisible Tokoloshe is playing tricks on the other characters. In reality, the actors are themselves responsible for the "stage business", such as spilling a calabash of beer as it is

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<sup>39</sup>P.J.Scholtz, TOKOLOSHE, EST Publications, University of Natal, Durban, 1991, p.10.

about to be drunk, reacting as if being pinched, or sitting heavily on the floor after a chair has apparently been pulled out from under them.

Other magical effects such as moving backwards and forwards in time may be accomplished in creative ways; as mentioned previously, in the section focussing on Participation, travelling songs can evoke the sensation of travel in an imaginative and informative way. Recognising the young person's fascination with being transported to another age, many playwrights have created fantasies that are based on tricks with time. These time-leaps may be into the past, as in the example of the travelling song from *THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA*, described earlier (section 2.2, p.21. above), or more commonly into the future, which introduces the young audience to the world of science fiction.

In the context of Theatre for Young Audiences, science fiction is regarded as an extension of the world of fantasy. However, some critics make a fine distinction between the two: it has been suggested that fantasy presents a world that never was and never could be, while science fiction speculates on a world that, given what we now know about science, might just one day be possible. Sylvia Engdahl maintains that "science fiction differs from fantasy not in subject matter but in aim, and its unique aim is to suggest real hypotheses about mankind's future or about the nature of the universe."<sup>40</sup> Such distinctions are of academic interest only in the context of Theatre for Young audiences, since drama is concerned with individualised experience, whether the environment be a microcosm of the real world, or a macrocosm embracing other worlds. The

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<sup>40</sup>S.L. Engdahl, *BEYOND THE TOMORROW MOUNTAINS*, Atheneum, 1973.

exposure of young people to science fiction through the medium of the film and television, with endless space-odysseys, star-wars and animated super-heroes with conflicts on a galactic scale, has created an addiction to violence and spectacle, which the theatre with its immediacy and power to enchant is best suited to counteract.

A particularly inventive magical device was employed in a play for young audiences entitled *MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE*. In return for assisting one of the characters in the play, who is an Actor, the audience is told of a magic word, which may be used only once, but if used wisely it will save the young hero when he or she is in danger:

ACTOR: ...I don't know what this play is all about, but there's bound to be a hero in it. Now, if this young boy or girl is ever in serious trouble, there's a magic word I've learned after many years treading the boards, and it never fails. It saved me many times when I dived hopelessly - when I forgot my words. All you have to say is "noi-tani-gami" and you will save him. But you have to say it together, and remember, you can only use the magic word once, so choose the right moment - when you have power use it wisely.<sup>41</sup>

Like the previous example of a creative approach to magic, this magical concept has to be reinforced dramatically and visually through the script and the action.

However, there are several significant variations and implications:

- i) Audience participation has been introduced; the success of the magic moment depends on how the audience will respond to the appropriate stimulus.
- ii) The playwright is challenged to create an appropriate stimulus.

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<sup>41</sup>P.J.Scholtz, *MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE*, Durban Theatre Workshop Company, 1975, p.7.



The danger is that the audience might respond with the magic word at an inappropriate point in the action; having set the rules the playwright and the performers have to keep to them.

- iii) There is the possibility thus, that the action and dialogue may deviate from the created scenario, requiring the actors to improvise.
- iv) The magic word has an educational dimension, since it reinforces one of the basic precepts encapsulated in the play, namely, that each individual has unique resources within, which can be applied to overcome difficulties.
- v) This precept, which is implicit in the young heroine's struggle to come to terms with her difficulties, is revealed at the end of the play when the audience is shown the magic word spelled backwards: "imag-inat-ion" What is demonstrated by Miranda is the use of her creative imagination to solve her problems.

In performance, the audiences never failed to exercise their prerogative to interfere with the course of events at the appropriate moment, by shouting the magic word at a point when Miranda was threatened physically by two bullies. The magical effect at this point, which was anticipated in the script, was the entrance of a group of muscular lifesavers, saving the situation.

The examples of magical powers which have been cited, are attempts to demonstrate a creative rather than a mechanical approach to magic, in theatre for young audiences. Moreover they have a palpable advantage over possibly more spectacular but mechanical methods, in that they do not require the

elaborate facilities of a theatre; they can be performed in any performance space, including an open-air theatre.

### 3.5 MYTHS AND LEGENDS

The origins of most myths are buried deep in the past; stories and songs told and sung around communal fires are said to form the basis of most myths and legends. Inevitably the stories and songs would take colour from the traditions and way of life of particular communities, and thus through a process of assimilation the particular characteristics of a group of people would become an integral part of its folklore.

According to Robert Graves, "Mythology is the study of whatever religious or heroic legends are so foreign to a student's experience that he cannot believe them to be true." He cites the English adjective "mythical" meaning "incredible" in support of this contention.<sup>42</sup> Within these parameters, myths and legends form a further extension of the world of fantasy, and a particularly appropriate source of material for Youth Theatre, since it is through myths, according to T.V.Bulpin, "that the mind of man confronts the mystery of the universe, the riddle of his own beginning, the purpose of life and its irrevocable ending in death." Through myths, he maintains, man has found explanations of natural wonders, excuses for his own misfortunes, supernatural scapegoats to blame for his own follies ... "myths have provided him with personifications of the awesome power of creation, the spirit of nature which permeates all

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<sup>42</sup>Robert Graves, *LAROUSSE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MYTHOLOGY* (Introduction), Batchworth Press Limited, London, 1959, p.v.

things."<sup>43</sup>

The charm of many folk-tales and legends resides in their reflection of local customs and beliefs. The stimulus for *THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA*, for example, a play for young audiences about the meaning of Christmas for a young African herd-boy, came from three legends which were ostensibly unrelated. One of the central characters in the play is Da, the "la-di-da hadeda" of the title. T.V. Bulpin describes the hadeda in the following terms:

Even the strident echoing cry of iNkankane, the black Ibis (Hadedah) had its meaning. "Ngyahamba, ngyahamba, ngyahamba", "I travel, I travel, I travel," he bellows out raucously as he flies down some winding river.<sup>44</sup>

The link between Da, the hadeda, and the Christmas story was found in Egyptian mythology:

Thoth is ordinarily represented with the head of an Ibis, often surmounted by a crescent moon, or simply as an Ibis. ...He was identified by the Greeks with Hermes, messenger of the Gods, and was worshipped throughout Egypt as a moon-god, patron of science and literature, wisdom and inventions, the spokesman of the gods and their keeper of the records.<sup>45</sup>

And so through Da's magic feather, Jabulani, the young herd-boy and Mkhulu, his grandfather, are transported back through time to the Egypt of biblical times, where Da is worshipped as a God, to discover the true meaning of Christmas.

The third link in the chain of events that make up the story of the "la-di-da hadeda", was derived from another legend. Werner Keller recounts this legend in his carefully documented study of *THE BIBLE AS HISTORY*:

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<sup>43</sup>T.V.Bulpin, *Introduction to MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA* by Penny Miller, Edited by Rosemund Handler, T.V.Bulpin Publications (Pty.) Ltd., 1979, p.7.

<sup>44</sup>T.V.Bulpin, *TO THE SHORES OF NATAL*, p.19.

On the road from Palestine to Egypt, about 6 miles north of Cairo, lies the quiet village of Mataria. It is on the right bank of the Nile.

...Joseph, Mary and Jesus are said to have found safe refuge among the Jewish gardeners in the fragrant balsam gardens of Mataria.

...Today, as of old, pilgrims from all over the world pass through the creaking gate into the garden, and stand in front of the great decayed bole of a sycamore, called the "Tree of the Holy Virgin". In its hollow trunk, says a pious legend, Mary and the infant Jesus hid from their pursuers during their flight. A spider is said to have spun such a close web over the fugitives that they were not discovered.<sup>46</sup>

This legend contains the very stuff of drama: conflict, tension, suspense and an imaginative flight of fantasy; an apt scenario for a play for young audiences, and in the context of THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA, an appropriate framework for Jabulani to learn the true meaning of Christmas by assisting the fugitives.

Zulu folktales (izinganekwane) form part of the oral traditions of the Zulu people. According to N.N.Cannonici, folktales were widely used as a means of education and socialization when there were no schools. They constitute a particularly apt source of material for Theatre for Young Audiences, since as Cannonici states, "the concrete images contained in the folktales remain much more deeply impressed in the young minds than theoretical precepts or commands."<sup>47</sup> But more significantly, folktales have been perpetuated and transmitted orally in a traditional format which includes a presenter or performer, traditionally the grandmother, who has the task of educating her grandchildren, and an audience, usually children, but also adults and especially

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<sup>45</sup>Larousse, EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY, Paul Hamlyn Ltd., London, 1965, p.82.

<sup>46</sup>W.Keller, THE BIBLE AS HISTORY, Chap. 37 p.337: The Flight into Egypt.

<sup>47</sup>N.N.Cannonici, THE ZULU FOLKTALE (Revised Edition), Department of Zulu Language and Literature, University of Natal, Durban, 1990, Chapter 2: Characteristics of Oral Traditional Narratives, pp. 10-19.

the close members of a family. They transmit simple universal truths; simple maxims containing a proven wisdom, "which should make everybody happy in a society which is based on traditional social norms." Folktales, thus, have much in common with Theatre for Young Audiences:

Apart from these moral points, folktales serve the purpose of widening the children's horizons into a world of fantasy which goes far beyond the world of sensory experience.<sup>48</sup>

The two main categories, that characterise folktales, are also familiar themes in Youth Theatre. According to Cannonici, folktales may be either Fables or Animal Stories (Ezezilwane), in which human society and its actors are represented in the guise of animals, who assume the function of universal human characters, or Trickster Stories (Ezeqili), where the weaknesses of human nature are clearly and cruelly exposed.<sup>49</sup>

The play TOKOLOSHE, referred to in the previous section (3.4, "Magical Powers".) is based on a Zulu folktale and features probably the most notorious trickster of Zulu folklore, the Tokoloshe:

Some people maintain that the tokoloshe is much maligned and that he is really a mild little creature who lives peacefully on lonely river banks, and is particularly fond of children. When he can, he will lure these boon companions away from their frog-catching and swimming, and will lead them into the ferny coolness of the bank where he will spread a delicious feast and delight in seeing them fill their round tummies to bursting point.

...The minute the tokoloshe suspects that he is being watched by an adult, he will pop a magic pebble into his mouth and vanish at once.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>N.N.Cannonici, ZULU FOLKTALES FOR BEGINNERS, Department of Zulu Language and Literature, University of Natal, Durban, 1989, p.iv.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid, p18.

<sup>50</sup>P.Miller, MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, edited by Rosemund Handler, T,V.Bulpin Publications (Pty.) Ltd., 1979, p.184.

#### 4. QUESTS AND ADVENTURES

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Theatre for Young Audiences is the extent to which character needs to be externalised in action. All drama is, of course, enacted by performers assuming the roles of characters, who through their attitudes, their values, their conflicts and their actions, give the audience an insight into the human condition. But much adult drama is written and performed with little or no overt physical action, focussing rather on human relationships revealed largely through dialogue, resulting in what many critics have labelled "static" drama. Playwrights and directors creating plays for young audiences can only succeed if they understand the importance of providing a framework of lively physical action to support the characters and their interaction.

The *lazzi* or comic routines, which are considered in Part Two of this thesis, provide playwrights and directors with invaluable source material for just such action drama (See Part Two, Chapter Two, "Lazzi").

Adventure stories which make use of the quest motif provide an appropriately active framework for constructing plays for young audiences. According to Huck, Hepler and Hickman, "high fantasy is almost always the story of a search - for treasure, justice, identity, understanding - and of a hero-figure who learns important lessons in the adventuring."<sup>51</sup>

One of the most famous seekers in children's literature is J.R.R. Tolkien's Bilbo Baggins, the Hobbit. During his adventures the Hobbit's inner courage gradually emerges, as he struggles through terrifying woods, encounters with

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<sup>51</sup>C.Huck, S.Hepler, J.Hickman, CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Fourth edition), p.374.)

huge hairy spiders, and battles with goblins to a victory over the dragon.<sup>52</sup>

The potential for exploring the dramatic possibilities of the quest motif in Theatre for Young Audiences, is demonstrated in a number of plays which focus on the personal odyssey of a young hero or heroine. In *MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE*, the young heroine Miranda embarks on an exciting adventure in the "undersea world", with the aid of a magic sponge that enables her to breathe under the water. Pursued by her greedy uncle, she is confronted by many dangers and challenges which test her resourcefulness and courage, including passing through the forests of the "rubber-flubber seaweed" that have trapped many unwary travellers and turned them into "soft green mizzle"; encounters with a gang of sharks and an angry octopus with "ten tickles", and finally she has to arbitrate between three intensely competitive witches who rule the "undersea world": the Seaweed Witch, the Coral Witch and the Mother-of-Pearl Witch. At the end of her adventure, which is really a quest for self-knowledge, Miranda demonstrates that she has grown in wisdom and understanding:

CORAL WITCH: Miranda, how can we thank you? You must let us reward you.

SEAWEED WITCH: You can have anything you desire, under the sea.

MOTHER-OF-PEARL WITCH: Stay with us my dear, and we'll make you a sea princess.

MIRANDA: Thank you. But I can't stay. You see, I have learned something too. Something very important. I thought I could run away from all the cares that crowded in on me. I thought I could escape into this magic world - and it is a magic world, it will always be. But now I know that wherever you are, there are

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<sup>52</sup>J.R.R.Tolkien, *THE HOBBIT and THE LORD OF THE RINGS*, Unwin Books, London, (Eleventh Impression 1971)

cares and troubles to be encountered. They don't disappear, they only change their shape. Only if you face them will they disappear. Goodbye Mr. Polyp, and thank you for your magic sponge. I'll keep it and sometimes when the whisper of the sea becomes too strong, I'll use it to visit you. Goodbye your Majesties, you are as I always knew you would be, true queens of the undersea.<sup>53</sup>

The theme of the quest is evident too in such plays as THURKAARI, OR THE DEMON OF THE CURRY POWDERS, where the young hero Sammy, finds the courage to face and finally outwit the Demon, and in SAMANTHA SEAL, where Samantha, after outwitting the brutal Captain Bludgeon, travels to the World Court to plead for the right of all seals to live in peace and safety.

The lesson that is learned by the young hero or heroine is, hopefully, transmitted to the young audience through the process of identification. Brian Wildsmith, an illustrator and author of children's books, believes that art works indirectly in this way on the mind and the imagination. He says that you have to "rivet the child's attention" - the pages of his books absolutely dance, clap and sing with colour and movement - "and then teach basic lessons about such values as kindness, compassion, honesty and the beauty of the human spirit. You're forming - in the child's subconscious mind - values, quality."<sup>54</sup>

Wildsmith's contention that the artist "teaches basic lessons" about values, appears to blur the distinction which was made earlier between Theatre-in-Education (TIE) and Theatre for Young Audiences. There is, however, a common denominator, expressed by Tony Jackson in the following terms:

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<sup>53</sup>P.J.Scholtz, MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE, Durban Theatre Workshop Company, 1975, p.89.

<sup>54</sup>From an interview with Brian Wildsmith in The Observer.



Any good theatre will, of itself, be educational - i.e. when it initiates or extends a questioning process in its audience and, when it makes us look again, freshly, at the world, its institutions and conventions and at our place in that world, when it expands our notions of who we are, of the feelings and thoughts of which we are capable and our connection with the lives of others.<sup>55</sup>

The solution to the polemic centred on didactic theatre and non-didactic theatre, is to be found in preserving aesthetic balance. Both forms stimulate the emotions, the mind and the imagination and afford both pleasure and "education". However, as Alan England states, "Such plays fall short in artistic integrity when playwrights and stage artists give undue attention to the effect they are trying to produce on an audience."<sup>56</sup>

## 5. THE DESIGN CONCEPT

The point was made earlier in this chapter that a pre-requisite for audience participation at all levels, was easy access from the auditorium to the stage. Mention was also made of conditions that were desirable for any performance presented before young audiences, including the proximity of the audience to the action, an unencumbered view of the action and the undesirability of a formal "end-on" arrangement for the audience. (See p.14. above) The nature of the performing space and the arrangement of the audience therefore have an important influence on the design concept.

There are other factors that become important in considering the approach to design in Theatre for Young Audiences: if we accept the premise that audience

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<sup>55</sup>Gavin Bolton, *LEARNING THROUGH THEATRE*, ed. Tony Jackson, Manchester University Press, 1980, p.22.

<sup>56</sup>A.England, *THEATRE FOR THE YOUNG*, p.14.

participation fulfils an important role in Theatre for Young Audiences, and that the nature of this participation ranges from spontaneous response to stimulated and directed participation, then we have to accept that the audience should be visible during the performance, since it is as necessary for the actors to see them as it is for the audience to see the actors. This can be accomplished by bringing up the houselights at appropriate moments, which would be distracting if the play has many opportunities for participation, or by leaving the houselights up permanently during a performance. The desirability of darkening the auditorium at all is brought into question, certainly for the younger members of the audience, who may experience anxiety, fear, or even find the darkness a barrier to the relaxed informality which characterises the most responsive audiences. Most of the productions which have been cited in this thesis were presented in the open air, where natural lighting and clear visibility of audience, actors and the natural surroundings, reinforced the credibility of the action.

Some observations are also necessary in relation to the configuration of the auditorium or the way in which the seating is arranged. The most natural and spontaneous arrangement occurs when the audience encircles the action. This is the configuration that occurs spontaneously when crowds gather to watch street-theatre, busking, or in fact any performance event where pre-arranged seating does not dictate the audience configuration. Some performers in the open, may choose to perform in front of a wall or backing, which provides the performance with a specific focus or front, despite the audience encircling the action as far as it is able. Brian Way and many other Youth Theatre practitioners advocate "theatre-in-the-round" as the audience configuration

providing the greatest sense of immediacy and involvement. However, for obvious reasons, the designer is restricted and inhibited when the audience completely encircles the action. The open-air theatre in which most of the productions cited in this thesis have been presented, has steeply-raked seating, encircling the performance space in a semi circle, providing a specific focus for the action, and at the same time providing the sense of immediacy which is necessary in Theatre for Young Audiences.

The following summary indicates some of the essential features of performing spaces for young audiences:

- i) The audience encircling, but not necessarily surrounding the action.
- ii) Raked or stepped seating providing an unobstructed view of the action.
- iii) A configuration flexible enough to make provision for the use of scenery and/or off-stage entrances, if necessary.
- iv) Easy access from stage to auditorium; the auditorium should be an extension of the stage or performing space.
- v) Although artificial or stage-lighting may enhance a performance, it is not a pre-requisite for Theatre for Young Audiences.

The nature of the performing space becomes even more relevant when the function of scene design is considered. According to W.O.Parker and H.K.Smith, the function of scene design is linked with the dramatic form which it serves; it provides a visual support to the dramatic form:

The scene designer brings to the production a visual expression of the

author's aim. It is the fusing of the visual effect and the basic intent of the play into a single dramatic impression.<sup>57</sup>

There appear to be two opposing views concerning the designer's approach in Theatre for Young Audiences; one approach views the designer's function as providing the visual means whereby the young members of the audience are transported into a world of fantasy and enchantment. This approach generally attempts to transform the stage or performing space into a magical world, through creating an illusion of reality or fantasy. Setting and costumes are generally detailed, elaborate, realistic or fantastic as required by the script. This approach characterises many pantomimes and dramatisations of traditional fairy-tales, and simply applies the techniques and conventions of adult theatre to plays presented for young audiences.

The alternative approach attempts to evoke an imaginative response through "suggestion" rather than through an explicit visual statement. But more significantly, it reinforces the aims of Theatre for Young Audiences as articulated previously; the stage and the auditorium do not become two different worlds; audience participation is actively promoted through a less formal approach to design, and the audience is stimulated and challenged to respond imaginatively to the visual stimuli.

The design concept for THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA illustrates this approach; a note about the setting and costumes is given as a guide to the designer:

The play can be presented in the simplest possible way. It was originally written for presentation in an open-air theatre, and the concept for the hut was uncomplicated: "The actors bring forward, or create with bent

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<sup>57</sup>W.O.Parker and H.K.Smith, SCENE DESIGN AND STAGE LIGHTING, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., (Second Edition), 1968, p.19.

saplings, the framework of a Zulu hut. They then cover the skeleton hut by overlaying it with reed mats."

Similarly, the Tree of the Holy Virgin consisted of two flats or structures carried in by audience volunteers and placed in front of a stepladder.

Costumes should be bright and inventive without realistic inhibitions. When the cast first enter they are dressed in brightly coloured overalls and tackies with floral waistcoats. Their characters' costumes should be witty and fanciful e.g. Herod in a sequin-covered top-hat and lame dungarees; Da (the hadeda) in a coat made of layered scraps of loose fabric and a grey pith helmet with a beak attached to it.

The setting should be treated in the same way, e.g. Christmas decorations on a wire base for the Balsam plants.<sup>58</sup>

As the appended photographs illustrate (Appendix 4) the Zulu hut was finally created out of thin metal rods bent into the shape of the hut and left in a skeletal state.

A clear example of what may be termed an evocative approach to design in Theatre for Young Audiences, occurs in the play SAMANTHA SEAL. The central feature of the setting is a large silk parachute, blue on one side, white on the other, which the performers are required to billow into the air, move under and over, creating a variety of effects and impressions. At one stage, with the blue side facing upwards, they create ripples, waves, splash in it and frolic in it. For the duration of the first act it serves as an ice pool, white side facing upwards, the source of much comic business as characters slip, slide and fall on it. The success of this scenic device depends on the performers skill in persuading the young members of the audience, through appropriate and convincing movement responses and body attitudes; through the appropriate effort qualities and spatial awareness they demonstrate, that it is indeed a

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<sup>58</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA, EST Publications, 1989, p.6.

slippery surface.<sup>59</sup>

The approach to costume design in this production is consistent with the scenic design concept; the actors transform themselves into their animal and bird characters, in full view of the audience, each by the application of a distinctive feature, such as a cap with a curved beak for the Seagull, and a balaclava with two tusks attached for Wally the walrus. These are, of course, only external indications, and would be of little benefit to the performers without the skilful and artistic control of visible and audible movement patterns.

The Tambootie series of plays for young audiences all take place within the suggested confines of a circus tent. As stated earlier (p.34. "Extraordinary Worlds") the circus ring encapsulates the world of the imagination; it can become anything and everything: "it is the knockabout world of the clown, the sawdust jungle of the wild beast, the rarefied air of the trapeze artist". The design approach should reinforce this concept through suggestion; the stage directions call for a brightly coloured floor-cloth (the circus ring), curved rostra for seating and a centre-post with coloured bunting. The central device in this concept is a revolving sign attached to the centre-post, and it is this sign, together with carefully selected furnishings or appropriate stage properties, that stretch the imagination of the audience. For example, a sign proclaiming "Durban Beach", together with a gaily-striped beach umbrella and a deck-chair, are sufficient stimuli, in the context of the circus, to transport the young members of the audience to the white sands of Durban Beach. When these

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<sup>59</sup>"Effort" as defined by Rudolph Laban, is the inner impulse from which human movement originates. Laban evolved a scientific basis for the analysis of human movement.

visual stimuli are reinforced with sound, the imaginative leap is even greater; a sign indicating "Jan Smuts Airport", for example, a baggage-scale and a desk marked "Passport Control", together with the amplified roar of a jet aircraft, is all that is required to introduce the young theatre-goer to the world of air travel, for anything is possible in a circus.

The same design principles have been applied to other productions cited in this thesis: a billowing length of chiffon to represent a stream in the play TOKOLOSHE; performers with strips of foam rubber draped over them to represent "the forests of Rubber-flubber seaweed" in MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE and a giant aerosol canister to represent the magnified world of the ants in THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT. These design principles are encapsulated in the following definition of the function of the scenic designer:

As a collaborating artist the scene designer should make an important visual contribution to the dramatic form. Through his knowledge of dramatic structure and directing or staging techniques he can bring proper visual expression to support the action of the play. He must ... keep them [his designs] in proportion to the dramatic import of the play and the movement of the actors.<sup>60</sup>

The designer working in Theatre for Young Audiences has endless scope for imaginative and truly creative design; unfettered by the restrictions of a realistic approach, with the endless vistas provided by fantasy, and bounded by no more than the functional and aesthetic requirements of the script.

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<sup>60</sup>W.O.Parker and H.K.Smith, SCENE DESIGN AND STAGE LIGHTING, p.17.

## 6. LANGUAGE AND EXPRESSION

One of the reasons why many plays for young audiences fail to engage the mind and emotions of those for whom they are intended, is that they fail to challenge them on many levels. This is particularly true at the level of language and expression. In a mistaken attempt to "come down" to the level of the young audiences such plays and productions succeed only in alienating the young audiences by overtly simplistic concepts and language. Playwrights, directors and teachers who work with and for young people should be aware that the surest way of alienating their young charges is by "speaking down" to them or by adopting a patronising attitude.

Learning theorists have established that during the period between kindergarten and high school, vocabulary increases rapidly, speech performance improves, syntax becomes more complete, a greater variety of grammatical structures is used, and the meanings assigned to words become more adult-like. By the age of 8 children understand that some words have several meanings and functions, and this understanding is the basis for the appreciation and creation of jokes and metaphors (See Chap. Two: "Humour").

The major theories of language development lead to different hypotheses about the importance of environmental influences on children's language development. However, most theories acknowledge the roles of observation, modelling, and imitation in language acquisition:

Certainly children imitate what they hear their parents (models) say, and thus add new words and ways of combining words to their language repertoires. Children cannot acquire a vocabulary or the grammatical structure of their language without exposure to models ... They gather



information about their own language by hearing others speak it.<sup>61</sup>

The presence at any prospective performance, of young people at different stages of cognitive and emotional development, may create some problems for the playwright, however, performances have demonstrated that it is more desirable to err on the side of evocative and challenging language and expression, which may elude some in the audience, than to reduce expression to a common denominator based on the earliest stage of development.

An example of the use of metaphor to evoke the appropriate atmosphere and setting for a play, occurs in *MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE*, when the Narrator describes the scene:

This play is about ordinary people, fishermen and their families, who live by the sea. Simple people who can read the moods of the sea as you or I could read a book. To them, the sea is a mother, at times smiling and warm, protecting them, feeding them - then they are happy and their joy dances on the crests of the waves with the sunlight; sometimes she is cold and stern, she looks at them bleakly out of her grey depths, and then they are wary for she is quiet and menacing. Sometimes, when they behave like spoiled children, she is angry, and her waves thunder at them, her white foam and her green depths surge and swell, her brows knit until they meet the sky, and then the fisherfolk creep away and hide like guilty children. But they always, always treat her with respect and long for her sunny smile.<sup>62</sup>

The use of choral verse in plays for young audiences also provides playwrights with opportunities for the evocative use of language and rhythms, and can be dramatically effective, especially when reinforced with appropriate illustrative actions. In the play *TOKOLOSHE*, Thandi and her dog Voetsek

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<sup>61</sup>P.H.Mussen, J.J.Conger, J.Kagan, A.C.Huston, *CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONALITY*, Harper & Row, New York, 1984, (Sixth Edition), p.197.

<sup>62</sup>P.J.Scholtz, *MIRANDA AND THE MAGIC SPONGE*, p.9.

have to cross a busy street. The performers, through rhythmic speech, body attitudes and illustrative actions create for the audience a representation of a busy street in a modern metropolis:

Hooters, horns, brazen blare  
 Strangled sirens tear the air  
 Rushing, racing here and there  
 Watch out! Step aside!  
 Make way! I'm late!

Busses, bakkies, battered beetles,  
 Mini-bus with maxi-load  
 Clattering, chattering, roaring bikes  
 Five hundred cc's  
 And a thousand crescendos  
 Articulated monsters labelled "death,  
 Highly inflammable, abnormal load",  
 Abnormal ...abnormal...abnormal...<sup>63</sup>

In the next chapter the manifestation of humour in relation to the growing metalinguistic awareness of young people will be examined. Language and expression can provide a stimulus for eliciting a humorous response, but this depends on the audience's comprehension of linguistic ambiguities. Examples of phonological ambiguity, lexical ambiguity and other forms of advanced verbal humour such as satire and parody will be examined in relation to the various stages of development manifested by young people. Playwrights writing plays for young audiences can exploit creatively the knowledge that as their metalinguistic awareness advances, young people begin to think about, talk about and "play with" words and language forms. In the TAMBOOTIE PLAYS, for example, the character Buttons demonstrates a humorous affinity with members of his young audience through his curiosity with words and their sounds. The following are some examples of phonological ambiguity in Buttons' vocabulary (the intended or actual word is given in brackets):

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<sup>63</sup>P.J.Scholtz, TOKOLOSHE, p.32.

Airyairyplane (aeroplane)  
 Catamatastrophy (catastrophe)  
 Missydrizzarable (miserable)  
 Collywobbelapsed (collapsed)  
 Horryworryble (horrible)  
 Smartyficial (artificial)  
 Elastimatic (elastic)

The range and variety of words and language-forms in dialogue is, of course, one of the ways in which characters are differentiated one from another. The verbal manifestation of the character is the playwright's responsibility; the visible manifestation of the character is the performer's responsibility.

## 7. CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISATION

In keeping with other misconceptions about Theatre for Young Audiences, based on the notion of simplifying the dramatic experience, characters and characterisation are frequently reduced to the level of stereotypes with little scope for subtle and imaginative interpretation. While it is the contention of this thesis that the stock characters or identifiable character types of the Commedia dell'Arte provide a wealth of source material for Theatre for Young Audiences (See Part Two, Chapter One: "The Characters of the Commedia dell'Arte"), the importance of detailed character delineation and believable characterisation should not be under-valued. Like all good scripts, a good script for young audiences should present a variety of characters, each of whom has a clear relationship to the plot and a function in developing and revealing the dramatic conflict. The detail and depth with which individual characters are drawn will depend upon the overall style of the script and also upon the character type. Those around whom the plot revolves should be defined,

motivated, and of sufficient human dimension to arouse audience identification, and they should be capable of growth and change. Mention has already been made of a hero-figure who learns an important lesson during a quest (See p.46. above). For similar reasons, some plays require the conflict to be resolved with an altered point of view in the antagonist. In both instances the capacity to change must be inherent in the character, since "change is the logical outcome of the conflict, and the reasons for it should have been implicit throughout the play".<sup>64</sup> Sometimes the antagonist is incapable of change. It is not very likely, for example, that Mister Big, the villain of the TAMBOOTIE PLAYS, will undergo character reform when he receives his "come-uppance" at the hands of Pappa Mario and his circus troupe; one of the reasons is clearly because of his character type, another is a matter of dramatic necessity; he is involved in successive attempts to thwart Pappa Mario and his troupe in a series of five plays.<sup>65</sup>

It has been stated that the overall style of the script and the character type will determine the depth of characterisation; some plays require stereotype, one-dimensional or symbolic characters, generally because their predictable reaction patterns create a sharp relief to the characters who are capable of a range of creative responses. They are generally antagonist figures like Mister Big, Captain Bludgeon, Ryk van Wyk and similar character types.<sup>66</sup> In such cases

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<sup>64</sup>J.H.Davis and M.J.Evans, THEATRE, CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

<sup>65</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS.

<sup>66</sup>These characters are antagonists in THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS, SAMANTHA SEAL, and MANTI'S MIRACLE respectively, all plays by P.Scholtz.

the following dictum provides an appropriate and balanced approach for playwrights and performers:

Characters of narrow dimension have to be artfully conceived and delineated in order to capture the subtle essence of the good line drawing, and avoid the blatant statement of overblown cartooning.<sup>67</sup>

## 8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The thrust of this chapter has reinforced the opening contention by Alan England, that "plays for young people form a distinctive cultural category and are worthy of serious attention." The point of departure in considering the unique characteristics of this genre has been the age-level and relatively unsophisticated nature of the audience. This factor provides a significant dimension to the constituent elements of Theatre for Young Audiences.

The actor-audience relationship, and more specifically the level of audience participation, constitutes one of the major elements which characterise this genre. The varying levels of audience participation, which include spontaneous, stimulated and directed participation, are regarded as central to Theatre for Young Audiences, and most significantly are perceived to be the result of a genuine belief, on the part of the young audiences, that their intervention can influence the course of events.

The use of fantasy in plays for young audiences is focused upon; the creation of strange new worlds and the conception of alternative ways of life, it is contended, assist young people to develop their imaginative insight. Some of the more common manifestations of fantasy in Theatre for Young Audiences are

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<sup>67</sup>J.H.Davis and M.J.Evans, THEATRE, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, p.124.

considered, including Animal Fantasy, when animals are endowed with human characteristics, Toys and Dolls Personified, the creation of Extraordinary Worlds, the use of Magical Powers and tapping the abundant sources of Myths and Legends.

The necessity for the integration of character and action, frequently precipitates the young hero or heroine into adventures which involve a quest or search, during which the young protagonist grows in stature and understanding. The importance of creating scripts that abound in action, conflict, humour and lively characters, is emphasised.

Design in Theatre for Young Audiences is integrally related to the performance space and to the venue. Because of the importance of promoting active participation between performers and audience, an intimate, encompassing audience configuration with an unobstructed view of the performance space is necessary. It is also the contention of this thesis that the design style should be consistent with the declared aims of Theatre for Young Audiences, amongst which is the awakening and stimulation of the imagination. In this context, suggestion rather than overt visual statement is seen as the most evocative approach for the costume and the scenic designer.

Language and expression are the playwright's tools for breathing life into the characters, and because young people are in the process of experimenting with and playing with words and language, the playwright has an ideal opportunity of challenging his young audience with evocative language and of stretching their vocabulary. Humour too becomes an important corollary to language and expression, since much of our appreciation of humour depends on

our awareness that many words have more than one meaning, and can be used in different ways; puns, riddles and word-play can play a significant role in plays for young audiences.

Finally characters and characterisation are considered; it is contended that the detail and depth with which individual characters are drawn or interpreted, will depend on the style of the script and also on the overall character type. Plays for young audiences can encompass one-dimensional stereotypes, as well as characters who have the capacity to learn and grow.

All the characteristics considered above have been coloured by one constant factor: the fact, stressed by Alan England, that "in content and in style, they [the plays] address themselves to an immature and less sophisticated audience, or at least an audience of a young age range." The Age-range and the varying levels of emotional and cognitive development that characterise various age-ranges, form the focus of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### YOUNG AUDIENCES: STAGES IN THE INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

In Chapter One it was established that what distinguishes Theatre for Young People, is primarily the fact that it consciously addresses itself to the immature.<sup>1</sup> Playwrights and scholars are often tempted to make assumptions about the developmental needs and capabilities of young audiences. Some, like Moses Goldberg, propose that plays and performances should be fashioned, both in content and artistic sophistication, to match the stages of a child's psychological growth.<sup>2</sup> This concept can best be realised in an educational environment, where control and organisation of audiences into age-group profiles is possible. However, public performances of plays for young audiences generally attract young people ranging in age from five or six years, to the early teens or older, usually accompanied by adults. Some playwrights, who seriously attempt to meet the developmental needs of young audiences in a less prescriptive way, recommend, for example, that particular plays are

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<sup>1</sup>The word 'immature' is used advisedly in a literary, not in a figurative sense, meaning "not developed fully": Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

<sup>2</sup>Moses Goldberg CHILDREN'S THEATRE: A PHILOSOPHY AND A METHOD, Prentice-Hall, 1974, pp. 80-84.



suitable for specific age groups, or are not suitable for young people under a specific age. Most published scripts, and professional productions in this genre, however, are written and presented with the intention of appealing to a wide range of young people of all ages, with the exception of the very young. David Wood, dubbed by British journalists "our national children's playwright", is an articulate and unashamed proponent of giving children what they want:

I believe I am an entertainer rather than an educator. Theatre should be about entertainment; if that element is there, all the other elements like "message", "theme" or "moral" are possible, and sometimes, though not always, desirable.<sup>3</sup>

Wood's statement questions the desirability, not only of educational theatre, but also of didactic theatre for young audiences. His own plays have frequently dealt with issues such as oil pollution (THE SELFISH SHELLFISH) and conservation (THE SEE-SAW TREE), but remaining true to his dictum on entertainment, these issues have been subtly integrated into a dramatic structure that focuses primarily on the characters, their interaction, conflicts and adventures; the "message, theme" or "moral" develops as a corollary to the main action.

In THE SEE-SAW TREE for example, the daily lives and adventures of all the creatures who live in and near the tree, form the focus of the action. Their relationships, tensions and conflicts evoke amusement and laughter, until it becomes apparent that the tree will be chopped down, destroying the homes and lives of all who dwell in it. In this way the audience is made aware not only of the impact that the destruction of the tree will have on the community it houses, but also of the motives of those who wish to destroy it.

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<sup>3</sup>Alan England, THEATRE FOR THE YOUNG, MacMillan Modern Dramatists, 1990, p.8.

Wood maintains an aesthetic distance however; he is careful not to impose his point of view on the audience, but allows the young spectators the final choice between preserving the tree as part of a children's playground, and the alternative option of clearing the land for a much needed shopping centre.

Brian Way, a leading playwright and innovator in the field of youth theatre, believes that theatre for young audiences should take account of the developmental stages of its audience. To this end, he advocates participation, or "participatory theatre", as an important educational medium. Way's ideas, and audience participation, in all its manifestations, have been considered in Chapter One.

At this stage, it is important to stress once again the distinction between *drama* for young people, and *theatre* for young people. Drama is concerned with experiential learning through creative dramatic activities and through role-play; the presence of an audience is not a pre-requisite, nor indeed is a theatre or a performing venue. As mentioned earlier, Drama has been included in the curriculums of many primary and high schools in this country, particularly in Natal, and in other countries, because of its importance as a tool for personal development. A report by the English National Curriculum Working Group in 1989 stressed the importance of drama as:

...one of the key ways in which children can gain an understanding of themselves and of others, can gain confidence in themselves as decision-makers and problem-solvers, can learn to function collaboratively, and can explore - within a supportive framework - not only a range of human feeling, but also a whole spectrum of social situations and/or moral dilemmas.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Department of Education and Science, 1989, "English for Ages 5 to 16 (The Cox Report), para. 8.6.

Theatre for young audiences, on the other hand, does require an audience and a performing venue. It is concerned with the end product or dramatic event, though it may include an educational bias, achieved through audience identification and participation, and through the audience's exposure to significant issues.

Brian Way and David Wood straddle both worlds; Way as author and educational proponent of *DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DRAMA*<sup>5</sup> and theatrical proponent of *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION*, and Wood through his integration of theatrical and educational values, evidenced in his plays. Alan England sums up the debate between the "developmentalists" and the "entertainers" by warning of the temptation, common among playwrights in general but particularly virulent among children's playwrights, to be "more concerned with what the spectators are learning than with the truth of what is being expressed." He asserts that even with plays for young audiences, "autonomy is an important artistic ideal - autonomy for the writer, for the performers and for the audience."<sup>6</sup>

Davis and Evans in a detailed study on "Theatre, Children and Youth",<sup>7</sup> maintain that because playwrights writing for young audiences, palpably believe in the many values of the theatre-going experience in the lives of children and young people, they should make use of valuable knowledge to help them succeed in reaching their inner lives. To do this, they must try to understand

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<sup>5</sup>Brian Way, *DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DRAMA*, Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., London, 1967, *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION*, Baker's Plays, U.S.A., 1980

<sup>6</sup>Alan England, *THEATRE FOR THE YOUNG*, p.9.

<sup>7</sup>J.H.Davis and J.E.Evans, *THEATRE, CHILDREN AND YOUTH*, Anchorage Press, 1982, p.48.

the processes involved in growing up, to see the world as children see it, to share their eagerness to increase in physical and mental powers, to gain control over emotions, to make sense out of the morass of contradictions between right and wrong, and to develop resources that will help them recognise and resist attempts at manipulation by vested interests.

The key to this success, according to Davis and Evans, lies in the playwright's ability to evoke identification. As indicated in Chapter One, unless the child's cognitive capacities are sufficiently developed so that he is able to see himself in the person of a character in the play; unless the character arouses in him an emotional sympathy through a shared problem or interest, he is likely to show little interest in the play. The extent to which playwrights and directors are able to elicit such identification is one of the main factors determining the degree of influence they will have on shaping the child's inner being.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES**

This chapter will consider the three main stages of intellectual development which children generally seem to follow during their growing years, as described by the noted Swiss child psychologist, Jean Piaget. Within the three main stages, Piaget has also classified several sub-stages which identify important changes that take place. An evaluation of these developmental stages will then be made, in relation to the demands that this form of theatre makes upon young audiences. The evaluation will necessarily examine to what extent the response of young audiences is affected by the development of logical thinking, the development of spatial concepts, emotional development and the development of moral and ethical systems.

It is not within the scope of this thesis to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the behaviour patterns of young children, nor to debate the rival claims of developmental psychologists and "behaviorists", but rather to relate the intellectual and emotional development of young people to the creation of appropriate dramatic stimuli and concepts.

Piaget's three main stages of development have been described as follows:

**STAGE 1: the period of Sensori-Motor intelligence (0 to 18 months)**

Children belonging to this stage and age are palpably unsuitable for exposure to theatre activity. According to Piaget their development proceeds through six sub-stages which include simple "reflex" actions, imitation of simple actions, repetition of pleasurable actions and other exploratory activities, to the stage where sensori-motor exploration is replaced by mental combinations of predictive value.

They are unsuited above all as their thinking is almost entirely egocentric.

**STAGE 2: the period of Concrete Operations (18 months to 11 or 12 years)**

This stage, in which children progress in ability to plan for and achieve goals that are distant in time and space, embraces several substages:

**2 a): PRE-OPERATIONAL (18 months to 7 years)**

**SUBSTAGE 1: Pre-conceptual (18 months to 4.5 or 5 years)**

Although the acquisition of language makes it possible for children to substitute thinking for action, in this substage children have not yet reached a level of development where they can adequately meet the demands of any but the most simple dramatic enactment. The symbolic use of words, drawings, and play may extend the range of experience beyond activity, but true concepts cannot yet be formed.

**SUBSTAGE 2: Intuitive (4.5 to 7 years)**

Children begin to ascribe reasons for actions and beliefs, and begin to form concepts. The intuitive sub-stage of the period of Concrete Operations, is therefore the first developmental stage where young audiences can begin to identify with characters in performance. However, judgments are made on the basis of perception, not logic. Thinking is not "reversible"; judgments may differ each time a problem is encountered.

**2 B): CONCRETE OPERATIONS (7 to 11 or 12 years)**

Young people in this stage comprise the most responsive and enthusiastic audiences. According to Piaget, when children reach this stage they are able to substitute mental actions for physical actions. Size, shape, and colour differences are easily fathomed, groupings are correctly made, systems of classification are taking shape. Egocentricity decreases. However, children still experience difficulties dealing with verbal problems, perceiving general rules, and solving problems, other than by trial and error methods. For the

playwright there are differences that are not insurmountable, between the previous Intuitive Substage, and the stage of Concrete Operations. These differences will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

### **STAGE 3: THE PERIOD OF FORMAL OPERATIONS (11 or 12 to 15 years)**

The only difficulties playwrights may encounter with young people at this stage of development, is resistance to fantasy, verbal participation and other previously spontaneous activities. Young people are able to survey many possibilities, mentally, to explore many points of view, to hypothesize and test solutions to problems. They are now able to observe events objectively without involving the ego.<sup>8</sup>

In considering the stages of development above, it becomes apparent that only three of the categories provide playwrights with audiences capable of responding to the challenges and stimuli that scripts for young audiences can provide. Although Piaget stresses that the age designations are approximate only, these three categories may be identified as:

- i) the Intuitive Sub-stage (4.5 to 7 years)
- ii) the stage of Concrete Operations (7 to 11 or 12 years)
- iii) the period of Formal Operations (11 or 12 to 15 years)

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<sup>8</sup>Mary Sime, *A CHILD'S EYE VIEW*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1973, pp.12-25.

Moses Goldberg, the American scholar, who believes that plays and performances should be fashioned to match the stages of a child's psychological growth, divides the life of a child into four phases of psychological growth. These phases are generally congruent with Piaget's stages of development, but in some instances the conclusions he draws when relating them to theatre, may be challenged. The first phase, according to Goldberg, encompasses children under seven, though presumably he would set a limit at four or five years to keep within Piaget's "Intuitive Sub-stage". He asserts that children under seven are active, curious, idealistic, optimistic, use other children merely as catalysts in their playing, and have short attention spans. He believes that the theatre they need is visual, participatory, its favourite subjects fantasy creatures and animals. These conclusions will be examined and evaluated in the second part of this chapter.

Goldberg's second phase embraces children between the ages of seven and nine years. This diverges from Piaget's "Period of Concrete Operations", which extends from seven to eleven or twelve years of age. In this phase Goldberg observes that children are preoccupied with rules and roles. Social mores become important and "fairness" is at a premium. They like the "good" and "bad" clearly defined and distinguished, and are strongly involved with stereotypes. Another assumption that will be examined is Goldberg's belief that as children in this phase are starting to choose the values they need, theatre should offer a wide range of experiences and "the more detached 'fourth wall' theatre should join participatory theatre in the repertoire." In addition to animals, myths, fairy-tales, mysteries and tales of foreign lands enter the arena.



Goldberg's third phase may be equated with the latter part of Piaget's stage of Concrete Operations, and the beginning of the Period of Formal Operations. He observes that children in this phase "do not merely try out roles but examine them in order to make choices. Individuals count for more than right and wrong and social recognition is what matters now." Of particular relevance to theatre for young audiences are his observations that children of this age worship heroes and admire physical prowess, and that boys love adventure and girls, romance.

His final phase, which embraces young people of fourteen to eighteen, may be equated with Piaget's third stage of development, the period of Formal Operations. At this stage young people are able to make the distinction between different kinds of good and different kinds of bad; actions can be both good and bad. Plays about the human condition itself, which may be intended for adult audiences, may become accessible to young people in this phase of development.<sup>9</sup>

### **AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS**

The first part of this chapter has been concerned with children as developing personalities and has presented some perspectives on children's intellectual, and emotional development. In the second part of the chapter the focus will shift to children as audience members. In this section an attempt will be made to match the theatre experience with the children for whom it was intended. The methodology will include:

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<sup>9</sup>Moses Goldberg, CHILDREN'S THEATRE: A PHILOSOPHY AND A METHOD, pp.80-84.

- i) empirical research and the observation of specific age-group profiles in performance situations
- ii) the application and evaluation of a developmental psychological approach, as exemplified by Piaget.

Observation of the responses of young audiences belonging to specific age-group profiles, has been made possible through performances which have been presented to audiences comprising primary school pupils drawn from specific standards. Piaget's age divisions, while they may be approximate, conform to natural divisions used in many school systems in South Africa: kindergarten and pre-primary, junior primary, senior primary, secondary and high school. Thus kindergarten and pre-primary would generally include children of four and five years; junior primary (class one and two and standard one), six, seven and eight years; senior primary (standards two to five), nine, ten, eleven and twelve years; and secondary or high school pupils (standards six to ten), thirteen to seventeen years. Perceived in terms of Piaget's developmental stages, pupils could be approximately classified in the following categories:

- i) Pre-primary: (4 and 5 years) the pre-conceptual sub-stage of the pre-operational phase of the period of Concrete Operations.
- ii) Junior Primary: class 1,2, std.1 (6,7,8 yrs) the Intuitive sub-stage of the pre-operational phase of the period of Concrete Operations
- iii) Senior Primary: std.2 to 5 (9 to 12 yrs) the period of Concrete Operations.

- iv) Secondary/High: std 6 to 10 (13 to 17 yrs) the period of Formal Operations.

As these age-divisions are approximate, it should be noted that some pupils in the upper levels of pre-primary, for example, could be entering the Intuitive sub-stage of the pre-operational phase, and some pupils in the upper levels of junior primary could be entering the period of Concrete Operations. The tabulated divisions above should therefore be regarded only as guidelines to which there may well be exceptions.

## **AGE GROUP PROFILES IN YOUNG AUDIENCES**

### **1. FOUR- AND FIVE-YEAR-OLDS (PRE-PRIMARY)**

This consideration of audience profiles proceeds from the premise that children younger than four are not yet ready for the theatre. As stated earlier in this chapter, although words, drawings and play may extend their range of experience beyond activity, children in this age-range cannot yet form true concepts. They fall within the stage of development that Piaget has termed the Pre-Conceptual sub-stage of the Pre-Operational phase of the period of Concrete Operations. Some may fall between the Pre-conceptual and the Intuitive sub-stages.

Although the house policy of many theatres includes the recommendation that performances are not suitable for children under the age of six, four- and five-year-olds invariably form some part of the audiences attending plays for young people. This is generally due to a variety of reasons including practical

problems, such as the lack of a baby-sitter, or more commonly, the parents' belief that the child is gifted, or the parents' lack of understanding of the parameters of theatre for young audiences. Whatever the reason, directors and performers may experience some disruption of performances when four- and five-year-olds are present for one or more of the following reasons:

- i) Separation anxiety, which is easily aroused by any one of a number of factors, including black-outs during a performance, or characters who are lost, isolated or distressed.
- ii) Fear; at this age, children are easily startled by sudden noises, frightening characters, or by performers intruding on their space. This may occur as a necessary part of the action in the auditorium, or through participation.
- iii) Egocentric behaviour, which includes talking aloud to parents or friends during a performance.
- iv) Limited concentration span and therefore easily distracted.
- v) Over-excitability; suspense, chases, or tension which are sustained may induce over-excitement.
- vi) Because of transductive reasoning, responses (particularly vocal ones) may become indiscriminate.

A brief consideration of this age-group as potential members of an audience, follows, in relation to its cognitive development, development of spatial concepts, emotional development, and development of moral and ethical systems.

Wherever necessary in this chapter, psychological terminology has been qualified in brackets.

### 1.1 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The ability to reason logically, to perceive a problem and by examining the problem from many perspectives and applying logic find a solution to the problem, is only achieved by the age of eleven or twelve according to Piaget's framework.<sup>10</sup> At four or five years, the child's reasoning is transductive (without logical derivation) and syncretistic (connecting everything according to some personal, illogical scheme). Because the child's reasoning is transductive, and its thinking is precausal (without seeking truly causal explanations), it will not pay much attention when the action stops, or when there are pauses or breaks, as this interferes with its ability to follow sequential action. In the TAMBOOTIE PLAYS, songs are frequently used as a dramatic device to transport the audience through time and space to a different locality. The lyrics reinforce the mode of transport and introduce the audience to the concept of different continents, time-zones etc. For children in this age-group, the essential logic of this convention is lost and the song becomes simply an opportunity to release some pent-up energy by singing along.

The use of songs and lyrics as dramatic conventions for travel and for stimulating participation has been considered in Chapter One.

At this stage of development, the language of a performance may go over the child's head. Although language acquisition is increasing rapidly, the vocabulary is still limited. Apart from individual words, key concepts may be lost to the child. In DINAH THE DINOSAUR for example,<sup>11</sup> an understanding of the play depends on assimilating the significance of words such

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<sup>10</sup>Mary Sime, A CHILD'S EYE VIEW, pp. 12-25.

<sup>11</sup>P.J.Scholtz, DINAH THE DINOSUR, EST Publications, 1991.

as "extinct, fossil, prehistoric, medical science" and "autopsy"(the villain is a medical scientist named Dr. Autopski).

Piaget distinguishes between thought which is internalized and private, and which is often expressed in monologues, which he terms "egocentric" and thought which is shared with others, termed "communicated intelligence". As stated previously, egocentric behaviour may disrupt a performance.

Children of this age are generally easily deceived by the appearance of things; they believe what they see. In *DINAH THE DINOSAUR*,<sup>12</sup> in a dramatic moment, Dinah hatches out of a giant egg and explores her environment on "wobbly" legs. Children of this age group were generally afraid when she approached them, not so much because of her appearance, which was quite appealing, but because they had witnessed the birth of a strange creature.

Discrimination between fact and fantasy is tenuous at this age, and because of this the child may try to enter the action - because it is "real".

Other factors which may complicate the response of this age-group to events on the stage, are what Piaget has termed syncretism (previously defined), and animism (ascribing life to inanimate objects and forces), although the latter belief may be exploited positively in theatre for young audiences. An appropriate example of this was seen in a play entitled *THE ADVENTURE OF EBENEZER SNEEZER*<sup>13</sup> which was suitable for younger children, including four- and five-year-olds. The young audiences readily accepted and believed in

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>G. Ginsberg, *THE ADVENTURE OF EBENEZER SNEEZER*, The University Open-Air Theatre, August 1987.

germs which were personified; Don Germani, Al Capain and Scarlet Fever formed a gang of germs which attacked characters in the play and infected them with a virulent strain of flu.

## 1.2. DEVELOPMENT OF SPATIAL CONCEPTS

The child's field of spatial experience is extended by crawling and later walking; locomotion introduces the child to the relationship between his/her person and the physical laws of motion, momentum, gravity, centrifugal force, and balance. What children draw has been used as an indicator of their spatial orientation. According to Piaget, perception of parts of the body and their relationship to the whole are only mastered by the age of seven, as demonstrated in children's drawings. The drawing of the penguin overpage, is by a standard one pupil, after seeing a performance of a play for young audiences entitled PRUNELLA PENGUIN.<sup>14</sup> The eight-year old child demonstrates a clear understanding, not only of the relationship between parts of the body (beak, wings, tail and feet) and the whole, but also a sense of depth-of-field and perspective. A four- or five-year-old child, according to Piaget's system of Horizontal-Vertical Coordinates, would be unable to distinguish surfaces or planes, either liquid or solid.<sup>15</sup> The ability to draw objects according to a realistic scheme is clearly not just a matter of drawing skill or of hand and eye co-ordination; there is palpably a relationship between a child's ability to understand spatial concepts and its intelligence.

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<sup>14</sup>P.J.Scholtz, PRUNELLA PENGUIN, EST Publications, 1989. Performance attended by standard one pupils from Glenashly Junior Primary School, Durban North, in May 1989.

<sup>15</sup>Piaget has outlined a stage by stage "System of Horizontal-Vertical Coordinates" which starts at early childhood and extends to the age of nine when the child achieves full understanding.





The appearance of things is of paramount importance to children of four or five years. Distortions of proportion can be bewildering to young people who are grappling with the realities of size, shape and perspective. In a play for young audiences entitled *THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT*<sup>16</sup>, the setting and properties are of grossly exaggerated size and proportion. This has the obvious visual effect of diminishing the scale of the performers who are all portraying ants. Thus the visual effect of a performer standing next to a match-box which is three metres long, or a can of aerosol spray seven metres long and two metres high, would be lost on a child of four or five, whose understanding of spatial concepts has not yet developed.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.3. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is necessary to understand the emotional climate in which children normally function, because empathy and identification are central to the theatre experience, and these depend on arousing an emotional state in members of the audience during which they project themselves into the dramatic event.

There is obviously a great deal of overlap between emotional and intellectual behaviour, and an interdependence between right brain and left brain functioning.<sup>18</sup> It is not within the ambit of this thesis to conduct a detailed investigation into such a complex and extensive process, however, it is necessary to examine some obvious manifestations of emotional behaviour in young people which occur during performance situations.

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<sup>16</sup>P.J.Scholtz, *THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT*, EST Publications, 1987.

<sup>17</sup>A photograph of the setting for a production of this play is appended (App. 4.)

<sup>18</sup>Hans G. furth and Harry Wachs, *THINKING GOES TO SCHOOL*, Oxford University Press, 1975, "Thinking Games", pp.71-149.

According to J.H.Davis and M.J.Evans, "emotion may be described as a state of generalised arousal with overtones of feeling." They state further that:

...emotions possess valence in that they are positive and pleasant or they are negative, unpleasant, disturbing. They possess degree or intensity; for instance they can be vague, indefinite and calming, or violent, all-consuming, and unbearably strong. Emotions possess the quality of activity as well. They may arouse one only slightly, or they may arouse one to vigorous effort." 19

The basic emotions of love, fear and anger are, of course, subject to infinite variations. As suggested earlier, fear exhibited in response to dramatic events by four- and five-year-olds may cause disruptions during a performance. At this age fear is easily aroused. Similarly, joy is readily elicited; pleasure may be experienced at this age, through songs, dancing, delight in physical movement, making sounds, rhythmic participation, physical involvement, unusual physical skills (circus routines) and humour. These are all important elements of theatre for young audiences, and would engage four- and five-year-olds. However, difficulties may still arise because of immoderate and indiscriminate responses and lack of control at this age. This is particularly true of expressions of anger and frustration which the young child generally struggles to control. The element of humour receives a more detailed consideration later in this chapter, because it is one of the most important single factors in theatre for young audiences.

#### 1.4. DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS

In the theatre the child's sense of what is right and what is wrong is constantly summoned, as a basis for judging actions and deeds which have been witnessed.

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19J.H.Davis and M.J.Evans, THEATRE, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, Anchorage Press, 1982, p.52.

At the age of four or five judgements, according to Lawrence Kohlberg, are Pre-moral, where rules are obeyed simply to avoid punishment.<sup>20</sup> According to Piaget, at about five the child becomes conscious of the rules of games, such as marbles. To him these rules are immutable, and they may not be broken. Fairness and right are determined by adherence to inherited rules. Breaking the rules leads to "Immanent justice", where retribution is visited automatically on wrongdoers.

Children of this age are unable to evaluate issues with any degree of complexity. In the play SAMANTHA SEAL for instance, seal culling becomes an issue which is debated at the world court. Samantha pleads for the right of all seals to live in peace and safety, while the lawyers for commercial interests make a strong case for culling seals. The audience is finally asked to give reasons for or against the culling of seals, and subsequently to render a verdict. For a four- or five-year-old the issue is simply the wrongness of killing. Acts are totally right or wrong, with no half-measures.

At this age happy outcomes are mandatory to resolve fears; wrongdoers should be physically punished. In DINAH THE DINOSAUR for instance, Dr Autopski is injected with the same hallucinatory drug which he administered to make Dinah compliant. The audience is able to appreciate the retribution visited upon Dr. Autopski as he happily obeys all commands, including the injunction to start a wild-life care centre, instead of dissecting animals. Any ambiguity of rightness or wrongness is likely to be confusing.

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<sup>20</sup>L.Kohlberg, DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL CHARACTER, in Review of Child Development Research, eds. Hoffman M L and L W, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964, p.385.

## SUMMARY

Although children of four and five years may be entering the Intuitive sub-stage, many are still at the Pre-conceptual sub-stage. As members of potential audiences they are likely to create some disruption to performances, because their thinking, emotional responses, appreciation of spatial relationships and their judgements, are at very early stages of development. Despite the fact that they participate readily through rhythmic, musical or vocal means, their participation is frequently indiscriminate, and their concentration easily broken. Playwrights writing specifically for this age-group need to work within uncomplicated parameters to achieve a satisfying dramatic experience.

## 2. THE AUDIENCE OF SIX-, SEVEN-, AND EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS

Most of the plays referred to in this chapter were written to be performed primarily to this age-group, and many theatre companies performing for young people draw their audiences from children of this age. They are particularly rewarding to play for because of their uninhibited and enthusiastic response and their capacity to identify totally with characters and events in performance.

### 2.1. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Most of the children in this group are in the Intuitive sub-stage, while some are entering the sub-period of Concrete Operations. They are beginning to make distinctions between the physical world and the psychical and intellectual world; the distinction between reality and fantasy is now quite clear. The child believes in what is occurring on stage, but is able to remember he/she is in a theatre. According to Piaget, the child is able to perceive the reality or improbability of stage occurrences by eight.

These characteristics were clearly demonstrated in letters written by standard one pupils (eight years old) after seeing a production of the first play in the "Tambootie" series, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET.<sup>21</sup> Because of possible reservations about the validity of conclusions drawn from written submissions by children, through problems of literacy, no attempt was made by teachers to monitor spelling or correct grammatical mistakes, nor to influence the response of the children in any way.

The following extract from one of the letters demonstrates the child's awareness of the duality of the real and theatrical worlds:

Dear Ellis,  
I would like to tell you that I enjoyed your play very much. I laughed so much that I got heekups. I hated Mr Big. I liked Tambootie very much and tell her she acted well. You were so funny. Did you know that you were my sister's boy-friend? ...<sup>22</sup>

Concentration can be centred for longer than at a younger age, although children in the intuitive sub-stage still need frequent changes in action sequences, visual impressions and emotional tone to maintain attention. An episodic structure or breaks between sequences are generally advantageous for this age. Periods of static dialogue, extended discussions and dialectic tend to bore the child if they stop the action. This, of course, is true to some extent of adult theatre, where audiences may become alienated or bored if the playwright ignores the visual demands of the medium, and resorts exclusively to word-play.

Children of this age can learn advanced linguistic forms through modelling. Language functions become increasingly important in their daily interactions

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<sup>21</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET, (THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS), SCAT Publications, 1992, Appendix I.

<sup>22</sup>Letters written by pupils of standard one, at the Park View School, Durban.

and they are becoming quite skilled in, and familiar with the power of words to stimulate response in others. Playwrights frequently exploit their linguistic curiosity by including words and dialogue which may baffle some amongst the young audiences, but which are intended to stimulate their desire to enquire and to stretch their vocabulary. Curiosity with words and sounds can also form the basis of humorous exchanges, as in the dialogue of the character Buttons in the TAMBOOTIE plays, who creates his own words derived from recognisable words, such as "exhaustipated, airyfairyplane" and "horryworryble".

Although their apprehension of events is well-developed, they may still miss the point because of an inability to make connections between events and their causes, which requires an understanding of characters' motivations. Thinking does not proceed from the acceptance of premises and reasoning from them. The child sees only the specific case before him without the need to express a general law. Thinking is dominated by immediate perceptions. Thus in the play TOKOLOSHE<sup>23</sup> many children, and some belonging to this age-group, were unable to make the connection between the Tokoloshe's need to follow Thandi to the city, forsaking his sparkling stream, his death in the polluted canal and his re-appearance and resurrection in human form. This may have been a fault of the writing, yet it was clear from their responses that the young audiences were absorbed in individual episodes; it was only after being questioned by the narrator about Tokoloshe's death that it emerged that the younger children had not understood the premise upon which much of the action had been based:

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23P.J.Scholtz, TOKOLOSHE, EST Publications, 1991.

NARRATOR: (*reading*) There is only one way the Tokoloshe can survive if he strays too far away from his stream: he will survive only if he gives his heart to another. But as a consequence he will lose all his Tokoloshe power; he will become mortal and assume a human shape; and he will have no memory of the Tokoloshe self that has left him. Do you think he gave his heart to another? Well, if he did we should soon know. Let's call him softly and see if he wakes...<sup>24</sup>

The concept embraced by the passage above, although a fairly complex one, was reinforced visually and was enacted with extensive use of physical action and participation. The problems arose when the younger members of the audience were unable to make the connections between the character's motivations and the subsequent actions.

## 2.2. DEVELOPMENT OF SPATIAL CONCEPTS

During the intuitive sub-stage, children appear to be especially sensitive to shapes, objects or things which are contained within other things. According to Piaget, this transparency concept which he terms "intellectual realism", is reflected in drawings which include chicks inside eggs, unborn babies inside stomachs and people inside houses.<sup>25</sup> Drawings executed by children of this age-group, after seeing a production of *DINAH THE DINOSAUR* all depicted the large dinosaur egg with Dinah curled up inside it. They were recording their impression of one of the dramatic moments of the play when Dinah hatches from a giant egg.<sup>26</sup> Similarly drawings submitted by seven- and eight-year-olds after seeing a production of *PRUNELLA PENGUIN* depict a

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid, p.44.

<sup>25</sup>Mary Sime, *A CHILD'S EYE VIEW*, PP.12-25.

<sup>26</sup>P.J.Scholtz, *DINAH THE DINOSAUR*, EST Publications, 1991.

transparent trattoria with people and furniture inside it. This not only demonstrates "intellectual realism", but is also an accurate rendition of the setting, which exploited the dramatic convention of presenting a section through a building. The drawing overpage illustrates the transparent trattoria with a character wearing a top-hat (Mr. Rich) seated at a table and other details of furnishings. The second drawing of the character Yin-Yang, is an example of centred perception, where the centre of the field of vision is overestimated in importance. The drawing illustrates one of the characters with whom the audience identified (Yin-Yang) with tables and chairs of the trattoria on a much diminished scale.<sup>27</sup>

Frequently post-production drawings show an original environment the child has invented for a suggested scene. This illustrates how suggested or conventionalised elements may be translated into fully detailed realistic form by the stimulus of the presentation on an active imagination. In the TAMBOOTIE plays for instance, the circus setting is simply suggested through a patterned floor-cloth, some rostra and poles with coloured bunting. However, all the children who submitted drawings of the performances depicted a striped canvas tent with trapeze and other trappings of the circus in detail.

A recurring phenomenon with children of this age, and younger, is the desire to explore the shape, size and nature of objects through touching. This tactile curiosity is an extension of the desire to explore the environment; to reinforce the visual impression by "feeling" the object or even the character. This is particularly evident when the characters are animal characters or have

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<sup>27</sup>Drawings by Standard I pupils of the Glenashley Junior Primary School (eight years of age) after seeing a performance of PRUNELLA PENGUIN presented in May 1989.





The tree of Idleness

MAMA PAPPADOURLOS and Yin-Yang

AREN LE ROUX



YIN-YANG

some unusual features or characteristics such as fur, feathers, flippers, tails and beaks. In Theatre for Young Audiences, where traffic between stage and auditorium is actively encouraged through participation, excursions onto the stage by young members of the audience during intervals, or before and after performances to touch, feel, or even lift properties and scenery, is to be expected. This can prove to be hazardous for the performance, particularly when properties have been carefully set for subsequent scenes. Performances at the University Open-Air Theatre, which has been the venue for most of the plays referred to in this chapter, are frequently subject to explorations of the type described above, because of the informal setting and the natural surroundings. The tentacles of the Giant Anemone in *THE SELFISH SHELLFISH*, or the paraphernalia and slide to trap Captain Bludgeon in *SAMANTHA SEAL*, for example, proved to be irresistible objects for the exploratory fingers of young members of the audience.<sup>28</sup> There are basically two ways of responding to this tactile curiosity; either by preventing the audience from venturing onto the stage during breaks, or by actively encouraging it by constructing robust scenery and properties and having a facilitator present to monitor the process. The latter course would seem to be more consistent with the aims of Theatre for Young Audiences.

### 2.3. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The range of interests of children in the intuitive sub-stage are more extensive, broadening to include fantasy, legends, myths, fairy tales and any adventurous

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<sup>28</sup>Productions of *THE SELFISH SHELLFISH* and *SAMANTHA SEAL* were presented in the University Open-Air Theatre in 1990 and 1987 respectively.

or realistic stories that have a clear moral scheme. Children of this age are generally exposed to television programmes which include animated cartoon sequences containing violence and conflict; violent action, natural disasters, war, destruction and death all feature in these programmes. A strong antidote to the predictable pattern of these programmes, which elicit largely mechanical responses, lies in Theatre for Young Audiences and its power to evoke empathy. Through creating characters with whom the children can identify strongly, the playwright has the power to enable them to become genuinely aroused and to empathise and sympathise with the plight of the characters.

The following letters and others written by pupils in Standard I, after attending one of the TAMBOOTIE plays, were addressed to the actor playing the role of Buttons, a policeman clown.<sup>29</sup> It was a role with which the children readily identified for a number of reasons, including the fact that he was continually at the receiving end of blows, cuffs and kicks; like Charlie Chaplin, he represents the helpless little man struggling to overcome often insuperable odds. It is interesting to note that children of this age-group referred to the actor by his first name, indicating a strong degree of personal involvement, whereas letters written to the same actor by older children from the school, used his surname. The following extract demonstrates to what extent the child becomes emotionally involved in the trials and tribulations of the protagonist, delighting in his triumphs and fearful of his danger, particularly when, as it obviously does in this case, the events have a direct relevance to the child's life:

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<sup>29</sup>Letters written by Standard I pupils at Parkview Primary School after attending a performance of THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET, presented at the University Open Air Theatre in March 1980.

...Did you get saw when you fall and when you went in the booby room? and nest time you say chaneging room for ladies. and when Mr Stink Bum hit you was it saw and when you kicked out of the booby room was that saw. I am sure you got saw when you were pust a round and fall on you hard. I had such fun there....

The degree of identification frequently depends on the child's perception of common experiences or interests, as in the above letter, where the child proved to have been regularly punished for misbehaving, and in the following extract from another letter, where a more positive affinity with the character is expressed:

...The best part was when Tammy was tap dancing. I love tap because I do tap, modern, acrobatics and ballet. I have won lots of certificates from dancing on stage. Well the best person, of course was the life-saver. He is very nice. (like you.) Still, all of you were good. I would love to see another play. Please invite us again. I hope you remember us...

Young people in the intuitive sub-stage are uninhibited and enthusiastic in their response to, and participation in events on the stage. Physical involvement extends beyond clap-a-long and shouted advice to a readiness to move onto the stage and assist characters in difficulties (see Chapter One, "Audience Participation"). This ranges from performing simple tasks such as assisting to move or open a large crate and clearing vegetables which have been scattered on the stage,<sup>30</sup> to more responsible actions such as apprehending the villain and donning masks as part of a plan to thwart the villain.<sup>31</sup>

At this stage the child's emotional responses still tend to be extreme, either completely happy or completely miserable, with very little intermediate ground.

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<sup>30</sup>P.J.Scholtz, PRUNELLA PENGUIN, pp. 6,19.

<sup>31</sup>P.J.Scholtz, PAPPAMARIO AND THE GRANDE CIRCUS ADVENTURE, pp. 57,58.

## 2.4. DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS

At this age the child is still at Kohlberg's Pre-moral stage (see moral development in four- and five-year-olds: p.81.) where rules are obeyed to avoid punishment. While most children in the intuitive sub-stage believe an act is totally right or wrong, some are developing an insight into possible ambiguity depending on the character's motivations. In THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA for example, the grandfather (U'Khulu) steals a bag of mealies from the witchdoctor (Goma-Goma) because there is a famine in the land and he and his grandson are starving. The motive for the theft may have exonerated him to some extent in the eyes of the young audience. However, it was clear that the audience became wholly sympathetic once it emerged that Goma-Goma had cheated the kraal-dwellers out of their mealies by demanding a sackful from each inhabitant as an offering for rain, but instead had kept all the grain for herself.<sup>32</sup>

There is also a developing perception that actions are worse if the motives are wrong, and not just if the material damage is great. According to Piaget, mistakes are distinguishable from deliberate wrong-doing by the age of eight.

During this phase, automatic deference to adult authority is gradually replaced by what Piaget terms "reciprocity"; fairness of punishment, or equal punishment given to others for similar offences.

### SUMMARY

Children of six, seven and eight are in the Intuitive sub-stage or entering the stage of Concrete Operations. These are developmental stages where

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<sup>32</sup>Performance of THE LA-DI-DAH HADEDA presented in the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre in December 1989.

identification, participation and uninhibited response create a particularly apt climate for Theatre for Young Audiences. Language acquisition and curiosity about words, their meanings and their sounds further enhance the potential of this age-group for evocative theatre.

Extended scenes of romantic love may have a negative effect by creating embarrassment and discomfort. The child may also react negatively to adulterated versions of known fairy tales or stories; such parodies, because they rely on satire and sophisticated humour, are not understood by children of this age. It is for this reason that many pantomimes are not truly satisfying for young people, who may enjoy the spectacle and knockabout humour, but may become disturbed by the deviations. Certainly pantomime lacks the potential for freeing the imagination and spirit that resides in Theatre for Young Audiences.

### **3. THE AUDIENCE OF NINE-, TEN-, ELEVEN- AND TWELVE-YEAR-OLDS**

This grouping comprises children who are in Senior Primary Schools (standards two to five) and represents another large reservoir of young people who are well-suited to enjoy and benefit from Theatre for Young Audiences. At this age young people are genuinely able to follow the dialogue and dramatic premises of the play, and if the material and the concept are sufficiently challenging, they constitute a rewarding and responsive audience to play for. The great danger in this context, is not for the young audience, but for the playwright, who should guard against any form of patronising or "speaking down" to the audience. Particularly at this age, the possibility that the play will appear childish is great, if the playwright does not take cognizance of the child's development on all levels.

### 3.1. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Most young people belonging to this age-group are in the sub-period of Concrete Operations, while some small percentage will have entered the stage of Formal Operations. Intellectually they are able to follow the individual stages and the development of a play with ease; attention span and concentration are no longer a problem; if the material is appropriate and the presentation arresting, they are able to concentrate for a considerable length of time. The young person's causal reasoning is now sufficiently developed to relate motives to characters and action.

The following extract from a letter written by a Senior Primary pupil is illuminating as an indication of the level of cognitive development. The letter, written by a Standard Three pupil (ten years old), was in response to the same play witnessed by the previous age-group<sup>33</sup> and was addressed to the same character (Buttons). A comparison between the responses of the two age-groups as reflected in these extracts, indicates a substantial development from pre-causal to causal thinking. In addition, speculation about the "how" of stage occurrences indicates a curiosity about the dynamics of performance. In this instance the letters refer to the actor by his surname, a departure from the previous egocentric stance:

Dear Mr Pearson,

...Your performance on Thursday was, to me, about the best I have ever seen. The way that Buttons always got his words wrong was so funny. I think that your part really was the best in the whole play.

...It must take you a long time to learn all those plays off by heart. Some parts like all those long, funny words that Buttons used must have been difficult to learn.

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<sup>33</sup>A performance of THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET, presented at the University Open-Air Theatre.



I am really looking forward to any other plays that you will be in. I hope that you get your B.A. degree that you have been studying for because, I think you deserve it.

Linguistic development proceeds rapidly between the ages of nine and twelve, and although static scripts militate against the aims of youth theatre at any age, greater emphasis can be placed on dialogue for audiences of this age-group. By the age of eleven, at the threshold of entering "Formal Operations", young people are able to project possible consequences from information verbally presented.

Characters and characterisation should also appropriately reflect the changing perceptions; more fully drawn characters with strengths and weaknesses will be understood. The character of the Tokoloshe, and the conflict within him between the opposing calls of the human world and the spirit world, which confused some members of the young audiences in the intuitive sub-stage referred to previously, presented no problems to pupils in this age-group, in the sub-period of Concrete Operations. When questioned by the narrator their responses were unambiguous and revealed an understanding, not only of the tensions within the character, but also of other subsidiary issues such as the importance of honouring a commitment (which the Tokoloshe had made) and loyalty to a friend.

Although fantasy and myth are still apt subjects, heroic tales and fictional science adventures challenge both the imagination and the scientific curiosity, which is stimulated by exposure on television to space travel and the wonders of the technological age.

Empathetic responses to the emotional state of characters can be quite

intense , but there are instances of some children rejecting the stage event or diverting their attention if the scene is too arousing. This occurred, for example, in productions of THE SELFISH SHELLFISH, when the Seagull died,<sup>34</sup> in TOKOLOSHE, when the Tokoloshe died,<sup>35</sup> and in THE LA-DI-DAH HADEDA, when Mary and the child were almost discovered by Herod's henchmen.<sup>36</sup> These examples each identify moments of extreme tension or emotion.

### 3.2. DEVELOPMENT OF SPATIAL CONCEPTS

Post production drawings by young people in this age-group generally reveal the same kinds of treatments as seven- or eight-year-olds in the intuitive sub-stage, but with greater detail and complexity. The concept of perspective in drawings is gradually mastered at this age. According to Piaget's "System of Horizontal-Vertical Coordinates" which is used as an indicator of children's spatial orientation, they have reached a transition to a full understanding of horizontal and vertical, by the age of seven to nine years.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.3. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At this age, interests are frequently governed by sex; boys tend to have common interests which differ from those of girls, although there is some overlap in

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<sup>34</sup>David Wood, THE SELFISH SHELLFISH, production presented in the university Open-air theatre in 1990.

<sup>35</sup>P.J.Scholtz, TOKOLOSHE, production presented in the University Open-air theatre in 1991.

<sup>36</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE LA-DI-DAH HADEDA, production presented in the University Open-air theatre in 1989.

<sup>37</sup>J.H.Davis and M.J.Evans, THEATRE, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, Anchorage Press, 1982;. pp.47-51.

areas such as mystery, suspense, dogs, horses and adventure stories. According to Berger,<sup>38</sup> boys' preference is for violence and aggressive action, heroes associated with war, politics, sports, and space exploration, while girls prefer scenes of romantic love, and heroes or heroines associated with humanitarian causes, religion, royalty or the cinema. Girls have a negative response to violence and aggressive action, while boys will tolerate scenes of romantic love only if they are brief and eschew intense passions.

In the following extract from one of the Tambootie plays, a romantic scene between Buttons, the policeman clown, and Thimbelina, the Italian girl-puppet, was enjoyed by the young audiences because the romantic element was leavened with humour:

THIMBELINA: Thimbelina too has the hunger. Ooooooh! I smell it in my nose, the spaghetti. *She sits opposite him. Aaaaah, it speaks to me, here. She pats her stomach. Buttons is sucking at a long strand of spaghetti. He speaks with his mouth full.*

BUTTONS: It's delishymis, taste some. *He holds out the other end of the long strand that is in his mouth.*

THIMBELINA: Si, Thimbelina will eat a leetle. *As they nibble at the strand, their heads draw close together.*

BUTTONS: Mmmmmmmmmmmmm!

THIMBELINA: Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm! *As their lips touch, Thimbelina giggles and draws back. You are not so much the fool huh? You are the clever one for the kiss. Molto intelligente!*<sup>39</sup>

Identification at moments of intense emotional response may also result in self-consciousness and embarrassment, particularly for boys of this age-group.

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<sup>38</sup>K.S.Berger, THE DEVELOPING PERSON, Worth Publishers Inc., 1980, p.344.

<sup>39</sup>P.J.Scholtz, MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN, (THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS), SCAT publications, p.46.

Death, as a concept, is subject to a gradual process of acceptance, so that by the age of nine the child knows that death will occur to him as well as to all living things. Before this understanding is reached, death is regarded as a fairly arbitrary event, linked in some way with sin, punishment or retribution. Death of evil characters is seen at earlier stages, as part of a reciprocal justice scheme, and as such is acceptable and satisfying. Death of sympathetic characters, however, can evoke an intense emotional response, and sometimes because of this, self-consciousness and resistance. The death of the Tokoloshe in the play of that name, is an intensely affecting moment, but it is balanced by the resurrection of the Tokoloshe in human form, which creates a release of tension for the audience:

THANDI: Tokoloshe ...

TOKOLOSHE: Shshsh ... take this *He hands her the magic pebble ...*  
 it's my magic pebble, the one that made me invisible when I  
 rubbed it ... when you get back home, throw it into my stream,  
 as far as you can ... Leguan will find it ... remember ... Toko-  
 Toko-Tokoloshe ... *He lies still.*

THANDI: Oh Tokoloshe, don't leave me. Please Tokoloshe!  
*She weeps over him. Voetsek whines and licks his face.*<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, the death of the Seagull in Wood's THE SELFISH SHELLFISH is an intensely moving moment, and one that could have evoked not only a negative response from young people in this age-group, but could also have traumatised younger children, had Wood not juxtaposed this moment with the characters' visual transformation into actors, by removing their head-dresses and costumes.

Seagull enters at the top of the rocks. He wears a black cloak of "oil". He stumbles painfully to the centre of the pool. The others watch in

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<sup>40</sup>P.J.Scholtz, TOKOLOSHE, P.42.

stunned silence. Seagull collapses. He has a couple of convulsions, and is then still. Starfish rushes to him. She listens to his chest, then looks at the others and shakes her head. He is dead. Music. The shellfish move sadly to each other, singing the "When Will We Learn?" song. They all hold hands, in grief.

As the song continues, the shellfish all remove parts of their costumes. They become actors again. It becomes clear that the actors have come out of character. Only Seagull remains centre. Two Actors go to Seagull and hold out their arms. Seagull gets up, and removes part of his costume. He is an actor again. All join hands and sing.<sup>41</sup>

The performance situation confirmed the effectiveness of Wood's concept and intention; the young audiences accepted the dramatic convention of characters becoming actors. Moreover, the concept reinforced the tenuous link that exists for many young people between fantasy and reality.

Young people of this age form strong attachments to friends. Such attachments may be consolidated in groups or gangs that are mutually supportive. Again, boys shun girls and seek their own companionship, while friendship between girls may be very close.

Young audiences are generally far more responsive when attending performances as part of a group, than in the company of adults or older children, precisely for this reason; the sense of belonging to a group who share like interests and responses. The presence of adults sometimes inhibits young people, or what is perhaps worse sometimes arouses the desire to be exhibitionistic.

### 3.4. DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS

Most young people in this age-group are still responding at Kohlberg's Pre-moral stage (see page 81.) but some now operate at the second level which

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<sup>41</sup>David Wood, *THE SELFISH SHELLFISH*, p.35.

Kohlberg terms "Conformity", where rules are obeyed to forestall guilt when censured.<sup>42</sup>

Motives for actions become increasingly comprehensible and, moreover, important in evaluating an action. There is also a developing perception that others may make different assessments. Some examples of how young people may be spontaneously stimulated to make value-judgements, were evident in performances of Ambrose-Brown's *THE CORAL KING*, when the Coral King offered the young hero Pierre any riches he desired under the sea, as a reward for saving the giant pearl from the clutches of the villainous pair Napoleon and Fleurette. The audiences responded with consistent fervour at each performance, shouting loudly and clearly that Pierre should choose "the Mermaid", which he subsequently did, providing the audience with the reassurance of having their intuitions endorsed.<sup>43</sup> Experiences such as these, reinforce values that are being formed in the child's subconscious mind; values such as kindness, compassion and honesty.

At this point it is appropriate to consider Goldberg's contention that the more detached "fourth wall" theatre should join participatory theatre in the repertoire of children at this age, as they are starting to choose the values they need (see page 72. above). Goldberg's contention is based on the assumption that participatory theatre is one of several options for young audiences, whereas the thrust of this thesis focuses on participation as an essential and organic

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<sup>42</sup>L.Kohlberg, *DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL CHARACTER*, Russel Sage Foundation, New York, 1964.

<sup>43</sup>James Ambrose-Brown, *THE CORAL KING*, production presented in the Alhambra Theatre in 1969.

process related to the emotional and intellectual development of young people. It is only when Piaget's stage of Formal Operations is reached in the early teens, that so called "participatory theatre" may be rejected because it is "childish". At this stage young people prefer adult models to reinforce their identification as adults.

### SUMMARY

As indicated earlier, this is a crucial age for youth theatre, because the child's rapid development and increasing sophistication provide an entree into mature interests and perceptions. If the dramatic presentation is sufficiently challenging and stimulating, this age-group is one of the most rewarding to play for, responding and participating as they do, with lively enthusiasm and commitment.

The division of interests on a gender basis need not create a dichotomy in a performance situation, since there are many areas of common interest, and since a strong group-awareness develops in young audiences of this age.

At this age too, young people empathise deeply with pain, sorrow, fear and joy, providing playwrights with audiences potentially responsive to greater subtlety in characterisation and motivation. Playwrights who are sensitive to the needs of young audiences, and to the possibilities inherent in writing and performing for such a malleable group of young people, can do much to nurture a love of creative endeavour at an early age.

#### **4. THE AUDIENCE OF YOUNG TEENAGERS**

It is clear from the foregoing study, that the two groups of young people most suited to benefit from the stimuli provided by Theatre for Young Audiences, are those who belong collectively to the Intuitive Sub-stage (six- to eight-year-olds at junior primary schools) and to the period of Concrete Operations (nine- to twelve-year-olds at senior primary schools). Although changes and development take place at all levels during these periods, as has been indicated, sympathetic playwrights can encompass these within the dramatic concept, and even exploit them as part of the artistic process.

The most marked change, however, takes place when young people move into their early teens. At the age of thirteen, fourteen and fifteen, young people have entered Piaget's stage of Formal Operations, a period of intellectual expansion in which basic processes have been achieved and the vast world of intellectual possibilities lies open to them.

This is possibly the most neglected area of youth drama, and one that requires careful consideration of material and dramatic techniques.

##### **4.1. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

According to Piaget, the stage of Formal Operations is synonymous with an increased ability to formulate propositions and argue from them. The young teenager is able to test hypotheses in a variety of ways using experience and increased reasoning power as a basis for evaluation.

Teachers are sometimes guilty of attempting to accelerate the young teenager's transition into adult interests and perceptions, to avoid the stigma of childishness. However if the young teenager's developmental level and special



interests are taken into account, there is a wealth of material suitable for dramatic treatment. Davis and Evans have listed a wide range of interests, including "detective stories, mysteries, adventure, the supernatural, tragedy, romanticised or idealised love stories, comedy, parody, animals, science, nature, historical adventure, contemporary teen literature."<sup>44</sup>

Productions presented to thirteen-, fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds, that confirmed these interests, were adaptations of TREASURE ISLAND, HUCKLEBERRY FINN and NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.<sup>45</sup> Each of these productions were dramatisations of novels with youthful protagonists involved in exciting adventures; each provided scope for realistic interpretation with fewer, if any, opportunities for vocal participation.

Contemporary social issues provide a rich field of interest for young teenagers, and topics such as alcoholism, drugs, teenage pregnancy, abortion, nuclear power, environmental pollution and the plight of the under-privileged, are apt themes for dramatic treatment.

#### 4.2. DEVELOPMENT OF SPATIAL CONCEPTS

Congruent with rapid development in other areas, spatial awareness progresses to the stage where the young teenager is able to perceive himself in relation to the cosmos; the infinitely small is accessible through a microscope in

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<sup>44</sup>J.H.Davis and M.J.Evans, THEATRE, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, pp.68-71.

<sup>45</sup>HUCKLEBERRY FINN, Mark Twain, adapted by P.Scholtz, Howard College Theatre, 1968.

TREASURE ISLAND, Robert Louis Stevensen, adapted and directed by P.Scholtz, Alhambra Theatre, 1970.

INTRODUCING MISTER CHARLES DICKENS (NICHOLAS NICKLEBY), devised and directed by A.Wakefield, Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre, 1982.

the science class, while the infinitely large can be glimpsed in televised views of space travel or through telescopes.

In drawing and art, the young person of fourteen or fifteen is capable of developing a real interest and individualised skill that carries over into adult life.

#### 4.3. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Because of a growing awareness on all levels, this is an age of rebellion and desire for increased independence; young teenagers tend to resist adult imposed rules to assert their independence.

Physical changes associated with puberty produce fears and distress related to male voice change, awkwardness, skin problems and feelings of inadequacy or unacceptability. Girls generally tend to be more mature than boys; in England puberty begins legally at the age of twelve in girls, and fourteen in boys.<sup>46</sup>

Feelings at this age are intense and generally easily aroused, with the potential for extremes of emotional response. Girls tend to empathise intensely with romanticised models in plays and films.

In the context of theatre, these changes and developing attitudes provide a clear indication of the appropriate parameters for playwrights, directors and performers; any performance that is interpreted as juvenile, simplistic, or patronising, will be resisted by the young teenager. However, if appropriate themes and dramatic techniques, as identified previously, are exploited

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<sup>46</sup>Shorter Oxford English Dictionary definition of "puberty".

creatively, young people of this age can become an empathetic audience responding intensely to the dramatic stimuli.

#### 4.4. DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS

Most young people in their early teens are still responding at Kohlberg's level of Conformity (see page 99 above); very few will have progressed to the advanced level which he terms "Principles", where rules are obeyed to satisfy individual conscience.

An understanding has been reached by this stage, that rules are not immutable, and that they may be changed by the application of democratic processes.

The sexual maturation mentioned in the previous section as part of the emotional development of young people in their early teens, introduces a complete new set of moral problems: how to reconcile physical urges with social or religious prohibitions.

An acute sense of justice and fairness prevails at this age and young people are well able to evaluate choices and their consequences according to ethical criteria. Although the play SAMANTHA SEAL was created for younger audiences, at the junior primary and senior primary levels, the response of young people in their early teens to some of the significant issues contained in the play, was a revelation of their developed sense of moral values. The judge's invitation to the audience to express their support for, or opposition to seal-culling, was a telling example; unlike the younger audiences who opposed the culling without qualification, teenagers were generally informed and able to evaluate the deed in relation to the motive; the necessity for culling to preserve

a balance in nature was recognised, but so was the self-interested motive of Captain Bludgeon, who perpetrated the culling.

## SUMMARY

The thrust of this thesis has been to establish Theatre for Young Audiences as a specific genre with specific characteristics and clearly defined parameters. Within this context, young people up to the age of twelve evince attitudes and responses that are commensurate with their development as novices; participation, role-play, identification, fantasy, are to a greater or lesser extent, common denominators in their response to dramatic stimuli.

From the age of thirteen, when the young person enters the period of Formal Operations, a barrier or resistance generally develops against "childish" attitudes and responses. Rapid development and increasing sophistication, which have been highlighted in the previous section, lead the young person to mature interests, which have more in common with adults than with the explorations of childhood.

The plays and manuscripts which have served as sources of reference and those contained in the appendices, therefore, have been written for young people between the ages of five or six years and twelve years. The contention of this thesis is that this age-range may be most suitably identified with Theatre for Young Audiences. *THE TRIALS OF KEENO* (appendix 3) is the only play intended for an audience of young teenagers.

## HUMOUR

Man is differentiated from other forms of animal life by his ability to appreciate and respond to the comic. Even though the level of appreciation may vary, and

the things at which we laugh are not always the same, laughter has always been an important force in man's existence. The comedian or jester has been accorded recognition in all ages, and extensive studies on the subject of humour, have been undertaken by philosophers and psychologists.

However, it is one of the most neglected areas of study in the context of Theatre for Young Audiences. Although a growing appreciation of what may be humorous or comic, is congruent with the cognitive development of young people, it was considered necessary to evaluate the manifestation of humour separately in this thesis, since it constitutes a significant area of performance and response.

Young people love to laugh. As their metalinguistic awareness advances, they begin to think about, talk about, and "play with" words and language forms. According to psychological studies, much of our appreciation of humour depends on comprehension of linguistic ambiguities and our awareness that many words have more than one meaning and can be used in different ways.<sup>47</sup>

But even before the acquisition of language children respond to stimuli with laughter. R.Tamashiro has identified five stages in the development of humour, and while he does not specify ages at which these stages occur, they may clearly be identified with the developmental stages which have previously been discussed.

The first, which occurs at infancy and therefore has no immediate relevance for young audiences, is identified as "laughing responses to bodily contact and

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<sup>47</sup>P.H.Mussen, J.J.Conger, J.kagan, A.C.Huston, CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONALITY, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1984.

tickling".<sup>48</sup> This occurs palpably in the first stage of intellectual development which Piaget has termed the period of Sensori-Motor Intelligence (0 to 18 months), when the thinking is almost entirely egocentric (see page 69. above) The second stage, which Tamashiro calls "impulsive", reflects an awareness of the growing control over bodily functions, and of self in relation to the environment. This stage may be identified with the pre-school child of four or five years, where humour is frequently related to noises of bodily functions such as burping, hiccoughs, passing gas, snores etc. Tamashiro also refers to "physical disfunctions", which he describes as "silly and slapstick accidents and actions" such as slipping and falling down. Although this physical humour is identified with the earliest manifestations of humour in the child, it is by no means exclusively confined to the very young, indeed, as will be illustrated in part two of this thesis, it forms the basis of comic action in the theatre, and is used in many of the "lazzi" of the *Commedia dell'Arte*.<sup>49</sup>

The field of comedy in the theatre encompasses many variations. Alan Thompson, in an effort to regularise the concept of different kinds of comedy, devised a comic ladder which places "obscenity" and "physical mishaps" at the bottom of the ladder, closest to farce, and "verbal wit" and "comedy of ideas" at the top of the ladder, closest to "high comedy".<sup>50</sup> However, this hierarchical concept is flawed, since it presupposes that non-verbal communication is necessarily basic and simplistic, whereas it is capable of being refined into an

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48 R.T. Tamashiro, A DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW OF CHILDREN'S HUMOUR, *Elementary School Journal*, 80 (Nov. 1979), pp. 68-75.

49 "Lazzi" may be described as the comic routines of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, and are considered in detail in Part Two, Chapter Two: "Lazzi".

50 A.R. Thompson, *THE ANATOMY OF DRAMA*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1942, p.17.

highly expressive art form, as demonstrated, for example, by Charlie Chaplin and Marcel Marceau.

In the context of Theatre for Young Audiences, words and expressions that bear some relationship to bodily functions can be the source of much hilarity. In the Tambootie plays, for example, Buttons frequently makes use of naively "lavatorial" words:

MR.BIG : You let them lock you in! I'm surrounded by nincompoops!

BUTTONS: Nin-com...

MR.BIG : Shut up Buttons! After them! *He rushes out with Bruno following.*

BUTTONS: ...Poop! *He gets up slowly* Mr. Big Bum!<sup>51</sup>

Not only were the words greeted with delighted hilarity because of their connotations, but also because they were uttered by a character not subject to parental disapproval. The post-performance letter referred to earlier in this chapter, in the section dealing with the Emotional Development of Six- Seven- and Eight-Year-Olds (p.90), also included a drawing of Mr.Big, boldly headed "MR STINK BUM AND BUTTONS". Clearly, the child who was concerned about the beatings, blows and knocks Buttons had received, and who identified with him, now felt able to express himself with impunity.

The physical dimension of humour, it has been asserted, though evident from early childhood, forms the basis of much comic action in the theatre. The "physical dysfunctions" referred to by Tamashiro, such as slipping and falling; the slapstick antics of characters, which rely on the sudden "inversion of

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<sup>51</sup>Scholtz P, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET (THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS), SCAT Publications, 1991, p45.

expectation" are particularly effective in Theatre for Young Audiences, precisely because they are a visual and physical form of humour, immediately accessible to young people.

Many theories on what provokes laughter have been posited through the ages. One of the most widely accepted theories was posited by the philosopher Kant, who asserted that "incongruity" was the basis of the comic. It may be incongruity in actions, words, ideas, or associations. We laugh at the incongruity of the fat man and the skinny man; at the incongruity of the self-important character (Mr. Big) slipping on a banana skin and ending up in an undignified horizontal position on his back; at the incongruity of Mrs. Malaprop's misuse of the English language.

The third stage in Tamashiro's scheme is termed "self-protective" humour, which he asserts focuses, for example, on practical jokes and insults. In the context of young audiences, practical jokes played on villains are especially appreciated. At this stage, which may be equated with the level of the Junior Primary pupil, the visual and physical components of humour are still very strong, as they are throughout the young person's development, but the vocabulary is increasing, and some verbal humour, supported by visual means is usually understood and appreciated. The following dialogue from THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET illustrates a simple level of verbal humour, reinforced strongly by visual means:

BUTTONS: *Pointing at the braces in Stinkwood's mouth* Hello dog! What you got there? *Stinkwood growls* Oooh! It's elastimatic for hanging pants on. Let me see. *He picks up one end, Stinkwood backs away growling* Let's play tug-of-war! *He backs away.* Pull But-tins! Stretch But-tins! Tug-some-more But-tins!  
*Mr. Big enters.*



MR.BIG: Buttons! I thought I told you to fetch the puppets! *He trips over the braces which are now stretched taut. Stinkwood lets the braces go. They pang Buttons on the chest. Stinkwood runs out after the others.*

BUTTONS: Oooh! He panged me! Naughty dog! *He staggers into Mr. Big who is scrambling up. They both collapse.*

MR.BIG: Buttons! You idiot! You imbecile! What are you doing?

BUTTONS :Sorry Mr. Big sir! Mr.Big imbecile sir! It was the elastimatic! It panged me! Like this Mr.Big Sir.  
*He pangs Mr.Big with the braces.*<sup>52</sup>

The fourth stage in the development of humour, which Tamashiro terms "conformist", may be equated with Senior Primary pupils who have entered the sub-period of Concrete Operations. He observes that "the child is identifying strongly with a group, and conventional humour in the form of cliché jokes (moron, elephant, knock-knock, racial and ethnic) emphasise belonging to the "in" crowd".<sup>53</sup> Humour is still visually and physically based, but jokes and riddles with a verbal, intellectual component, are increasingly popular.

According to studies in Child Development and Personality, children under the age of seven or eight tend to regard words as having only one meaning; consequently they do not find jokes based on word-play to be funny.<sup>54</sup> The humour in riddles and jokes may be based on several kinds of linguistic ambiguity. The kind of jokes and riddles that children first consider funny,

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<sup>52</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET, Appendix 1.

<sup>53</sup>Tamashiro, A DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW OF CHILDREN'S THEATRE, p.68-75.

<sup>54</sup>Mussen, Conger, Kagan and Huston, CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONALITY, Harper and Row, Publishers, New York, 1984, p.196.

beginning at ages six or seven, depend on phonological ambiguity, that is, when the same sound can be interpreted in different ways:

MR.BIG: Who's in there? Answer me!

BILLY: *In a falsetto* Amy!

MR.BIG: Amy? Amy who?

BILLY: Amy fraid a've forgotten!

MR.BIG: I don't believe you! Come out!

PIERRE: *Also in a falsetto* And Tish!

MR.BIG: Tish? Tish who?

PIERRE: Bless you!

Variations of phonological ambiguity riddles can extend to the recognition of familiar sayings:

BUTTONS: Irish stew!

BILLY: What do you mean Irish stew?

BUTTONS: Irish stew in the name of the law!<sup>55</sup>

Appreciation of the humour in lexical ambiguity, involving double meaning, develops soon afterwards. Berger has identified three types of riddles that are popular during middle childhood, each one reflecting different aspects of cognitive development. The first is defined as "reality riddles", because the child must have a notion of the way things really are in order to perceive the humour in the riddles:<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET, p.46.

<sup>56</sup>K.S.Berger, THE DEVELOPING PERSON, Worth publishers, Inc., Bronx Community College, City University of New York, 1980, pp.395-397.

MR.BIG: What do you call an elephant that flies?

BILLY: An elephant that flies is called ... a Jumbo jet.<sup>57</sup>

The second type is described as "language ambiguity" jokes. These constitute many of the favourite jokes during middle-childhood, and can be integrated into scripts for young audiences with telling comic effect:

MR.BIG: Why do leopards never escape from my circus?

BILLY: Because they're always spotted!<sup>58</sup>

The response to these riddles is entirely dependent on an awareness that words have more than one meaning. Children at the Intuitive substage are quite capable of missing the point entirely:

BILLY: Hello! Hello! Hello! Did you hear about the musician who spent all his time in bed? You didn't? Well he had to, you see he wrote sheet music!<sup>59</sup>

The third type of riddle is described by Berger as "Absurdity Riddles", which become more common toward the end of middle childhood, since they demand a degree of sophistication for appreciation:

How do you fit six elephants into a VW?  
(Three in the front and three in the back.)<sup>60</sup>

The fifth and final stage in the development of humour is described by Tamashiro as the "conscientious" stage, in which a personal assessment of

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid. p.31.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid, p.31.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, p.33.

<sup>60</sup>THE DEVELOPING PERSON, p.397.

values is paramount. This stage is reached late in adolescence, when young persons in their early teens have entered Piaget's stage of Formal Operations, as described earlier in this chapter (page 101). This period of intellectual expansion, when basic processes have been achieved, enables the young teenager to respond to humorous situations and stimuli with a breadth of responsiveness. Satire, parody and other forms of advanced verbal humour become accessible at this stage.

Finally, it should be observed that the traits and abilities that have been associated with certain ages in this chapter, should not be regarded as definitive in selecting or creating dramatic material for young people. Indeed, young people frequently enjoy challenges that range beyond their abilities and may have their sensibilities stretched or extended by the experience. Moreover, as has been mentioned previously, audiences generally comprise such a composite gathering of young people, that allowances have to be made for many levels of humorous response.

The value of the age-group profiles is that they provide very specific parameters for youth theatre, and a scientific basis for creative exploration and investigation.

## **PART TWO**

### **THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The second part of this thesis focuses on the Commedia dell'Arte, and more specifically on how the forms and conventions of this unique development in the history of the theatre in Western Europe, have provided a wealth of source material for Theatre for Young Audiences. In order to illustrate the extent to which the living tradition of the Commedia dell'Arte is discernible in Theatre for Young Audiences, it is necessary to examine some of the predominant characteristics of this genre, in relation to the form and structure of Theatre for Young Audiences as defined in Part One of this thesis.

There are many scholarly and some definitive publications which document the history and development of this vigorous form of popular theatre which flourished in Italy in the second half of the sixteenth century and throughout the

seventeenth century,<sup>1</sup> and it is not the intention of this thesis to reproduce a detailed history of the Commedia dell'Arte, but rather to focus on some of the remarkable features of this genre, which have helped to shape the forms and conventions of comedy as we know it today, and which are manifest in Theatre for Young Audiences.

Commedia dell'Arte means literally "comedy of the [actor's] guild" and was essentially a form of improvised comedy, which was based on a scenario, or plot outline, rather than written dialogue. The performers comprised twelve or more stock characters, several of whom wore masks, and a few *zanni*, or clowns, who each possessed a wide repertoire of comic business, known as *lazzi*. The *zanni* who were often the main attraction of the troupe, were the very embodiment of the spirit of the Commedia dell'Arte. Their names have been perpetuated in the annals of the theatre: Arlecchino, Pulcinella, Scapino, Brighella, Scaramuccia, Mezzottino and a whole brood of lesser known cousins.

According to Oreglia, the essential fact about the Commedia dell'Arte is that each troupe consisted of a constellation of characters who remained the same regardless of the plot they found themselves embroiled in. He asserts further that the second essential element was improvisation:

Much of the genius of the Commedia lay in its spontaneity ... Each performer would have in his command a large stock of speeches and bits of 'business' which he would draw on, in much the same way that a modern stand-up comedian can provide a joke or a 'one-liner' for any topic, any situation, any fortuitous event. The actors and their routines

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<sup>1</sup>The publication in 1611 of *IL TEATRO DELLE FAVOLE RAPPRESENTATIVE* by Flaminio Scala, for example, may be considered as one of the definitive works, as it was the earliest comprehensive collection of the scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte to be published.

were the interchangeable parts made to fit a vast variety of machines.<sup>2</sup>

The origins of this popular form of theatre are generally acknowledged to stem from various sources; some have linked it to the farces of ancient Italy and to the Latin popular theatre, thus making it a direct descendant of the *fabulae atellanae* (Atellan farces in Rome).<sup>3</sup> It is likely, however, that it inherited a legacy from many sources: from the clowns and variety artists who entertained at the festivities of the nobles; from the jesters, minstrels, jongleurs and medicine shows, performed in the streets in Medieval times; from the *Commedia erudita* of the Renaissance; and even from Asiatic mimes.

Although many of these elements may have contributed to the formation of the Commedia dell'Arte, it emerged as a unique and independent form of popular theatre at the hands of the notable player companies which came into being after 1550.

For two centuries the player companies toured the length and breadth of Europe, demonstrating their artistry and skills, spreading their ideas and techniques, leaving unmistakable evidence of their influence on performers and playwrights alike. France attracted touring companies consistently and French writers began to find inspiration in the Commedia dell'Arte; Moliere's comedies, for example, are steeped in the Italian tradition. Many of his plays are based on the typical plot-devices of the Commedia; the comical antics of a

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<sup>2</sup>Giacomo Oreglia, *THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1968, p.xii.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, Chap.1: "Origin and Definition of the Commedia dell'Arte".

crafty servant in the interests of his young master (LES FOURBERIES DE SCAPIN); the pedant doctor (LE MALADE IMAGINAIRE); confused elders tricked by a handsome hero and an intriguing ingenue (L'ECOLE DES FEMMES and LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME). Although Moliere's rich imagination enabled him to make the material his own, the influence is unmistakable.

Elizabethan playwrights were exposed to the influence of the visiting Italians in much the same way; Pantaloon, Harlequin and Zany appear frequently in Elizabethan comedy. Echoes of the Commedia dell'Arte are heard in several of Shakespeare's plays. The two sets of twins and the resulting complications in THE COMEDY OF ERRORS were typical of the scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte, as were the twin brother and sister situation and Viola's masquerade in TWELFTH NIGHT. The bawdy comic business of Trinculo and Stephano in THE TEMPEST and the buffoonery of the rude mechanicals in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM can be found repeatedly in the Italian scenarios. Like Moliere's, Shakespeare's genius transcends his source material, but the echoes are heard nevertheless.

The influence of the Commedia dell'Arte on the Spanish theatre, though not as pronounced, may be seen in the *comedia nueva*, which was perfected by Lope de Vega and the great dramatists of the Golden Age.

As for its impact on the emerging cultures of Eastern Europe, the stimulus was direct; according to Allardyce Nicoll, "without a doubt, in these three lands, Germany, Poland and Russia, the Italian comedy was a force leading towards the development of native theatres."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEATRE, p.106.



These are but a few examples of the living tradition of the Commedia dell'Arte and its influence on other countries in Europe.

Part Two of the thesis will focus on two of the central features of the Commedia dell'Arte mentioned above, namely the stock characters and the *lazzi*, and will attempt to demonstrate their relevance to Theatre for Young Audiences. Finally, a play for young audiences, based on an extant Commedia scenario will be considered, to evaluate its affinity with the forms and conventions of the Commedia dell'Arte.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE CHARACTERS OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE

The characters of the Commedia dell'Arte are widely referred to as "stock" characters. Almost without exception published treatises on this genre of popular comedy refer to the immediately recognisable types of characters comprising the Commedia troupes as "stock" characters.<sup>1</sup> The literal meaning of this term as defined by the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, is "a store or provision to be drawn upon as occasion requires."<sup>2</sup> The obvious connotations are that the characters are constant types that can be drawn on for any appropriate dramatic occasion. A further dimension is added by an alternative definition provided by the same dictionary, which refers to "The source of a line of descent; the progenitor of a family or race."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps unintentionally,

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<sup>1</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, *THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEATRE*, George G. Harrap & co.Ltd., Third Edition 1952, p.106.

<sup>2</sup>C.T.Onions (Ed.), *THE SHORTER OXFORD ENGLISH DICTONARY*, Oxford Press, Third Edition 1959.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

this highlights an important feature of the Commedia dell'Arte, namely, that the skills and repertoire of a particular character or characters were perpetuated by being transmitted from one generation to another, in one family. A company was frequently headed by a husband-wife team, so that in time the children were added to their numbers. An actor often played a character for so many years and became so famous for his interpretation of the role that he was known to the public, and in subsequent theatre history, by his stage name rather than his real name. For instance, Francesco Andreini created the enormously popular Spanish captain, Captain Spavento, who is not unlike the *miles gloriosus* of Plautus. He became known as Captain Spavento and initiated an enduring vogue for the braggart soldier in other countries.

Other accounts of the Commedia characters identify the characters with their masks. K.M.Lea in his study of the Italian Popular Comedy goes so far as to refer to masks instead of characters:

Masked actors make no attempt to show the development of individual characteristics but depend for their success upon their immediate recognition as types. They are not people but personages. The fixity of expression symbolizes the self-appointed limitation. As a mask represents a collection of individuals, so the idea of a mask emerges from a study of individual presentations. The mask of Pantalone is the abstract of the behaviour of innumerable Pantalones ... The character of a personage in literary drama exists as an actuality: the character of a personage in masked and improvised drama as a potentiality.<sup>4</sup>

Allardyce Nicoll adopts a similar stance in referring to "the serious masks" and "the comic masks" when he is actually referring to the characters implicit in the masks.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>K.M.Lea, *ITALIAN POPULAR COMEDY, A Study in the Commedia Dell'Arte, 1560-1620, With Special Reference to the English Stage*, Oxford Press, 1934, p.18.

<sup>5</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, *THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEATRE*, p.106.

According to Kenneth McKee, a typical company or troupe always included a Pantalone, an elderly parent or guardian; Gratiano, the *dottore*, a doddering and gullible old crony of Pantalone and the butt of much of the comedy of the play; a young hero and an ingenue, the latter usually the daughter of Pantalone or the ward of the *dottore*; a braggart Spanish captain, jealous suitor or other secondary romantic figure; a maid for the heroine, who connived with the young couple to outwit their elders; subordinate characters such as servants, nurses or trades-people; and, " most important of all, two or more *zannis* who might be now a clever valet working in the interest of the hero, now a stupid lackey of the *dottore* or Pantalone, but always a buffoon ready to make comedy whenever and wherever the opportunity occurred."<sup>6</sup>

Of the predominant character types, or stock characters referred to above, two male and two female characters will be considered in detail in relation to characters and characterisation in Theatre for Young Audiences, since it is the contention of this thesis that the character types of the Commedia dell'Arte are ideally suited to the broad comic action and knockabout humour which characterises plays for young audiences. Arlecchino and Pantalone, as master and servant, and Columbine and La Ruffiana, as maid and mistress provide apt subjects for comparison. Moreover, these four characters comprise the cast of a play written for young audiences, based on an original Commedia scenario entitled THE DISGUISES OF ARLECCHINO.<sup>7</sup> In this play, Arlecchino is

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<sup>6</sup>Kenneth McKee, Foreword, SCENARIOS OF THE *COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE: FLAMINIO SCALA'S IL TEATRO DELLE FAVOLE RAPPRESENTATIVE*, Translated by Henry F.Salerno, Limelight Editions, New York, 1989, p.xv.

<sup>7</sup>Scholtz P, THE TRIALS OF KEENO, EST Publications, 1986, (See appendix 3.)

metamorphosed into Keeno, a shrewd, scheming, lively valet with all the characteristics of his namesake, Arlecchino.

### ARLECCHINO (HARLEQUIN)

By all accounts Arlecchino was the most popular of all the traditional Commedia characters. There have been many hypotheses about the origin of his name; Oreglia suggests several possibilities, for example that it may be derived from *Harle* (a bird of variegated plumage), from Erlkonig, king of the elves in a Germanic saga, or from Hoillequin or Hellequin of Boulogne, a knight who lived in the ninth century and who died fighting against the Normans, giving rise to a legend of damned devils (*chasse Arlequin*).<sup>8</sup>

Nicoll suggest he is of divine essence, "if not, indeed, the god Mercury himself, patron of merchants, thieves, and panders." He suggests that these last-named, the *lenones* of the ancient satiric plays wore the same sort of motley as Harlequin, and concludes that the *lenones*, or "flat-feet" of the Roman theatre are plainly Harlequin's ancestors. According to Nicoll, he is the most strongly individualised and yet the most enigmatic of all the comic masks:

His mask, a peculiar mixture of stupidity and cunning, aptly symbolises his nature, for Harlequin can be deceived as well as deceive. Sometimes he is the master of the plot; sometimes for him are reserved the lashes and the buffetings which his dull wits prompt him not how to escape.<sup>9</sup>

His enigmatic nature may be attributed, in part, to his birthplace, the town of Bergamo. According to Duchartre, the lower town produced nothing but fools

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<sup>8</sup>Giacomo Oreglia, THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, p.56.

<sup>9</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEATRE, p.108.

and dullards, whereas the upper town was the home of nimble wits; Harlequin himself claims both the upper and the lower town as his birthplace and consequently his stupidity was intermittently relieved by flashes of shrewd wit. The early Arlecchino is shown in engravings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as leaping and dancing, walking on stilts, making love to an Inamorata, or executing devilish capers and backward somersaults. Riccoboni wrote that:

The acting of the Harlequins before the seventeenth century was nothing but a continual play of extravagant tricks, violent movements, and outrageous rogueries. He was at once insolent, mocking, inept, clownish, and emphatically ribald. I believe that he was extraordinarily agile, and he seemed to be constantly in the air; and I might confidently add that he was a proficient tumbler.<sup>10</sup>

Later accounts of Arlecchino reveal little change in the duality of his nature, for example an eighteenth century account by Jean-Francois Marmontel describes his character as:

...a mixture of ignorance, naivete, wit, stupidity, and grace. He is both a rake and an overgrown boy with occasional gleams of intelligence, and his mistakes and clumsiness often have a wayward charm. His acting is patterned on the lithe, agile grace of a young cat, and he has a superficial coarseness which makes his performances all the more amusing. He plays the role of a faithful valet, always patient, credulous, and greedy. He is eternally amorous, and is constantly in difficulties either on his own or on his master's account.<sup>11</sup>

The earliest pictures of Arlecchino, depict him clothed in a jacket and trousers overlaid with irregular coloured patches (a painting by Probus the Elder, painted about 1570). He wears a black half-mask surmounted with a hare's tail, a wallet

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<sup>10</sup>Pierre Louis Duchartre, *THE ITALIAN COMEDY, The Improvisation, Scenarios, Lives, Attributes, Portraits and Masks of the Illustrious Characters of the Commedia dell'Arte*, translated from the French by Randolph T. Weaver, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, p.125.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p.132.

for ill-earned gains, and a wooden sword (slapstick). In time his costume became more stylized and in the sixteenth century it was made up of regular diamond-shaped lozenges of many colours.

His distinctive mask is frequently pictured as a typically demoniacal half-mask, made of leather or waxed cardboard, with bushy eyebrows and moustaches, and with a red or black carbuncle or protuberance on the forehead, a snub nose, two hollow cheeks and two little holes for eyes.

In Part One of this thesis reference was made to characters in selected original plays for young audiences who have a marked affinity with the stock characters of the Commedia dell'Arte; in the TAMBOOTIE plays,<sup>12</sup> many of the characters are loosely based on Commedia prototypes, however, they are essentially modern in conception. Thus Buttons has many of the qualities and characteristics of Arlecchino; his naivety, his physical dexterity, his child-like responses are all reminiscent of Arlecchino. He is the comic foil for many of the *lazzi* that develop in the plays.

The TAMBOOTIE plays also encompass a characteristic which was central to the whole concept of the Commedia dell'Arte, namely, the appearance of known characters in successive adventures. This device creates two important dramatic attitudes in the spectator and the playwright respectively: the young spectators come to see characters they know, characters they have seen before, characters they enjoy, thus a certain expectation has already been created for them. The playwright no longer has to spend time delineating the characters;

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<sup>12</sup>See Appendix 1, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET.

because their main characteristics are already known they can be precipitated directly into the action. The danger for the playwright in this format is to allow the characters to become secondary to the plot, whereas in truth, the action should be precipitated by the characters and their attitudes.

THE TRIALS OF KEENO, based as it is on an extant scenario, incorporates broad comic action which exploits the possibilities of mistaken identity to the full; Mr. Brock, the Pantaloon figure in the play, becomes infatuated with the young maid, Cherry, whom he believes to be Mrs. Broadbeam, a wealthy neighbour. Mrs Broadbeam is similarly enamoured of Keeno (modelled on Arlecchino), whom she believes to be Mr. Brock. The situation is tailor-made for the wit; Keeno, who enlists the aid of Cherry (Columbine), to continue the deception to their benefit. In keeping with the traditional scenario, Pantaloon ends by being duped of his money and the young girl.

### **PANTALONE (PANTALOOON)**

The thorny relationship between master and servant, between Pantaloon and Harlequin, has been exploited by dramatists of all ages, and none more effectively than Shakespeare in his portrayal of the dissonant relationship between Shylock and Launcelot Gobbo in THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Shakespeare was well acquainted with the character of Pantaloon:

The sixth age shifts  
 Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
 With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,  
 His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide  
 For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
 Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
 And whistles in his sound.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Shakespeare, AS YOU LIKE IT, Act 2, Sc.vii, (Jaques)



According to Duchartre, the figure of Pantaloon with his "long red legs, his loose black cape, or *zimarra*, his beard blown in the winds, his Turkish slippers and his red woollen bonnet", was as much a symbol of the prosperity of Venice, as the Rialto or St. Mark's. Although his name is largely associated with the single-piece breeches he wore, Duchartre points out that he had long been a celebrated character in his native city even before that time. Other theories suggest his name originally came from the phrase *pianta leone*, "to plant the lion", which was intended as a jibe. Another theory purports that he received his name from San Pantaleone, the old patron saint of Venice. Whatever uncertainty exists about the derivation of his name, the same cannot be said of his character. Riccoboni, whose extensive study of the Italian Comedy was penned in 1728, has the following advice for the actor who assumes the role of Pantaloon:

He should try to provoke laughter at appropriate junctures by his self-importance and stupidity, and in this manner represent a man ripe in years who pretends to be a tower of strength and good counsel for others, whereas in truth he is blinded by amorous passion and continually doing puerile things which might lead an observer to call him a child, for all that he is almost a centenarian. The actor should also demonstrate how Pantaloon's avarice, common enough in men of his advanced age, is dominated by a more virulent vice, love, which makes of him a callow greybeard ... lost to all sense of decency ...

The behaviour of Brock (Pantaloon) in *THE TRIALS OF KEENO*, follows precisely the pattern detailed above. His infatuation for the young maid Cherry, whom he believes to be the wealthy Mrs. Broadbeam, makes a laughing stock of him in the end.

## THE WOMEN OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE

Because of the prohibition on female performers in Europe and in England, the female characters of the Commedia dell'Arte never became as important as the popular male characters. If this was the case in Italy, it does not appear to have been true of England; Shakespeare does not seem to have been inhibited by the same constraints in creating some of the most demanding and challenging female roles, to be enacted by young boys.

A further distinction between male and female performers in the Commedia dell'Arte, was manifest in the absence of masks for the female roles. Duchartre reasons again that there were no masks for the women in improvised comedy because the real mask was the standardisation of a character, "and no matter how frequently or how variously the Inamoratas, soubrettes, or matrons were introduced, these Flaminias, Sylvias, and Fiamettas changed in character and personality as often as different actresses were found to interpret them."<sup>14</sup> However, the women did wear a tiny black velvet mask, or *loup*, which is not considered to be a true mask in the Commedia tradition, because it was worn outside as well as inside the theatre, and was an integral part of their dress.

The women of the Commedia dell'Arte fall into four groups or types of characters. Nicoll dismisses all but one of these groups (the Soubrettes), as uninteresting because they are non-comic characters. The first of these, the young lovers, or *inamoratas*, are frequently described as "subdued and colourless"; the *comica innamorata* was usually a young girl, curbed by hard parents, who desired marriage. She was modelled on the fashionable young

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<sup>14</sup>Pierre Louis Duchartre, THE ITALIAN COMEDY, p.271.

ladies of the time, with names such as Aurelia, Ginevra, Isabella, Flaminia, or Lucinda, and was merely a puppet for the plot.

The second group, the Cantarina and the Ballerina belong to a very ancient tradition:

The Ballerina, or Dancer, of Herculaneum, like the Songstress of the troupes of the Renaissance, was accustomed to come forward to the apron of the stage and sing the story of the play. She took part in the comedy also, and at intervals would sing, dance, or play a fragment of instrumental music. Her entrances and exits, in fact, often served no other purpose than to add variety and movement to the performance, and were accepted as an ordinary stage convention.<sup>15</sup>

It should be remembered that the Commedia dell'Arte owed a large part of its popularity to the way in which it offered, what may be termed, total theatre: action, words, music and dancing were all combined into a single, entertaining whole.

### COLOMBINA (COLUMBINE)

The female counterparts of the *zanni*, who played the roles of the various types of man-servant, were the *zagne* or *servette* (soubrettes), the serving-maids, who constitute the third clearly defined group of women in the Commedia dell'Arte. One of the most popular of the soubrettes was Colombina or Columbine, a lively and quick-witted character often described as a *servetta birichina* or artful servant maid. Duchartre describes her as the constant friend and companion of Harlequin, "eternally in love with the rascally valet and by her keen and active wit [she] was able to hold her own in every situation and emerge with ease and dignity from the most involved intrigues."<sup>16</sup> Oreglia

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid, p.268.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p.278.

reinforces the concept of the "artful" servant-maid:

These actresses, whether they spoke in standard Italian or in dialect, were remarkable for their sharp and malicious wit or gossipy gaiety, and their performance for its sprightliness of rhythm. Always quick to give a helping hand to the Lovers, the *servette* were capricious and coquettish with the man-servants, whom they often ended by marrying; 'the dialogues of the *zanni* and the *zagne* were witty parodies of courtly love.'<sup>17</sup>

The traits that distinguish Colombina are readily translated into the ingenue and the lively, spirited character types such as Tambootie, in the Tambootie plays and Cherry in THE TRIALS OF KEENO. In the latter play, Cherry, who is the pert young maid, meets up with Keeno again, after having been tricked by him in their previous relationship:

CHERRY: Facts! I'll give you facts. Fact one, we had a partnership remember. Keeno the Magician and his assistant Cherie. Fact two, the disappearing trick. All the gentlemen place their watches in your hat. A flick of the wrist, a flare of magnesium and the watches disappear. And so does Keeno. Down the trap-door. Fact three, Cherry is left to face the music. Fact four, Keeno has disappeared for good. Until today.

In the true spirit of the Commedia dell'Arte, however, Cherry gains her revenge at the end of the play by tricking Keeno and disappearing with one hundred and fifty pounds, the booty from their devious schemes against Mr. Brock. The relationships between Keeno and Cherry, Keeno and Brock, and Cherry and Mistress Broadbeam, mirror the often turbulent relationships between their Commedia counterparts. In the final moments of the play, Keeno reads a note left for him by Cherry who has disappeared:

KEENO: [Reading] There may be one hundred and fifty other reasons for my absence, but I can't remember them. Just one keeps

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<sup>17</sup>Giacomo Oreglia, THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, p.123.

humming in my head, though I can't remember why. Tit-for-tat! What do you think it means? ... Oh Keeno, Keeno, you have been put down. You have been couzened and beguiled by a pretty face, a scheming minx. Ah well, at least I have my freedom, and there's always tomorrow. So I shall sing you a song before I go, about the wicked ways of the world.

### LA RUFFIANA (LA GUAIIASSA)

Cherry's mistress in the play, Mistress Broadbeam, is based on one of the lesser known characters of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, belonging to a group of older women. The *Commedia scenari* required other characters from time to time; rustic men and women, trades-people, artisans and peasants, and although many of these did not appear frequently enough to have evolved as fixed types, Duchartre does make mention of some female characters who did emerge as stock characters, and who did wear masks. Chief amongst these was La Ruffiana, variously known as La Guaiassa, The Go-between or The Gossip.

Both titles have analogous meanings of go-between, procuress, scandal-monger, etc. According to Duchartre, "The Guaiassa is a Neapolitan type. She is an old woman of the people, trifling, garrulous, extremely limited, but good at heart. Her quips reek of garlic."<sup>18</sup> M.C.Mic asserts that the Go-between is a character which belongs more to the regular or legitimate stage than to the *Commedia dell'Arte*, however, it is interesting to note that she appears in various frescos, engravings and documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which appears to confirm her *Commedia* status. In *THE TRIALS OF KEENO*, Mistress Broadbeam speaks with an affected dialect, which further reinforces her affinity with her *Commedia* forebear:

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<sup>18</sup>Pierre Louis Duchartre, *THE ITALIAN COMEDY*, p.285.

M/BROADBEAM: Aye feel quayt faint, aye do declare, quayt out of breath. May little heart's going pit-a-pat. (*Piano - she tries the door and finds it locked.*) How vexing, locked out of may own maison! (*She rings the bell - piano.*) Where is that tiresome gel. Fast asleep aye do declare. (*She puts down a large box she has been carrying, on the doorstep and raps on the door - all mimed to the piano.*) Cherry! Where can she be? (*She moves back a few paces to call up to the balcony.*) Cherry! Descend and open the portal!

*(Piano - Cherry flies down the stairs, opens the front door and steps out, flattening the cardboard box - piano rumbles.)*

The four character-types considered above are demonstrably well-suited for inclusion in plays for young audiences. As indicated earlier, the Commedia troupes comprised a colourful assortment of stock characters, each with clearly identifiable characteristics, and with the potential to be exploited imaginatively in Theatre for Young Audiences.

Pantaloon's companion and neighbour, sometimes friend and sometimes enemy, is the old Doctor (*Dottore*), with whom he has many traits in common; they are of about the same age, they have the same fatal weakness for oratory, and they are both miserly. He also serves, like Pantaloon, as a butt for laughter, mocked at by his wife or mistress, and cheated by his rascally servant, usually Harlequin or Brighella. Nicoll makes the distinction that the *Dottore* provided a foil for Pantalone, and that the dramatic force of the role depended on the characteristic speech which the public expected from this character. "The *Dottore*, who is most commonly presented as a legal man, can never refrain from expressing his opinions or from giving his advice even in situations about which he knows nothing."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, *THE WORLD OF HARLEQUIN, A Critical Study of the Commedia dell'Arte*, Cambridge University press, 1963, p.56.

The characters in the TAMBOOTIE PLAYS have strong affinities with their Commedia counterparts. Mister Big has many of the attributes of **Il Capitano (the Captain)**, and as his name suggests, he is a braggart and a swaggerer: "B for Better, I for Incredible and G for Great."<sup>20</sup> He talks continually about acts of bravado and magnificent glory, but in the end reveals himself as cheap, contemptible and cowardly. During the course of the five plays, Mr. Big develops an obsession about outwitting Pappa Mario and his troupe, but inevitably he is the one to be outwitted.

Similarly Tambootie and Pitzi and Cato have the Soubrette as their ancestors, with all the crafty and cunning qualities of the artful servant maid of the Commedia dell'Arte (*servetta birichina*). Tambootie has much in common with **Columbine**, using her quick wit and agility to get out of tight corners.

Like Buttons, Ou Pierre is descended from the Zannis, the buffoons or clowns of the Commedia dell'Arte. His truculent nature and "slap-stick" antics are reminiscent of a **Brighella** or a **Scapino**.

Pappa Mario, though he lacks the mean and miserly characteristics of a Pantaloon, is nevertheless typified as the elderly parent or guardian. And many of the other characters, including Thimbelina, Mamma Gina, Fifi, Muffins and Herr Pumpernickel, who weave their way in and out of the Tambootie plays, all have strong affiliations with the Commedia dell'Arte.

The characters and characterisation considered above have been related to two examples of Theatre for Young Audiences: THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS

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<sup>20</sup>Pieter Scholtz, THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS, EST Publications, 1992, p.10. (The Amazing Adventures of Tambootie the Puppet).

and THE TRIALS OF KEENO. In performance the characterisation would, of course, be reinforced on a visual level by the design concept. In the production of the latter play, for example, exaggerated masks, based on the Commedia dell'Arte half-masks, were designed for each character. However, they differed from their prototypes by concentrating on the dominant and characteristic shape of the nose and cheeks only, leaving the eyes and mouth free and unencumbered for expression. Thus Brock's nose bore the unmistakable, beak-like character of Pantalone's nose, while Keeno's broad, flattened nose was distinctly reminiscent of the traditional Arlecchino mask.

The costumes too were stylised incorporating elements of burlesque and the circus, but also of the Commedia dell'Arte. Keeno's distinctive lozenge-patterned shirt was combined with a boldly-patterned pair of dungarees and "takkies".

The setting was formalised into two scaffolding structures painted silver and "floated" against a black background and black floor-cloth.

The sun and moon, two large discs, were hoisted or lowered from the "flies" on Keeno's command to appropriate music, and held in a single, concentrated, coloured spot to create a delicately magical effect.

An analysis of the process of creating and mounting the production, which was published in the journal NEON, concludes with the following statement:

...the more I reverted to the spirit of the Commedia dell'Arte, the closer I approached a style of theatre which was entirely accessible to young people.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>J. van Biljon (Ed.), NEON 46, Natal Education, December 1984.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE LAZZI

#### (THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE)

Etymological theories on the derivation of the word "lazzi" have been rife since the beginning of Commedia scholarship. In 1728 Luigi Riccoboni in his "Histoire du Theatre Italien" wrote that it was a Lombard corruption of the Tuscan word "lacci", which meant cord or ribbon. Riccoboni went on to reason that the term "lazzi" alluded to the comic business that tied together the performance. This theory has been challenged by contemporary scholars who argue that in fact, the *lazzi* interrupted the performances:

Of course, the practical reality was quite different; *lazzi* functioned as independent routines that more often than not interrupted or unravelled the Commedia plots or performance unity. Possibly the metaphor of an extraneous ribbon or the actual use of ropes and ribbons in the comic routines was the origin of the word. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, Performing Arts Journal Publications, New York, 1983, p4.

Other more widely accepted theories suggest that "lazzi" was only the simple corruption of "l'azione", or the action, referring to the activities between the plotted scenes<sup>2</sup>

Still other linguistic theories suggest parallels between the word "lazzi" and the Hebrew "latzon", trick; the Swedish "lat", gesture; and the Latin "lax", fraud.

Whatever the origins of the word, the definition of *lazzi* is relatively standard. Riccoboni declared that the name *lazzi* was given to the actions of Arlecchino or other masked characters when they interrupted a scene by their expressions of terror or by their fooleries.<sup>3</sup> In 1699, Andrea Perrucci simply defined the *lazzo*, a single *lazzi*, as "something foolish, witty, or metaphorical in word or action."<sup>4</sup> Later scholars have described *lazzi* as "stage tricks" or "comic stage business."

*Lazzi*, then, refers to comic routines, generally with the emphasis on physical action, that could be introduced in a planned or spontaneous manner, into any play at appropriate points.

The living tradition of the *lazzi* may be discerned in contemporary performance in the form of "slapstick" routines. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines "slapstick" in the following terms:

**slapstick**, n. Flexible divided lath used by harlequin; (fig.) boisterous low comedy of the roughest kind (also attrib.). (SLAP V. +STICK)

These knockabout comedy routines abounded in the American "silent movies"; in the antics of Charlie Chaplin, the Marx Brothers and Laurel and Hardy, for

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<sup>2</sup>Arthur Pougin, LE DICTIONNAIRE DU THEATRE, (Paris, 1885), p.467.

<sup>3</sup>Luigi Riccobone, HISTOIRE DU THEATRE ITALIEN, Paris, 1728.

<sup>4</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, Performing Arts Journal publications, New York, 1983, p.4.

example. They are evident in the repertoire of circus clowns and in the theatrical genre of Farce, and as this thesis proposes, they can form an integral part of Theatre for Young Audiences.

### SOURCES OF LAZZI

A study of the iconography in many of the authoritative publications on the Commedia dell Arte, reveals drawings, mezzotints and paintings of perverse sexual play, nudity, vomiting, defecation, and all sorts of activities involving enemas and chamberpots; images of actions that are almost never described in the texts. In fact, a description of the *lazzi* is either completely ignored, or attempted in only a few paragraphs.

Certainly, the obscene *lazzi* which make up a good portion of the whole, are hardly if ever referred to:

It is as if these scholars, publishing in the early twentieth century, were psychologically or morally inhibited from accurately documenting the Commedia's best-known performance innovation, *lazzi*.<sup>5</sup>

Records of the *lazzi* are largely pictorial, and like the scenari themselves, are open to conjecture and interpretation. Constant Mic, in his study of the Commedia dell Arte<sup>6</sup>, places the *lazzi* in three categories: 1) when, in fact, they arose out of the scenic occasion - for instance, when the audience became restless or bored during the performance; when the actors tried to comically cover dropped lines or cues; when the performers attempted to inject new and

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Constant Mic, LA COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, Paris: Editions de la Pleiade, 1927.

irrelevant amusements at the conclusion of a scene; 2) when the *lazzi* were an expected and welcomed event for the spectators, who came to see the *lazzi* as high points or specialty acts in the performance; and 3) when the *lazzi* were actually written into the Commedia texts as contrived business. It is the third category of *lazzi* that has become an integral part of Theatre for Young Audiences, and that will occupy a major part of this chapter.

Mel Gordon, in his detailed study of the *lazzi*,<sup>7</sup> has attempted to collect and organize the available *lazzi* from the period of 1550 to 1750 in Europe. This listing takes well over half of the three or four hundred names of *lazzi* that have come down to us in several hundred scenari and manuscripts and places them in one of twelve categories. Gordon explains that although several thousand performers enacted Commedia scenarios during its heyday, except for a single manuscript deposited at the library of Perugia, no detailed lists of *lazzi* are extant. The publication in 1611 of *IL TEATRO DELLE FAVOLE RAPPRESENTATIVE* by Flaminio Scala was an important event in the history of drama, for, as Kenneth Mckee points out, "not only was it one of the earliest appearances of Harlequin ("Arlecchino") in a printed play, but also it was the first time that anything like a comprehensive collection of the scenarios of the Commedia dell'Arte had been published."<sup>8</sup> Most of what is known of *lazzi*, Gordon elucidates, is from descriptions, performers' autobiographical statements, and notations of *lazzi* sequences - sometimes no more than titles - in

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<sup>7</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE.

<sup>8</sup>Flaminio Scala, SCENARIOS OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE (Il Teatreo delle Favole Rappresentative), Translated by Henry F.Salerno, Limelight Editions, New York, 1989.

Commedia plot outlines or scenarios that were posted on the wings of the stage or appeared in the Commedia texts that were intended for publication. In his listing he has only considered routines that the Commedia performers or historians have called *lazzi*. Moreover, only those *lazzi* that have some definition have been included in his listing, since many of the *lazzi* now exist only as a name. It should also be noted that these descriptions of the *lazzi* are usually only their barest bones. A *lazzo* related in a single sentence may have been in fact an elaborate five- or ten-minute sketch. The twelve categories reflect distinct modes of humour, however, as can be seen, they are not mutually exclusive:

- i) Acrobatic and Mimic Lazzi
- ii) Comic Violence/Sadistic Behaviour *lazzi*
- iii) Food Lazzi
- iv) Illogical Lazzi
- v) Stage Properties as Lazzi
- vi) Sexual/Scatological Lazzi
- vii) Social-Class Rebellion Lazzi
- viii) Stage/Life Duality Lazzi
- ix) Stupidity/Inappropriate Behaviour *lazzi*
- x) Transformation Lazzi
- xi) Trickery Lazzi
- xii) Word Play Lazzi<sup>9</sup>

### THE ROLE OF LAZZI IN THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

The following section will illustrate, through examples drawn from original scripts for young audiences, the dramatic effectiveness of *lazzi* when they are written into the texts as contrived business (the third category of *lazzi* as defined by Constant Mic, in establishing the function of *lazzi*.) It should be noted that *lazzi*, in scripts for young audiences, may have the additional function of actively promoting audience participation.

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<sup>9</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, pp.9-59.

The examples of scripted *lazzi* will follow the categories established by Mic, although for reasons which will become evident, some categories are more appropriate for this genre of theatre than others.

#### i) ACROBATIC AND MIMIC LAZZI

Athleticism and clowning, which were always among the best known features of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, form one of the most popular elements of Theatre for Young Audiences. Tumbling, stilt-walking, handsprings, diving, tightrope-balancing, all feats associated with Arlecchino's normal means of locomotion, are skills which evoke tension, excitement and laughter when integrated organically in scripts for young audiences.

Amongst the examples of Acrobatic and Mimic Lazzi, cited by Mic, which were recorded in documents dating from the seventeenth century, is the "Lazzi of the Ladder":

##### Lazzi of the Ladder

A series of comic routines, generally beginning with Arlecchino (Coviello or Pasquariello) carrying in a ladder. Then any one of the following actions can occur: (a) Arlecchino walks the ladder as if it were a pair of stilts. (b) The ladder keeps slipping when placed against the wall. (c) Suddenly frightened, Pantalone shakes the ladder as Coviello attempts to pick apples. (d) Determined not to let Arlecchino reach the top, Brighella rattles the ladder as the upper half bends back and forth. (e) In a panic, Arlecchino continues to slip off the ladder's rungs as the Captain shouts for him to hurry and drop his love letter in Flaminia's window. (f) The ladder that Arlecchino (or Pasquariello) is climbing bends at the top so that he enters the wrong window. (g) Arlecchino and Trivelino each bring in a ladder and place it against the other, creating a Roman ladder; they form several acrobatic positions, walk on double stilts, and wind up climbing over each other. <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.9.

An appropriate example of an Acrobatic and Mimic *lazzo* in Theatre for Young Audiences, is drawn from a play entitled PAPPÀ MARIO AND THE GRANDE CIRCUS ADVENTURE.<sup>11</sup> This is one of five plays written around the adventures of a troupe of circus puppets. The plays are strongly influenced by the traditions of the Commedia dell'Arte in many respects, but more specifically, in this context, with regard to the extensive use of *lazzi*. Each play ends with an extended circus routine, in which all the characters are involved, and which requires advanced levels of acrobatic and mimic skills from the performers. A prerequisite for the performers, therefore, is physical coordination, dexterity and fitness, all attributes to which young people aspire. A brief explanation of the context of the routine is necessary, to illustrate how it has been integrated dramatically into the action of the play.

Pappà Mario and his circus troupe have been invited to perform in the International Festival of Circuses in Paris. Their journey to Paris, arrival and subsequent rehearsals, are continuously obstructed by their arch-enemy, Mister Big, who seeks revenge for past injuries. After several exciting chases, Mister Big's schemes are finally thwarted, and the troupe perform for their Parisian audience and for a prize of sixty thousand francs.

The description of the routine, lasting approximately ten minutes, is given in full, without extraneous dialogue, to illustrate the complexity and the variety of the comic action. Each character performs routines which are appropriate to their respective characteristics and idiosyncrasies:

Circus Music. The stalls are removed and the high-wire apparatus is set up. The sign is revolved to read: INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

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<sup>11</sup>Pieter Scholtz, PAPPÀ MARIO AND THE GRANDE CIRCUS ADVENTURE (THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS) SCAT Publications, 1992.

OF CIRCUSES. A fanfare. The Master-of-ceremonies enters in tails, with a trailing microphone. Buttons runs in making soap bubbles from a bottle. Then, swiftly, he takes a hammer out of his suitcase and bursts each bubble with the hammer. It is a trick hammer, which, with the flick of the wrist, makes a loud "Ping" as each bubble is burst. Circus music. Muffins runs in with a monocycle. She gives it to Buttons, who mounts it and pedals in a circle around her.

Muffins takes three apples out of the suitcase and juggles dexterously with them. Buttons dismounts and watches her.

She tosses them to him. He juggles with them successfully for a brief moment, looking very clumsy, then drops them one by one. Meanwhile, Muffins has taken three eggs out of the suitcase and starts juggling with them. Buttons watches her, wide-eyed, hand-over-mouth in horror. She turns to him. He shakes his head. Muffins tosses them to him, one by one. Buttons picks them up in the air, and juggles desperately, staggering from one side to the other. Suddenly one drops. Buttons catches the other two and watches in horror. The egg bounces and rolls at his feet. Buttons grins foolishly at the audience and points at the egg. Muffins picks it up and tosses it to him. He juggles again, getting more and more confident, trying little variations. Suddenly, one flies high in the air and falls "splat" on his head, dripping egg all over him. Buttons howls. Circus Music. Muffins collects the apples and suitcase and pushes Buttons upstage.

Fi-Fi enters with Stinkwood. Stinkwood does a few cartwheels, then clambers up the ladder, while Fi-Fi sings her song. He puts a tentative paw on the wire and quickly withdraws it. Fi-Fi reaches the top of the ladder. Stinkwood hands her the parasol. She opens it and steps past him. A drum-roll. Stinkwood puts his paws over his eyes. Fi-Fi reaches the far side with a loud "voila!" Stinkwood drops his paws and stares disbelievingly. Fi-Fi beckons to him. He points to himself incredulously. She nods. A drum-roll. Stinkwood steps onto the high-wire. For a moment he flails wildly trying to keep his balance. A loud cymbal clash and he is hanging under the wire, feet and hands locked tightly around it. Buttons runs forward and places a cushion on the floor under him. Then finger-to-lips to the audience, he places an egg on the cushion. He doubles-up in silent mirth. Stinkwood pushes himself along the wire, hand-over-hand until his feet touch the far step-ladder. Then he swings down, bumping Buttons, who is doubled-up. Buttons swallow-dives onto the egg and howls. Fi-Fi jumps down, takes Stinkwood's hand and curtsies to the audience....

The *lazzo* described above is incomplete, and focuses on only four characters: Buttons, Muffins, Fi-Fi and Stinkwood. The *lazzo* continues with stilt-walking, large rod-puppets and tumbling sequences, until all ten characters have been fully integrated into the routines.



Over and above the acrobatic and mimic demands of the *lazzo*, the particular "mode of humour" implicit in the action should be examined. In the juggling sequence, and in the tightrope/cushion-and-egg sequence, Buttons and the audience are duped. Buttons, in his naivete, is always the victim of his own tricks. The inversion of Buttons' and the audience's expectation occurs at the very last moment, to heighten the comedy. This is essentially a visual mode of humour, and as such particularly effective with young audiences. Empathy is achieved through the audience identifying with Buttons and sharing his tribulations.

## ii) COMIC VIOLENCE/SADISTIC BEHAVIOUR LAZZI

The world of the Commedia dell'Arte was peopled with masters and servants; relationships with rich potential for comic violence. The comic subjugation and punishment of the innocent or defenceless servant Arlecchino, and the subsequent retribution or retaliation, was a frequent focus of the Commedia scenarios. The victims of the violent *lazzi* were usually Pantalone and the Captain, although Oreglia asserts that a new character, neither master nor servant, became involved with sadistic or violent *lazzi* in the 1700s. This was the humpbacked Pulcinella, whose sole purpose seemed to be to torment other characters.<sup>12</sup>

The comic possibilities of the master/servant relationship, have long been exploited by dramatists, because of the inherent conflict between the powerful and the powerless, the wealthy and the poor. As Captain Bludgeon says to his timid assistant, in a play written for young audiences

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<sup>12</sup>Giacomo Oreglia, *THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1968, pp.96-97.

Now come along Willie, some of us, like me, are in charge because we do the thinking, and some of us, like you, get ordered about because you do the doing, so its logical that you should crawl out to the hole. Besides if you don't I'll dock one month's pay, so get on with it. <sup>13</sup>

*Lazzi* involving comic violence or sadistic behaviour, feature strongly in the repertoire of circus clowns, and, indeed, in any form of knockabout humour, where the unsuspecting, devious or naive victim is on the receiving end of custard pies, blows, cuffs, kicks or similar forms of violence being administered by a domineering, ruthless or indifferent perpetrator. Two of the *lazzi* listed by Gordon in the above category, for example, have direct parallels in the contemporary plays for young audiences, which serve to illustrate and qualify this thesis.

The first is the "Lazzo of the Chair", which has been described thus:<sup>14</sup>

Arlecchino (or Pierrot) pulls the chair away from the Captain just before he is to sit down. Or the Captain's cape is pulled, so the Captain is forced from the chair.

A variation of this *lazzo* was written into a play for young audiences entitled PRUNELLA PENGUIN. Mr. Rich is the Pantalone figure, while Yin-Yang is an example of the Soubrette, and more specifically of the "servetta birichina", or artful servant maid (see Part Two, Chapter one: "The Characters of the Commedia dell'Arte).

MR. RICH: Yes, well you just call her, while I sit here and wait.  
*(He makes to sit. At the same instant Yin-Yang moves the chair from under him and re-positions it, unaware that he has crashed to the floor.)*

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<sup>13</sup>P.J.Scholtz, SAMANTHA SEAL, EST Publications, 1987, p19.

<sup>14</sup>Mell Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, p.18.

YIN-YANG: Madame Mama vellee busy plepaling food.

MR. RICH: You idiot! You imbecile!

YIN-YANG: I lepeat, is most lude to shout. *(She turns)* Why you sit on floor? Is more civilized to sit on chair. *(She moves out a chair for him.)* Here is one.

MR. RICH: *(Struggling up)* Do you realize I could have injured myself seriously!

YIN-YANG: Seliously, chair is better than floor. Why not sit here?

MR. RICH: Very well. But please call Mrs. ... Poopy-doopy immediately.  
*(He makes to sit. Again she moves the chair out from under him at the last moment. He crashes to the floor.)*

YIN-YANG: On second thoughts, other chair more comfortable - this one have clooked legs.

MR. RICH: Alright, that does it! Two can play at that game! *(He gets up)*

YIN-YANG: *(Placing a second chair for him)* This chair more comfortable.

MR. RICH: Why don't you sit in it? Just to show me.

YIN-YANG: Is stlange lequest. Velly well, Yin-Yang demonstlate.  
*(He pulls the chair out from under her. What follows needs to be treated as a circus routine, their alternating falls developing into a fast-action tumbling routine over the chair. Finally, to end the sequence, he pulls out the chair, while she remains suspended in mid-air, in a seated position.)*

Please observe flee demonstlation. Chair is most comfortable.

MR. RICH: I'm holding the chair. You're not sitting on anything.

YIN-YANG: You are mistaken, chair is extlemely comfortable.

MR. RICH: I tell you, you're sitting on fresh air. Look! Here's my hand under you.

YIN-YANG: Ah-so, is tlue, no chair. *(She sits down hard on top of him)* 15

Many contemporary theatre companies, focusing on alternative forms of theatre, have exploited the comic and creative possibilities of the Commedia dell'Arte, and more specifically of the *lazzi*. One such group, the Trickster Theatre Company of Britain, in a recent production entitled "CHARAVARI",<sup>16</sup> performed a skilful and imaginative variation of the "Lazzo of the Chair". Two characters, attempting to sit in a chair, pulled the chair out from beneath each other, with split-second timing, and with hilarious consequences. The whole *lazzo* was repeated, but the second time, the mood and rhythm were dramatically changed, to emphasize the pain, anger and violence of the two characters, illustrating the narrow dividing-line between comedy (slap-stick) and the grotesque.

The Company's "mission statement" reinforces its affinity with the Commedia dell'Arte: the intention of the Company, which was formed in 1981, is stated as an attempt to create a dynamic form of visual theatre fusing movement skills with spectacular design. They wanted their work to be widely accessible, communicating with its audience through the senses, emotions and imagination more than the intellect, and to put some of the physical excitement back into theatre:

Frustrated with the literary and verbal nature of so much of the work we saw around us, initially we turned for our inspiration to tribal theatre forms and the Commedia dell'Arte. Here we found just the extravagant design, stress on physical expertise and sense of surprise and mystery that we sought. Here were theatre forms that appealed to whole communities, and not just the educated and elite, forms that combined a

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<sup>16</sup>CHARAVARI, presented at the Place Theatre, Dukes Road, London, December/January 1988.

sense of physical thrill with consideration of the most central aspects of people's lives, both physical and spiritual.

...What we have attempted to do is fuse old skills and traditions into new forms, to try to capture a sense of theatrical magic that circus seemed to promise in the first picture books we read as children, to create a circus of the imagination. <sup>17</sup>

Many other contemporary theatre companies have followed the same path. Notable amongst these have been companies promoting the "New Circus" concept,<sup>18</sup> such as the French company "Le Cirque Imaginaire"(Circus of the Imagination), one of the earliest companies to promote the "New Circus", and the Spanish company "Os Paxaros"(The Birds). Their aim, as indeed the aim of Theatre for Young Audiences, as this thesis proposes, is to "fuse old skills and traditions into new forms".

The second *lazzo* in the category of "comic violence", that will be used to illustrate the contemporary relevance of Commedia traditions, is the "Lazzo of the Sack", which was integrated dramatically into one of the plays in the "Tambootie" series, entitled "MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN".<sup>19</sup> Several variations of this *lazzo* are recorded under the title "Lazzi of the Sack":

A popular routine where the victim is either secreted or tricked into a cloth sack: (a) Zanni (or Arlecchino) hides in a sack, which the Captain (or Scaramouche) trips over and begins to beat in anger. (b) Hoping to be sneaked into his beloved's house or a room full of riches, the Captain (or Pantalone) is tricked into hiding in a sack; the Captain is then delivered into a pork butcher's hands, whose sounds of delight and knife-flourishing frightens the Captain. (c) Several Commedia

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<sup>17</sup>An extract from the programme for "CHARAVARI", presented by the Trickster Theatre Company, London, 1988.

<sup>18</sup>"New Circus" is a term used to denote groups who integrate circus skills into their performances, but without animal acts.

<sup>19</sup>P.J.Scholtz, MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN, (THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS), EST Publications, 1980, 1991.

characters are fooled into hiding in sacks; confused over the others' identities, they alternately attempt to beat and seduce each other. <sup>20</sup>

Shakespeare, in "THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR" makes use of an hilarious variation of (b) above, when Sir John Falstaff is secreted in a basket of foul linen by Mistress Ford, to escape the wrath of her jealous husband. By previous arrangement, the basket is carried by her servants to Datchet-mead, where the contents, including Sir John Falstaff, are emptied into a muddy ditch.<sup>21</sup>

A more obvious variation of (c) above has been integrated into the comic action of *MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN*. As this is a play specifically written for young audiences, it is significant that much of the humour evoked by this *lazzo*, is derived from the opportunities it provides for audience participation. In this example, the two villains are the victims and retribution is exacted:

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*To the audience*) Now you'll all have to help me. Will you? Good! Now listen closely. When I say the words 'Here they come' I want you all to stamp your feet as if you're marching. But you must keep time and you must stay seated! Shall we try it? Ready? 'Here they come!' Left, right, left, right ... keep together ... left, right, left, right. Good! And when Billy says 'Halt!' you must stop. Now we're ready for them. Mamma Gina, tell Billy and Pierre to bring them in.

*(Billy and Pierre lead in Mr. Big and Luigi, who have black bags over their heads, and are bound).*

Mr. Big and Luigi are persuaded that they are to face a firing squad for their crimes. Unable to see, and with the audience's active participation an army is

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<sup>20</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, *THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE*, p.14.

<sup>21</sup>THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, Shakespeare, Act III SceneIV, ll 110-144.

conjured up before them, with comical consequences. In this participation *lazzo* members of the audience play an active role and are led to believe that they can change the course of events onstage.

BILLY: What is the crime?

TAMBOOTIE: They are guilty of kidnapping!

BILLY: Hah! The punishment is death. By the shooting squad! Soon my soldiers come, for the shooting squad.

TAAMBOOTIE: Look! Here they come. (*She signals. The audience start marching*)

LUIGI: Mamma Mia! It is the army!

MR.BIG: Hundreds of them!"

BILLY: Halt! (*The marching stops*) Do you have any last words to speak? Before my soldiers shoot?

Maximum comic effect is then derived from the situation; the two terrified villains are beaten, taunted and thoroughly chastised, while the audience relish their role in the *lazzo*.

### iii) FOOD LAZZI

The Food *lazzi* described by Flaminio Scala<sup>22</sup> and other extant manuscripts fall into two categories: those that exhibit real food, such as the ubiquitous macaroni, and those in which its presence is mimed. Gordon maintains that the *lazzi* with food hark back essentially to an infantile development, where the *zanni* characters, or infants, are in a constant search for nourishment. He points out that most of the food consumed in *lazzi* is the kind that babies eat.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Flaminio Scala: *Il Teatro delle favole rappresentative*, translated by Henry F Salerno, Proscenium Publishers Inc., New York.

<sup>23</sup>Mel Gordon, *LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE*, Performing Arts Journal Publications, New York, p21.

However, an equally valid premise would be that the particular kinds of food were chosen for their comic and mimic possibilities. The "Lazzo of Eating the Cherries",<sup>24</sup> for example, in which Arlecchino takes imaginary cherries out of his hat, eats them and spits the pits at Scapino, has rich possibilities for mime because of the nature of the fruit. Similarly, in the "Lazzo of Eating the Fly",<sup>25</sup> in which Arlecchino catches an imaginary fly, tears off its wings, studies it, and devours it with gusto as if he were eating a chicken, there are rich possibilities for comic mime. Gordon's contention possibly has greater force where *lazzi* were performed with real food.

Two examples will be used to illustrate the comic possibilities of "Food Lazzi" in Theatre for Young Audiences, both from MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN. In both cases the victims are again the Pantalone- or Il Capitano-type figures:

*Luigi takes out a telescopic cigarette-holder which is about half a metre long when extended and lights up a cigarette. Mamma Gina enters carrying the cappucino and a clean table-cloth. The cappucino has a mountainous head of white foam .*

MAMMA GINA: Bellissimo no! The best cappucino in Venice! (*She sees Thimbelina*) Buon giorno! Please, you hold-a the cup while Mamma Gina lays down the clean table cloth. (*She hands the cup to Thimbelina. Luigi watches scowling.*)

THIMBELINA: La sigaretta! The smoke, it tickles my nose. I think I sniz!  
(*She sniffs, then sneezes violently, blowing the foam into Luigi's face*)<sup>26</sup>

Both the Cappucino *Lazzo* above, and the Spaghetti *lazzo* which follows, depend on real food for their comic effect. It is doubtful whether mimed sequences would evoke the same response from a young audience:

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p23.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p23.

<sup>26</sup>Pieter Scholtz, MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN, EST Publications, 1980, p.32.



*(Thimbelina and Mamma Gina appear, each carrying a plate of spaghetti. The spaghetti is made of lengths of white string piled on a plastic plate.)*

MAMMA GINA: Due spaghetti!

*(As Thimbelina reaches Mr. Big, she pretends to stumble and upsets the plate of spaghetti on his head.)*

MR.BIG: *(Rises)* Aaaah! You idiot! You cretin! You nincompoop! Look what you've done!

THIMBELINA: Mi scusi signore! Mi dispiace.

*(She brushes him down. Mamma Gina puts the second plate of spaghetti on Mr. Big's chair and starts scooping the spilt spaghetti off the table. Mr. Big sits on the spaghetti and rises with a yell.)*

MAMMA GINA: Mi scusi signore! A small accident! 27

#### iv) ILLOGICAL LAZZI

A number of *lazzi* derive their humour from a misuse or distortion of simple logic or rationality. This is the type that Gordon has categorised as "Illogical Lazzi". The offending character in these comic routines of distorted logic is generally Pulcinella, whose stupidity leads him to believe not only that he has fooled the others, but that his illogic is true. Clearly, this type of *lazzo* is almost exclusively verbal and relies on the ability of the audience to distinguish between logical and illogical thought. Consequently, it has a limited potential in Theatre for Young Audiences, especially where the developmental stage of young people in the audience has not encompassed logical thinking.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p.38.

<sup>28</sup>See Part One, Chapter Two: " Young Audiences - Developmental Stages."

However, there are occasions when illogical behaviour and thought may be linked to the eccentric behaviour of a particular character, or when it involves a play on words. In such cases the humour operates on more than one level and makes it accessible to young people:

ALICE: How many hours a day did you do lessons?

MOCK TURTLE: Ten hours the first day, nine the next. And so on.

ALICE: What a curious plan!

GRYPHON: That's the reason why they are called lessons. Because they lessen from day to day.

.....MOCK TURTLE: Reeling, and Writhing, of course, to begin with. And then the different branches of Arithmetic - Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision.

..... MOCK TURTLE: The master was an old turtle - we used to call him Tortoise.

ALICE: Why did you call him Tortoise if he wasn't one?

MOCK TURTLE: We called him Tortoise because he taught us. Really you are very dull. <sup>29</sup>

Conversely, the next category of *lazzi* relies entirely on action, mime and the dramatic context for its effect. These *lazzi* can only be realized in performance, since their stimulus is visual and non-verbal. Of course, this is largely true of all *lazzi*, and indeed of drama itself, since it is a performance art. Scholars and critics who evaluate drama from a literary perspective only will be unable to appreciate the essence of the Commedia dell'Arte, which lies in action. In Greek the word *drama* simply means *action*. Esslin states that drama is mimetic

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<sup>29</sup>Lewis Carroll, ALICE IN WONDERLAND, Adapted by Eva Le Gallienne and Florida Friebus from Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass", Samuel French 1949, Act 1, pp. 68-70

action, action in imitation or representation of human behaviour. What is crucial, he asserts, is the emphasis on action. So drama is not simply a form of literature (although the words used in a play, when they are written down, can be treated as literature):

What makes drama drama is precisely the element which lies outside and beyond the words and which has to be seen as action - or acted - to give the author's concept its full value. 30

#### v) STAGE PROPERTIES AS LAZZI

As stated, the place of performance (the stage) and the objects used in performance (properties) became essential elements of these *lazzi*. However, the stage objects were often employed as trick properties in the Commedia performance; a tradition that has been perpetuated in the comic routines of circus clowns. The ubiquitous back-firing, collapsing car used in many clown routines, is simply an extension and elaboration of Commedia trick properties such as the exploding book, the disappearing fruit, the moving table and others. The audience's enjoyment of these *lazzi*, from the seventeenth century to the present, has resulted from the magical aspects of the objects as well as the character's bafflement over mastering their unexpected actions. The zanni characters were inevitably the victims of the almost supernatural objects. Trick properties or "magic" properties can be the source of much amusement and wonderment in theatre for young audiences, particularly when they are extensions of a character's idiosyncratic behaviour. The "Lazzo of the Tables", which was first performed in Paris in 1670, has been transmitted in many variations:

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<sup>30</sup>Martin Esslin, AN ANATOMY OF DRAMA, p.14, Chap 2 "The Nature of Drama", ABACUS edition, 1976.

Just as Pulcinella and Mezzettino are about to indulge in an elaborate feast, the tables suddenly arise and walk away. Or, part of the table settings arise and chase Arlecchino from the table.<sup>31</sup>

A variation of this *lazzo* was integrated into the action of MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN. Ou Pierre, a Pierrot-type character, and his dog Stinkwood, both puppets, seek refuge under a table in Mamma Gina's Trattoria. They are hidden from their pursuer, a zealous Italian official, by the tablecloth which hangs to the floor. The official questions Mamma Gina and the audience:

*While the Passport official is talking, the table starts moving slowly. It moves across behind him until it bumps into the other table and then stops. The official moves back to his chair and sits, then realizes that the table is no longer there. He looks across at the table, scratching his head. Then he rises and moves slowly to the table. He carefully lifts off his cap and puts it on his head. Then suddenly and deftly he whips off the table-cloth and peers underneath. There is nothing there. Ou Pierre and Stinkwood have crept under the second table! He stands for a moment, puzzled. Then shaking his head, he drags the table back to its original position. He bangs it once or twice to see if it will move. Mamma Gina enters with a glass of water. She sees the table-cloth in his hand. She glances around, alarmed, then realises what has happened. She snatches the table-cloth from him.*

MAMMA GINA: This is not the souvenir huh! The water is free but not the table-cloth!

OFFICIAL: Grazie!

*He takes the glass and starts drinking. Mamma Gina arranges the table-cloth. Slowly, the second table starts moving towards the audience. When it reaches the edge of the acting area it stops. Ou Pierre and Stinkwood nip out and hide amongst the audience. Mamma Gina who has been facing the table, stands riveted. The official, with his back to the moving table, is oblivious.*

<sup>31</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, Performing Arts Journal Publications, New York, 1983, p.29.

Ah, grazie! And now, I have much work, to find the criminal.  
Arrividerci!

*He turns and moves off. Only when he has passed the isolated chairs does something register in his mind. He stops, turns slowly and scratches his head. Then he puts his finger to his lips. Signalling Mamma Gina, he tip-toes to the table. He lunges and whips off the table-cloth. He examines the table incredulously. Then crawls underneath.* 32

The simple *Commedia lazzo* of a moving table, has been considerably developed and extended in the above sequence. As indicated earlier, the success of the *lazzo* is necessarily linked to the amazement or incredulity of the victim. In this instance the audience is a willing ally, reinforcing their participatory role in the performance.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, identified in the previous chapter, was the use of "stock" characters. These were recognisable, oft repeated, identifiable characters. One of the advantages of using such stock characters, was that they created anticipation and expectation; audiences came to see their favourite characters.

This was the intention underlying the second example of *lazzi* created around stage properties. In each Tambootie play, Buttons, a whimsical, naive character, carries a small suitcase. In each play the contents of the suitcase are examined with great suspicion, and inevitably disastrous consequences, by an officious policeman or official. This *lazzo* is keenly anticipated in each production by the young members of the audience, with whom Buttons has become a confirmed favourite. Although the format of each *lazzo* is the same, the paraphernalia inside the suitcase varies with each production, creating the

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<sup>32</sup>P.J.Scholtz, *MISTER BIG STRIKES AGAIN*, EST Publications, 1980, p52.

element of variety and surprise. Inevitably, the policeman or official becomes the victim of the *lazzo*:

*The customs official opens the suitcase on the table. He takes out a sticky lollipop.*

BUTTONS: *A sticky-licky lollipy-pop. He takes it and starts licking. The Official takes out a packet of Jelly Beans. Jelly-bellybeans! He takes them and pops one into his mouth. A toy telephone is next. A telephonogram! Hellooo, this is But-tins. The Official starts pulling out a scarf which is endless. But-tins miraculabous scarf, long enough for wrapping up toes in winter! He throws it around his neck. It trails on the ground, back and front. Buttons takes out an abnormally large toothbrush and toothpaste tube. An' But-tins' tootybrush! An' But-tins' tootypaste. He squeezes the tube, which squirts foam over the Official.*

TAMBOOTIE: Buttons!

BUTTONS: *Oooh, sorry Mr. Inspection sir, But-tins is mortifried! He tries to wipe off the foam, but only succeeds in smearing it all over the uniform. Billy and Pierre drag him away.* <sup>33</sup>

The next two categories established by Gordon, have limited relevance in Theatre for Young Audiences. Sexual or scatological *lazzi*, excepting in their mildest form, such as references to "bums" or "boobs", for example, would not be appropriate in plays for young audiences. Gordon's description of the stage crudities of the Commedia dell'Arte as "infantile and adolescent" may be true, simply because of their relationship with the developmental stages of young people, but the exploitation of these interests for the purposes of entertainment or sensation would be difficult to justify. These stage crudities, which were among the most popular routines, although the least considered by scholars, included routines with faeces and urine, humiliation through exposure,

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<sup>33</sup>P.J.Scholtz, PAPPAMARIO AND THE GRANDE CIRCUS ADVENTURE, EST Publications, 1982, p.36.

"business" associated with erections and arousal, anuses and faces in close proximity and the telling of dirty jokes. Consequently, the humour was coarse and vulgar. Arlecchino's hand found its way up women's skirts; his bat was employed as a phallus; the chamber pot was emptied over serenaders in the street below; enemas were administered by a monster syringe.

In the context of Theatre for Young Audiences, eschewing sexual or scatological *lazzi* does not constitute de facto censorship; the parameters are not defined by subjects that must not be treated, words that must not be used, or motivations that must not be suggested. The parameters are defined, as this thesis proposes, by playwrights who create challenging plays or theatre pieces, using good taste and informed artistic judgement, based on a thorough knowledge of children derived from observation, study and personal research.

Similarly, but for different reasons, the *lazzi* described as "Social-class Rebellion Lazzi" have a limited potential in this genre of theatre. In these *lazzi* the humour grows out of a class reversal; the servant acts like a master and the master becomes confused. Like the Lazzi of Comic Violence, the Social-Class Rebellion Lazzi are predicated on a "universe of unfair socio-economic arrangements"<sup>34</sup>. Role-reversal is a common device in comic drama, and in Theatre for Young Audiences it may be exploited at the simplest and most basic level; the swaggering, arrogant servant, for example, aping his master, shouting commands and behaving in a generally pompous manner, may evoke appreciative laughter from the young audience.<sup>35</sup> But the focus is on exploiting

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<sup>34</sup>Mel Gordon: LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, p.37.

<sup>35</sup>Buttons, in the "Tambootie" plays, for example, frequently imitates Mr.Big or other authoritarian figures in an exaggerated manner.

the comic possibilities of role-reversal through ridiculing or poking fun at the victim, rather than through providing any comment on "Social-class".

#### viii) STAGE/LIFE DUALITY LAZZI

The Stage/Life Duality Lazzi, which break the convention of the dramatic illusion, are described by Gordon as being among the most curious of comic routines in the Commedia dell'Arte.<sup>36</sup> However, there are many examples in dramatic literature and performance art of such conventions; Aristophanes' *parabasis*, where actors sometimes unmasked themselves during the performance, is an example; Shakespeare's Chorus in HENRY V, who invokes the audience to "work" their thoughts, another, and many contemporary playwrights, such as Pirandello, Wilder and Anouilh, have experimented with the conventions of the actor-audience relationship in a variety of ways.

Basically, the dramatic illusion is broken when the character steps outside of the action of the performance. This is usually a scripted or planned innovation and may be effected in a variety of ways, such as by addressing the audience, acknowledging the audience's presence, assuming a different character, commenting on the play or the playwright etc.

One of the *lazzi*, which illustrates the Stage/Life Duality, is the "Lazzo of the Script"<sup>37</sup>:

Arlecchino tells a joke, which doesn't get a laugh from the audience. He tells it again this time more slowly. Receiving no response from the

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<sup>36</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, p.41.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p42.



audience, Arlecchino pulls out a script from his sleeve and reads the joke. Again Arlecchino receives no laughs. He tells the audience from now on he will tell his own jokes, not those of the playwright.

Of course, one of the unique characteristics of Theatre for Young Audiences, is the possibility of extensive audience participation.<sup>38</sup> This participation may involve the character and the audience, or the actor and the audience, but whatever its nature, it does not intrude on the dramatic illusion to the extent that it does in adult theatre. The reasons for this have been discussed at length in an earlier chapter, but in the context of Stage/Life Duality it is necessary to focus again on three of them: i) the distinction between illusion and reality is tenuous for young audiences; ii) the participation is generally spontaneous and becomes an integral part of the performance; iii) the participation is the result of a genuine belief on the part of the young audience, that it can alter the course of events through its intrusion.

Audience participation plays an important part in all the Tambootie plays, and there are many examples of collusion between the characters and the audience. However, exchanges between actors (as distinct from the characters) and the audience may introduce an entirely different dimension to the action. David Wood, is a playwright and director who has been in the forefront of major innovations in the field of Theatre for Young Audiences. In a play entitled "The Selfish Shellfish", the stage/life duality becomes the central concept, and is a critical factor in the audience's understanding of the play. In an introductory note he explains that although some people may feel that the death of Seagull (a happy-go-lucky, breezy character) might disturb young

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<sup>38</sup>See Part One, Chap.I, "Audience Participation".

audiences, he believes that it is absolutely necessary to the play, and that the device whereby the *character* dies, but the *actor* is seen palpably to live is quite understandable and acceptable to the youngest child:

Seagull enters at the top of the rocks. He wears a black cloak of "oil". He stumbles painfully to the centre of the pool. The others watch in stunned silence. Seagull collapses. He has a couple of convulsions, and is then still. Starfish rushes to him. She listens to his chest, then looks at the others and shakes her head. He is dead. Music. The shellfish move sadly to each other, singing the "When Will We Learn?" song. They all hold hands, in grief. As the song continues, the shellfish all remove parts of their costumes. They become actors again. It becomes clear that the actors have come out of character. Only Seagull remains centre. Two actors go to Seagull and hold out their arms. Seagull gets up, and removes part of his costume. He is an actor again. All join and sing. <sup>39</sup>

Most playwrights, writing for young audiences, have adhered to tacitly accepted dicta, that death, if it has any part in plays for young audiences, best belongs to the antagonists, the villains, those with evil intentions; if death happens to protagonists, it is not final; if it is, it must seem as remote as possible, preferably occurring offstage. Presumably these attitudes were based on a desire to protect children from harsh reality as long as possible and to avoid upsetting them emotionally during a performance. David Wood found the means to avoid upsetting his young audience through exploiting the concept of "stage/life" duality. However, they were exposed to the harsh reality of death; the death of innocent creatures as a consequence of our own selfishness and greed.

Not all playwrights and scholars will support the inclusion of various realistic and romantic views of death in plays for young people. There can be few, however, who will argue with the sensitive and dramatically effective

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<sup>39</sup>David Wood, *THE SELFISH SHELLFISH, A play for Children*, Samuel French, London, p35.

manner in which Wood has focused on the subject. For children over the age of nine,<sup>40</sup> there is no reason why death should not be assigned its natural place in the scheme of things. Certainly, there seems little point in banning its occurrence from the stage.

There is a strong affinity between the "Stage/Life Duality Lazzi", and what Gordon has termed the "Transformation Lazzi", which involve the "sudden and complete change of personality and emotion".<sup>41</sup> Clearly, the example of the actor arising like a phoenix from the dead seagull, could also be considered a "Transformation Lazzo". As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the twelve categories are not mutually exclusive.

#### **ix) TRANSFORMATION LAZZI**

There is the potential for extensive use of "Transformation Lazzi" in Theatre for Young Audiences. The conversion of the villain from an aggressive, bullying antagonist, to a submissive, meek confidant, for example, forms the comic climax of many plays for young audiences. Attitudes bred of greed, fear, anger, envy, all create the potential for instantaneous transformation and fuel the humour of the "Transformation Lazzi".

An example of a comic *lazzo* involving the transformation of the antagonist, is drawn from a play for young audiences entitled DINAH THE DINOSAUR. The antagonist is a ruthless and cruel medical scientist, Dr. Autopski, who has

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<sup>40</sup>In Piaget's terms, "subjective intentionalism" evolves from "moral realism" by about age 10; motives for actions become increasingly comprehensible and important in assessing the degree of rightness or wrongness of an action.

<sup>41</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, p.47.

attempted to dissect Dinah, the Dinosaur. At the end of the play he is injected with a drug, which has an immediate effect on him:

*Dinah injects him.*

DR.AUTOPSKI: You vill regret zis, all of you! You sink you haf heard ze last of Dr. Autopski. Hah! I vill show you ... I ... yai ...yai ... *He looks glazed.*

PROF.FOSSIL: Now listen very carefully Doctor ...

DR.AUTOPSKI: I am listening ... very carefully ...

PROF.FOSSIL: ... in future you will do everything in your power to protect endangered species.

DR.AUTOPSKI: I vill protect endangered species ...

PROF:FOSSIL: Especially Dinah! You will never think of harming her again.

DR.AUTOPSKI: I vill never sink ... of harming her again.

PROF:FOSSIL: In fact, you will close down your laboratory.

SUZIE: Good riddance!

PROF.FOSSIL: ... and instead you will start a wildlife care centre.

DR.AUTOPSKI: I vill start a vildlife care centre.

SUZIE: Hurrah!

PROF.FOSSIL: And you've no idea how happy it will make you.

DR.AUTOPSKI: I vill be happy.

SUZIE: So smile!

*Dr.Autopski smiles happily. 42*

The "Transformation Lazzi", in common with many other types of comic routines, are based on a simple device: the inversion of expectation. The

expected behaviour-pattern is suddenly inverted and the audience responds to the manner and extent of the inversion or transformation. The comedy may arise out of the suddenness of the event, such as a clown slipping unexpectedly on a banana skin, or it may be compounded by a protracted anticipation of the event, such as the clown walking back and forth several times, narrowly missing the banana skin each time. But the reason for the response is essentially because the clown ceases to continue in a vertical position, and suddenly ends in a horizontal position.

For similar reasons, the "Stupidity/Inappropriate Behaviour Lazzi" evoke laughter. Normal human interaction requires a whole range of logical strategies. The "Lazzi of Stupidity, or Inappropriate Behaviour" work on a complete violation of those laws, and consequently they frequently become part of the repertoire of clowns or *zanni*.

#### **x) THE LAZZI OF STUPIDITY, OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR.**

A typical example of this category is the routine described as "the Lazzo of Looking Everywhere and Finding Nothing".<sup>43</sup>

Zanni (or Arlecchino) is asked to find an object or person right in front of him. Looking everywhere but at that spot, Zanni announces that it's not there.

The stupidity may be communicated through speech or through movement responses, or through a combination of both, as in the extract above.

Buttons, a policeman-clown in *THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET*, a play for young audiences, behaves in much the same way:

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<sup>43</sup>Mel Gordon, *LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE*, p.44.

MR.BIG: Come on Buttons!

BUTTONS: Coming Mr.Big Boss!

*He takes out a large magnifying glass.*

But-tins the fearless bobby-guard on the track!

*He peers at the audience through the magnifying glass as he moves up the aisle.*

Sniffing the scent! Tracking the track! Collecting the clews!

*He peers at somebody in the audience.*

Ooooh! What an ugly face!

*Mr.Big has returned and stands over Buttons. Buttons peers at his boots through the magnifying glass.*

Hey Mr.Boss! Mr.Big Boss Sir! But-tins has found some ugly boots sir! Belonging to some ugly legs! It must be a criminiminal!

MR.BIG: *Dangerously.* Buttons, if you don't behave, I'll confiscate your helmet and your magnifying glass! Now get up at once!

BUTTONS: *Peering up at Mr.Big through the magnifying glass.*

Sorry Mr.Big nose sir! <sup>44</sup>

Shakespeare, in his romantic comedy TWELFTH NIGHT, created a *lazzo*, or comic routine, in which two antagonists, driven by fear, behave inappropriately. Viola, disguised as a young man, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a foolish knight, are tricked into a duel by Sir Toby Belch and Fabian. The ensuing comedy as each attempts to avoid a confrontation, results in an extended *lazzo*. This is a variation of "Inappropriate Behaviour Lazzi" described as the "Lazzi of Cowardice", first presented in a Commedia performance in Bavaria in 1568, just four years after Shakespeare's birth:<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup>P.J.Scholtz, THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET (THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS), SCAT Publications, 1991, p17, Appendix 1.

<sup>45</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, p.43.

#### Lazzi of Cowardice

Pantalone and Zanni (or Arlecchino) search for the man who has beaten them. They practice duelling. But when the Captain appears, they suddenly forget how to hold their swords in their fright. Pantalone and Zanni attempt to persuade the other to fight, pushing the other toward the Captain.

Just as the Commedia scenarios revolved around intrigues and deceptions, many of the *lazzi* were nothing more than stock ruses and tricks. The so-called "Trickery Lazzi" impinge on many of the categories previously discussed, since character types like Pulcinella were the eternal schemers, and Pantalone and Arlecchino, the eternal dupes.

#### xi) TRICKERY LAZZI

There are many examples of "Trickery Lazzi" in plays for young audiences. The victims of the deceptions and ruses are usually the antagonists, who deserve retribution. Chief amongst the Commedia victims was Pantalone:

#### Lazzi of Bamboozling

Zanni (or Coviello), offering Pantalone (or Pulcinella) the secrets of amorous speech, teaches him a thousand ridiculous sayings. Then, with Coviello egging him on, Pulcinella repeats them to his beloved. <sup>46</sup>

The humour may be compounded, when, as in the following example from a play for young audiences, the perpetrator of the ruse becomes the victim.

Buttons, the clown is attempting to bath Stinkwood, the dog:

*Buttons picks up the bucket and pours a little water into the tub.*

BUTTONS: See, if Stinkydog has a bath, all the itchy-fleas will drown.

STINKWOOD: Aikona! Ek's nie onosel nie!

BUTTONS: Now But-tins is going to high-dive into the bathing-tub!  
*He climbs the step ladder.*

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p.51.

STINKWOOD: Ag man, wat voeter jy nou? Jy skeer die gek met my!

BUTTONS: *Poises himself.* Ready, an' steady, an' ...  
*He swings his arms, then stops.* Oooh, look!

STINKWOOD: Wat?

BUTTONS: In the bathing-tub. A big bone!

STINKWOOD: 'n Been? Waar?

BUTTONS: *Pointing.* There! A scrumbumtious, juicy big bone!

*Stinkwood moves to the tub.*

STINKWOOD: Ek voel net lus vir 'n lekker been.

*Buttons creeps down the step-ladder, finger-to-lips, and creeps up behind Stinkwood.*

Waar is dit! Ek sien g'n been nie.

*As Buttons makes to push him, Stinkwood moves aside. Buttons falls forward into the tub.* 47

The final category to be considered, includes *lazzi* based on a play of words and ambiguities of meaning. The previous categories have, to a greater or lesser extent, exploited opportunities for action and physical involvement. The "Word-Play Lazzi" depend on verbal dialogue for their effect. Of course they cannot be considered in isolation, or separated from the characters or context of the performance. However, the humour is largely derived from the interplay of dialects, misunderstood words, puns, "malapropisms", story-telling and foreign accents. Gordon states that these *lazzi* were normally peculiar to Southern Italy, especially in the 1700s. He asserts that the speech of the Doctor, German innkeeper, and the Jewish merchant were, there, considered *lazzi* rather than *uscite* and *chiuette*, the stock phrases and prattle of the early Commedia

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<sup>47</sup>P.J.Scholtz, PAPPAMARIO AND THE GRANDE CIRCUS ADVENTURE (THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS), EST Publications, 1991, p4.



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## xii) WORD-PLAY LAZZI

A typical example of the *lazzi* which fall into this category, is the "Lazzo of the Knocking":

### LAZZO OF THE KNOCKING

The master tells Pulcinella to knock on the door. Pulcinella asks what the door has done wrong that it must be hit. The master demands that Pulcinella knock (*bussare*). Pulcinella says that he doesn't want to make a fool of himself (*abbuffare*). "Knock lightly," says the master. Pulcinella barely touches the door. "Now knock softly (low)." Pulcinella bends down. "Knock loudly (high)!" He stands up.<sup>49</sup>

This *lazzo* exploits the ambiguity of words; the difference between the literal and the figurative use of words. In this instance, the *lazzo* is not static, since the difference is demonstrated through actions.

"Word-Play Lazzi" are particularly appropriate and effective in Theatre for Young Audiences, since they focus on the acquisition of vocabulary, and the corresponding appreciation of verbal humour, especially when amply supported by visible means. This concept is fully explored in Part One, Chapter Two, "Developmental Stages of Young Audiences" and "Humour".

The following examples illustrate two ways in which "Word-Play Lazzi" may be integrated into plays for young audiences. The humour in the first example is based on the interplay of dialects:<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Mel Gordon, LAZZI, THE COMIC ROUTINES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, p.54.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid, p.59.

<sup>50</sup>TAMBOOTIE'S TYROLEAN ADVENTURE (THE TAMBOOTIE PLAYS): Pieter Scholtz, EST Publications, 1991, p22.

MR. BIG: I come bearing the olive branch.

OU PIERRE: Passop hy't 'n stok!

PITZI: Silly, it's a metaphor.

OU PIERRE: Wat?

CATO: It means peace.

OU PIERRE: Well, met 'n stok of met 'n phor, dis' die selde ding, hy's dangerous.

The second example derives its humour from the use of similar sounding words, and nonsense words. The humour in this example is directly related to the character (Buttons) and his idiosyncratic use of language. The words he should have used are given in brackets:

BUTTONS. There's a floating-graph (photograph) in the noodle-paper, (newspaper) an' then Miss Pitzi an' Cato saw the horror-bioscope (horoscope) an' it's not fair-an'-sunny (fair) 'cause they wouldn't pay But-tins, an' the floating-graph (photograph) was clever Miss Tambootie 'cause she won the yo-ho-hodeling (yodelling) petition (competition) unanimously. (unanimously).<sup>51</sup>

## LAZZI AND THE USE OF MIME AND MOVEMENT

It is abundantly clear, that all the *lazzi* embraced by the twelve categories considered previously, rely heavily on mime or non-verbal communication. Even the *lazzi* which focus on verbal interplay, are reinforced in visual terms. This is not surprising when the evolution and development of this genre are considered. It was a popular form of theatre, appealing to all sections of society; audiences were at once unsophisticated and drawn to instantly recognisable character-types and their antics.

A popular routine, which demonstrates the importance of mime, was the night scene, or the "Lazzo of the Dark", in which two characters enter, in the bright light of

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid, p.12.

the open stage, carrying candles as if at night. Each one is looking for an intruder he thinks he has heard. A gust of wind blows the candles out. They grope about as if in pitch darkness, hearing the other's movements, feeling their way towards one another, just missing, embracing the furniture, finally grappling furiously together only to find that they are friends living in the same house.

Of course, the mime was not entirely "the poetry of silence" as defined by Marceau;<sup>52</sup> improvised dialogue, exclamations, music made on a bellows or a gridiron, and any other sounds which reinforced the action, were used.

It is also evident, from the examples of *lazzi* considered above, that knockabout humour was introduced wherever possible. Water was thrown about, and characters spat fountains of water out of their mouths to drench their companions. Routines frequently required characters to fall down, as if dead, while others tumbled over them as they ran onto the stage.

What is significant, in the context of Theatre for Young Audiences, is the response of the Commedia audiences to these *lazzi*. From all reports, the characters were frequently required to adapt their actions to the audience's responses, which frequently took the form of shouted advice, which the characters understood, or misunderstood as required. The need to participate in the dramatic event, and the dramatic stimulus which provide the opportunities to do so, are both factors common to the Commedia dell'Arte and to Theatre for Young Audiences.

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<sup>52</sup>Marcel Marceau, the French Mime, who created the character Bip.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis reference has been made to original plays for young audiences; the plays have served not only as reference points, but have also reinforced the thrust of the thesis on two levels: firstly in establishing Theatre for Young Audiences as a distinctive theatrical genre, with clearly defined parameters, and secondly, in demonstrating the living tradition of the Commedia dell'Arte.

The three plays which have been included as appendices, represent three distinct approaches to creating entertaining yet meaningful dramatic experiences for young audiences.

The first play, entitled **THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET**, fulfils many of the criteria considered in Part One of this thesis. At the level of "fantasy", mention has been made of the personification of toys and dolls: many of the characters in this play are puppets, a fact which in performance has to be reinforced through movement and design. There is also an element of "animal fantasy" in the character of Stinkwood, who is not only a marionette, but also a dog. The audience's belief in the fantasy world is reinforced by the plot, which stresses the value of these "living puppets", and

introduces the antagonist or villain (Mister Big) who attempts to steal them and exploit them.

The magical world of the circus forms the *milieu* or environment for the action of the play, and has strongly influenced the design concept, which challenges the imaginative insight of the young audiences through "suggestion". Costumes, setting and properties are suggested through selected details, and the main design feature is a revolving sign on the centre-post which denotes each respective scene, and is changed by the characters in full view of the audience.

Extensive use is made of various forms of audience participation, including spontaneous and directed participation, and an innovative use is made of musical participation to evoke the sensation and the experience of travelling.

The "living tradition" of the Commedia dell'Arte in this play, has been fully explored in the foregoing chapters; the use of "stock" characters, and more significantly the reappearance of these characters in successive plays, reinforces the tradition of the Commedia dell'Arte. The frequent incorporation of *lazzi*, with a strong visual or movement emphasis, further reinforces the tradition.

The second play included in the appendix, and frequently referred to in this thesis, is entitled SAMANTHA SEAL. The focus in this play is on "animal fantasy"; the major characters in the play are animals: Samantha Seal, who speaks with a pronounced lisp, her uncle Wally the Walrus, full of wise "saws", and the chattering, precocious Seagull.

But the main focus of the play is Samantha's quest - the quest for "respect and consideration". The play introduces young people to issues such as the

culling of seals, and indirectly reinforces such values as compassion and consideration for all living things.

Audience participation forms a critical part of this play: the audience is required to give the final verdict, as the jury.

One of the major challenges for the playwright lies in avoiding any didactic overtones. This is accomplished largely through creating characters with which the young members of the audience are able to identify, and through the introduction of such comic, "stock" characters as Captain Bludgeon and Willie Whatsis.

The design concept in this play has also featured in the foregoing chapters: a white silk parachute is transformed into an ice-pool. An extended *lazzo*, or comic routine takes place on the ice, which again has a strong visual or movement focus, requiring skilled visualisation from the performers.

The final play is entitled THE TRIALS OF KEENO, and is based on an extant Commedia scenario entitled THE DISGUISES OF ARLECCHINO. The target audience for the previous two plays comprised the audience of six-, seven- and eight-year-olds, while THE TRIALS OF KEENO was intended for children who are in Senior Primary Schools (standards two to five) and even audiences of young teenagers.

As stated in the foregoing chapters, all the characters in the play were modelled on clearly recognisable "stock" characters of the Commedia dell'Arte, while the plot, which is based on intrigue, trickery and mistaken identity, follows closely the pattern of the typical Commedia scenari.

Two elements of the production which further reinforce its affinity with the popular Italian comedy, are the musical sub-text and the use of mime and movement. Every important action and reaction is reinforced musically with the appropriate sounds. Thus when Cherry speaks to the caged canary in a sustained monologue, its response is conveyed by the pianist with appropriate trills on the piano, or when Keeno drops the trunk on Brock's foot, the pianist expresses the musical counterpoint to the action, which includes Brock's agonised hopping on one leg.

More than this, the pianist becomes a character, not a musician ignored or excluded from the action by the other characters, but responding musically and sometimes evoking a direct dramatic response from the characters, as when Keeno in a fit of pique, storms to the piano and demands that the pianist stop playing.

The use of mime and movement is also a key element in the production of this play, since all the properties are mimed. This demands a skilled control of movement by the performers who have to move from the comparative security of a fairly predictable audience response, based on exploiting the comic possibilities of a situation where the comic business depends on a specific prop or article, to the insecurity of attempting to mime the article without diminishing the comedy. An example of this is when Keeno, endeavouring to formulate a scheme whereby he can trick Brock out of some of his money, calls for "inspiration from above". Brock, who has appeared impatiently on the balcony above, empties the contents of a chamber-pot on Keeno's head. In a conventional rendering of this business, the audience response would depend

primarily on seeing the chamber-pot, anticipating the effect of its contents on the unsuspecting Keeno, and then savouring the event. In a mimed version the nature of the container and its contents would only become apparent to the audience during Keeno's reaction and the musical expression of it. The whole episode has now developed into the creation of a detailed *lazzo* for the character.

Finally, it should be reiterated that the texts for the three plays for young audiences above, comprise only the blueprint for performance. They have to be animated through imaginative characterisation and the skilled use of movement. This is true of all theatre, but more so in Theatre for Young Audiences where the visual dimension of the action is of paramount importance.



APPENDIX NO. 1

**the amazing adventures of**  
**TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET**

**by**  
**Pieter Scholtz**

**Amstel Playwrights Award 1979**

# THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET

A Play for Young Audiences by Pieter Scholtz

## CHARACTERS

MR. MARIO NETTE, better known as Pappa Mario.

BUTTONS, a Policeman Clown.

TAMBOOTIE, a girl puppet with a mind of her own.

BILLY, her friend.

OU PIERRE, a Gamaat Pierrot puppet.

STINKWOOD, a dog puppet with an inferiority complex.

PITZI, } twin girl puppets.

CATO, }

MR. BIG, a villainous Circus-master.

M.T.WESSELS, a bilingual auctioneer.

BRUNO, a mute Lion-tamer.

SYBIL, } two beach-belles.

VICTORIA, }

CECIL, a T.V.Cameraman.

## ACT ONE

*The setting, which is permanent throughout, represents a circus ring. A boldly patterned, circular floor-cloth defines the ring.*

*A double row of raised seating (rostra) creates a semi-circular barrier around the upstage perimeter of the ring. Two breaks in the seating provide upstage entrances.*

*Six poles are fixed to the seating, in a semi-circle, with coloured lights strung between them. A taller centre-post stands in the centre of the circus ring.*

*From the top of the centre-post, to the top of each surrounding pole, radiate lengths of cord, with bright triangular flags attached.*

*The coloured lights, the bunting and the poles create a skeletal representation of a circus tent.*

*A large sign-board, which can be revolved, is attached to the centre-post. On both sides are several signs which can be lifted off to reveal other signs beneath.*

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##### SCENE ONE: THE AUCTION SALE

*The sign reads: "M.T. WESSELS AUCTIONEERS (PROPERLY) LTD."*

*Upstage centre is a wooden cart, on which is mounted a puppet theatre. The puppet theatre is basically a large wooden box, about one metre across and two metres high. Two doors, painted like curtains are set in the lower half of the side facing the audience. The theatre is divided into two compartments; one at the back for the puppeteer, with a door on either side, and one in front, with the "Curtain-Doors", for the suspended puppet. Faded gold lettering across the front proclaims: "Mr. Mario Nette's Puppet Theatre". The paintwork is scarred, the theatre has an air of neglect.*

*Nearby i. a small table on which is a black top-hat.*

*Pappa Mario bustles in from the back. He is a large, friendly man with white hair and spectacles, who seems to have stepped straight out of an Italian comic opera. He wears an embroidered waist-coat and knee-breeches with long stockings and large boots.*

**PAPPA MARIO:** Mamma Mia! What a gathering! What a crowd! What a multitude! What a catastrophe! I was hoping to get here early, before anyone, to take one last look at my theatre. And instead, I'm the last one here. I can't believe it! Hundreds of you, like little ants around the honey-pot, all waiting for the auction sale.

*(Squints at the sign short-sightedly)*

"M.T. Wessels, Auctioneers" Humph! Do you know what they are selling here? I'll tell you. They are selling my little theatre, my magnificent Puppet-Theatre! Believe it or not, I am Mario Nette at your service. At least I used to be at your service. Nowadays ... well, as you can see I'm down and out, scraping the bottom! Forced to sell everything lock, stock and barrel. But once, ah! once

not so long ago, Mario Nette's Puppet Theatre played to packed houses. Children used to queue all day for a seat.

*(He moves back to the theatre)*

Roll up! Roll up! See the one and only Mario Nette and his puppets! I've travelled the world. I've travelled to towns you've never heard of before. Olifantsfontein! Pampoenpoort! Pofadder! Stinkdoring!

*(He sighs)*

Forgive me. Memories are all I have left now.

*(He closes the front curtain of the puppet-theatre)*

Do you know that each one of my puppets was hand-carved. Each character grew out of the wood, as if my chisel was uncovering a sleeping figure and freeing it. But I've had to sell them one by one, my own children! And with each one a spark was lost and my eyes grew dimmer. Except for my favourite, my little Tambootie. I couldn't bear to part with her. Oh no! She gave me a lot of trouble. So stubborn! She wouldn't wake up out of the tambootie log. Just lay there. Until I carved a little turned-up nose for her. I even imagined I heard her complain as I whittled away, "My nose is too big! How dare you put a potato where my nose should be!" And then her legs. Mamma Mia! "I want to dance," she said. "How can I dance with legs like bananas!" And so I chiselled and carved, I filed and sand-papered until she was satisfied. "About time!" was all she said, when I introduced her to my other children. Oh! she's a character. I wish you could see her. She's there behind the curtain. And now she has to be sold too. But here I am chattering away, boring you with an old man's dreams. I came to have one last look at my little bambino, my headstrong Tambootie.

*Billy enters through the auditorium, out of breath.*

**BILLY:** Am I too late? Is this the Open-Air Theatre? *(Or whatever name is appropriate).* Have you sold it yet? Am I too late?

*(He runs to Pappa Mario)*

**PAPPA MARIO:** Are you asking me?

**BILLY:** Aren't you the auctioneer?

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**PAPPA MARIO:** My dear young friend, I'm afraid you are mistaken. I am not the auctioneer.

**BILLY:** What are you doing up there then?

**PAPPA MARIO:** Just reminiscing! A sentimental old man who cannot understand the tricks of this world.

**BILLY:** Then it hasn't started yet. What a relief.

**PAPPA MARIO:** I shouldn't really be here. In fact I must leave you now.  
*(He starts going).*

**BILLY:** You see, I saw this advertisement in the paper, here it is. *(He takes out a cutting and reads)* "Insolvent Estate, Mario Nette Esquire."

**PAPPA MARIO:** *(Turning back)* Insolvent Estate! What a joke! There! That is my whole estate!

**BILLY:** "M.T. Wessels, Auctioneer, offers for sale without reserve, to the highest bidder, a magnificent Puppet Theatre ....

**PAPPA MARIO:** My bread and butter!

**BILLY:** .... and two puppets, extremely lifelike, carved by the maestro himself."

**PAPPA MARIO:** Two puppets? Of course, how could I forget Stinkwood!

**BILLY:** Stinkwood?

**PAPPA MARIO:** Yes! You see I told these young people here about Tambootie, but I quite forgot Stinkwood.

**BILLY:** The two puppets?

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**PAPPA MARIO:** More like my own children. Stinkwood was adopted. The only one I didn't carve myself. He was given to me by an old farmer who saw us perform in Pampoenpoort.

**BILLY:** A girl puppet and a boy puppet?

**PAPPA MARIO:** No, no! A dog! Stinkwood is a dog. Carved out of stinkwood. But he only speaks Afrikaans, like the old man who gave him to me.

**BILLY:** Really?

**PAPPA MARIO:** Yes. And he's very touchy if you mention the word 'Stinkwood'!

**BILLY:** Oh please! Could I see them Mr. Mario. That is your name isn't it?

**PAPPA MARIO:** The one and only my boy.

**BILLY:** You see, I've always wanted puppets of my own. I've saved up my pocket money for months now and I've got exactly (*takes money from his pocket*) three Rands and forty one, two, three, four ... five cents. And when I saw the advertisement ...

**PAPPA MARIO:** Well ... I don't know ... if the auctioneer comes in we'll be in trouble. Besides all these young people have come to the auction sale ....

**BILLY:** But I'm sure they want to see the puppets too! You do, don't you?

**PAPPA MARIO:** Well all right. But we'll have to be quick. (*He moves to the theatre*) Now if you will open the front curtain for me. Just wait until I'm in the theatre. (*He climbs up into the Puppet Theatre*) Thank you. Ladies and Gentlemen, Tambootie the Puppet!

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*Billy opens the doors and then joins the audience. Tambootie's lines are spoken by the actress, concealed in the puppet theatre, who also manipulates the strings. She should be identical to the puppet in every respect.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Hello! How's your uncle!

**BILLY:** Is she talking to me?

**TAMBOOTIE:** `Course I'm talking to you! What are you gaping at Pumpkin-face? Never seen a lady before? Lost your tongue?

**BILLY:** Mr Mario is that your voice ....

**TAMBOOTIE:** You're not very bright are you! Shame!

**BILLY:** Well you're just a wooden puppet!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Oooh! Don't get upset Pumpkin-face. I'm here to help you. Try on that top-hat for size. You'll be surprised at the difference it'll make to your intelligence. Take my advice, it's free! Bye now!

*She disappears. Mario Nette steps into view.*

**BILLY:** Mr. Mario .....

**PAPPA MARIO:** Quite a handful isn't she. I warned you!

**BILLY:** But that wasn't your voice was it? And what did she mean about the top hat?

**PAPPA MARIO:** Now where is Stinkwood? That dog is always up to some mischief. *(Calling)* Stinkwood! Stinkwood!

**BILLY:** But isn't it a puppet?

**PAPPA MARIO:** He steals anything he can lay his teeth on. Socks, slippers, umbrellas, you name it!



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*Mr M.T. Wessels bustles onstage. He is clutching his trousers with one hand.*

**M T WESSELS:** What's going on here! Hey? Wat soek julle hierso?

**PAPPA MARIO:** We were just ....

**M T WESSELS:** *(He seizes Mario Nette)* No excuse hey! I caught you in the act! With red hands! Interfering with sale property. Loop hier weg of ek roep die polisie! Trap! *(He pushes them both off the stage. His trousers fall down. He pulls them up)* Ladies and Gentlemen, Dames en Here, I am M.T. Wessels your friendly auctioneer. All sales conducted in both official languages and without reserves as advertised! Dames en Here ek vra om verskoning vir die kort vertraging. *(He hitches up his trousers again)* As you can see a small catastrophe occurred which caused me to be late - I refer to my braces which unaccountably have disappeared! Sowaar! Terwyl ek geslaap het. Now dear friends, liewe vriende, if you will be patient just a few minutes longer while I fetch some string from my office next door, to restore my dignity, so to speak, then we will begin the sale of this magnificent puppet theatre and accessories. Bly sit asseblief dames en here, ek sal gou weer terug wees! *(He exits clutching his trousers)*

**PAPPA MARIO:** *(From the auditorium)* Well my young friend, that's it. I'm afraid I had better move on. I can't afford to get into any more trouble. Perhaps we'll meet again. You never know! Good luck and goodbye.

**BILLY:** Wait Mr. Mario! Do you think I have enough money to buy your puppets? I've never been to an auction sale before.

**PAPPA MARIO:** I would be happier if I knew you were looking after them. But you see, I can't think of my children as so much money, or so much money. They are part of me.

**BILLY:** Yes, of course. I'm sorry.

**PAPPA MARIO:** Why not take Tambootie's advice - try on this top-hat.

**BILLY:** The top-hat?

**PAPPA MARIO:** It belonged to an Indian magician, Allah Kazam. He used to travel around with us. He called it his 'higher intelligence.' When he had it on, he said he could solve any riddle, settle any problem. And now farewell my boy. Arrividerci! We will meet again. *(He exits)*

**BILLY:** Goodbye Mr. Mario. *(He takes out the money)* Three Rands and forty five cents! What should I do? Shall I try on the top-hat? But what if the auctioneer comes back and catches me! I'd better be quick about it. *(He climbs onto the stage)* I'll do anything to have my own puppets. Though I don't see how wearing this old top-hat will help! Well here goes! *(He faces the audience and puts on the top-hat)* I feel stupid wearing this old top-hat! I feel .... *(sound cue)* .... light headed! I feel strange, as if my head were growing bigger! I'm getting taller. I think it's working! *(Suddenly very businesslike)* Now what's the problem? Ah yes! The auction sale! No problem at all. This sale is without reserve - that means they have to accept the highest bid, whatever it is, as long as there are at least two people bidding! Now you'll have to help me! Will you? Good! Someone will have to start the bidding. Who will start the bidding? *(Selects someone in the audience)* When I give a sign - I'll sneeze - then you shout out 'one rand'! Will you do that? Good! Then I'll bid 'two rands'! *(Selecting someone else)* I'll sneeze again, then you bid 'three rands', all right? Then I'll give the final bid, 'three rands and forty five cents' and he'll have to sell it to me! Can't fail! Now, let's go over it again. *(He repeats the sequence with demonstrations.)* Now I'd better join you down there before the auctioneer comes back. *(Takes off hat - sound cue.)* My head! It's shrinking! *(Shakes his head)* What a strange sensation!

**M T WESSELS:** *(Shouting offstage)* Mathilde waar is my hammer?

**BILLY:** Here he comes! Make room, I'm coming to join you.

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*He nips into a seat in the auditorium. Mr Wessels enters with a hammer. His trousers are tied with string.*

**M T WESSELS:** Hoeveelmaal moet ek vir jou sê! Die hammer is nie vir die kombuis nie! *(To audience)* Excuse me hey, just minor domestic complications. Nou ja! Ladies and gentlemen, dames en here, these magnificent items before your eyes will go under the hammer. They will be offered for sale without reserve. *(He bangs on the table with his hammer)* What am I offered for this Puppet Theatre, in brand new condition, complete with accessories, including one female puppet - waar is sy? *(Holding up Tambootie)* Aha! Kyk net hoe fraai! And one dog puppet, *(searching)* somewhere here! Never mind! We'll throw in the top-hat. Shall we say twenty rands for the lot? *(Pause)* Well then, eighteen rands? A bargain at eighteen rands! *(Pause)* Kom nou dames en here, agtien rand!

*Billy sneezes.*

**AUDIENCE:** One rand!

**M T WESSELS:** Een rand! *(Laughs)* Julle skeer seker die gek met my nê?

**BILLY:** Two rands!

**M T WESSELS:** Wag nou! Wag nou! You can't be serious! Two rands? The cartage cost me double that.

*Billy sneezes*

**AUDIENCE:** Three rands!

**M T WESSELS:** Nee! Nee! Nee! Ek sal dit nie doen nie. I'm afraid I will have to withdraw these articles from the sale!

**BILLY:** You can't! It's without reserve! You advertised!

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**M T WESSELS:** Oh I did, did I? And who might you be? Who's going to listen to you? Klein snuiter! Weet jy wie ek is?

**BILLY:** M T Wessels!

**M T WESSELS:** M T Wessels! I'm a man of some importance around here - 'M T Wessels your friendly auctioneer!' M T Wessels ....

**BILLY:** Oh I've heard about you. They told us about you at school.

**M T WESSELS:** Wat?

**BILLY:** Yes, M T Wessels make the most noise!

**M T WESSELS:** Passop mannetjie, jy kry!

**BILLY:** If you don't go on with the sale, we'll all go to the police. All of us! Isn't that right?

**M T WESSELS:** *(Aside)* Klein niksnuts! All right! All right! I'm bid three rands, *(weakly)* drie rand!

**BILLY:** Three rands and forty five cents!

**M T WESSELS:** *(Hopelessly)* And forty five cents! I have a weak heart. Three rands and forty five cents I'm offered. Who will make it four? Did I hear four? *(Pause)* Any advances on three rands, forty five cents? *(Pause)* I'm going to end in the poorhouse! Going for the first time at three rands, forty five cents, going for the second time .... no further offers? Going for the third and last time at three rands and forty five cents ....

*He raises the hammer. Mr Big enters from the back of the auditorium. He is tall, bearded and wears a top-hat, a black cape and carries a cane. He is followed by Buttons, his personal bodyguard. Buttons is a policeman clown with large shiny buttons on his uniform. He clutches a black holdall and imitates Mr Big's walk and movements.*

**MR BIG:** Twenty five rands! (*He strides down the aisle.*)

**M T WESSELS:** Twenty five rands! Twenty five rands! That's more like it! A gentleman who appreciates value! (*Eager to close the deal*) No further offers? Going at twenty five rands! Going! Going! Gone! To the gentleman in the top-hat. (*Mr Big has mounted the stage*) Congratulations Mr .... sir. You've got a bargain. You won't regret it!

**MR BIG:** I never regret anything! I know what I want and I get it! I'm prepared to pay for it! Right Buttons?

**BUTTONS:** Left But-tins!

**MR BIG:** What?

**BUTTONS:** Mr Big right ... I mean Big Mr. Right ... I mean ... Right Mr Big ... Sir!

**MR BIG:** Right! I get what I want!

**M T WESSELS:** Of course. High finance hey? I can see you're a businessman Mr ... Mr?

**MR BIG:** Big! Mr Big! B for Better, I for Incredible and G for Great. This is Buttons my personal bodyguard.

**BUTTONS:** Personal Bobbyguard. (*He salutes and knocks his helmet off. He giggles.*)

**MR BIG:** Buttons!

**BUTTONS:** (*calling*) But-tins!

**MR BIG:** (*Raising his cane*) Behave yourself or you'll feel my stick!

**BUTTONS:** Oooh! Yes sir, Mr Big Stick sir, sorry sir! And you too Mr Watchamacallit sir. But-tins appollonollogises. (*Holding out his hand*) How-di-dooo sir, Mr Watchamacallit sir.

*M T Wessels reaches out to shake his hand, Buttons withdraws his hand. M T Wessels withdraws his hand, Buttons holds out his hand. This is repeated several times, accompanied by Buttons.*

**BUTTONS:** Di-dooo! di-dooo! di-dooo!

**MR BIG:** Buttons! *(He wallops him on the bottom with the cane sending him sprawling.)* I don't want the rest of this rubbish, just the two puppets. The rest you can give away or throw away. Now I'll want a receipt. Money Buttons!

**BUTTONS:** *(Opening the holdall and taking out a handful of notes)* Money But-tins! Funny But-tins! Funny money But-tins.

**M T WESSELS:** Just step this way Mr Big, into my office, and we'll settle the deal.

**MR BIG:** *(Grabbing the money from Buttons)* Well get on with it man!

**M T WESSELS:** After you sir! *(Mr Big exits followed by M T Wessels.)*

**BUTTONS:** *(Facing audience)* About turn! *(He does a 360° turn to face the audience again).* Oooh! Wrong way! Silly But-tins! *(Imitating Mr Big)* Well, get on with it man! About half-turn! *(He manages it this time).*

**MR BIG:** *(Calling)* Buttons!

**BUTTONS:** *(Calling)* But-tins! Here! Clickety march! *(He exits)*

**BILLY:** Mr Big! Mr Big Mouth more like it, with all his money. 'I get what I want!' I bet he does. But one day there will be something he can't buy. Well, I might as well go! There's nothing more I can do here. My few rands didn't get me very far. Oh, by the way, thank you all for trying to help me.

*He starts up the aisle. The actress Tambootie pops her head out from behind the side-door of the theatre.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Hey Pumpkin face! *(She disappears)*

**BILLY:** *(Turning)* What was that? Did someone call me 'Pumpkin-face'?

**AUDIENCE:** *Responds.*

**BILLY:** It couldn't have been the puppet. You see when a puppet speaks it's really the puppeteer speaking - Mr Mario. And he's gone now. It was one of you! I don't think it's very funny! *(He starts towards the exit again).*

**TAMBOOTIE:** *(Appearing)* Hello! How's your uncle? *(Disappears again)*

**BILLY:** *(Turns sharply)* Stop it! Stop playing tricks! I'm not stupid you know.

**TAMBOOTIE:** *(Appearing)* You're not very bright are you? *(Disappears)*

**BILLY:** There is someone in there! It's one of you isn't it? Crept in there when I wasn't looking! Well, I'll teach you to play tricks on me. *(He strides onto the stage)* Come out, I know you're there!

*As he puts his head in at one side of the theatre, Tambootie nips out the other side. Billy climbs in through one door and out through the other, while Tambootie circles around keeping on the opposite side of the theatre.*

**BILLY:** Nobody! Not even the puppets! There's something very strange going on here.

*With prompting from the audience, Billy circles the theatre. Tambootie moves with him to keep the theatre between them. Finally she ends up behind him. Prompted by the audience again, he whirls around to look behind him, then turns to face the audience again. Tambootie manages to move with him, keeping well behind him.*

**BILLY:** The only place I haven't looked yet is under the theatre! *(He kneels down and peers under the cart.)*

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*Behind him*) Hello! How's your uncle!

**BILLY:** (*Banging his head*) Don't do that! Who are you?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Don't be tiresome! You know who I am. We haven't much time? We must escape before he comes back!

**BILLY:** Before who comes back?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Before Mr Big comes back, that's who.

**BILLY:** Mr Big?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Yes, Mr Big, the Circusmaster. Mr Big the slavedriver! Mr Big who bought my sisters and my brother and now thinks he can buy me. For twenty five rands! Cheek!

**BILLY:** Now wait a minute ....

**TAMBOOTIE:** Not to mention the three rands and forty five cents you offered!

**BILLY:** I said wait a minute! Are you trying to tell me that you ... that the puppet Tambootie ...

**TAMBOOTIE:** And what's wrong with being a puppet?

**BILLY:** What's wrong with being a puppet! I can't believe it! I mean you're wearing the same dress and you look like ... well like that puppet, but ...

**TAMBOOTIE:** Oh do stop jabbering. They'll be back any minute and then it will be too late! Now where's that dog Stinkwood? (*She searches behind the puppet theatre*) He's always stealing things. He can't resist it, canine delinquent! (*She puts her fingers to her mouth and whistles like a boy*).

**BILLY:** I must be dreaming.



**TAMBOOTIE:** Where are you?

*Stinkwood bounds in with M T Wessels's braces in his mouth. He lies down and starts shaking the braces like a snake.*

**BILLY:** I am dreaming!

**TAMBOOTIE:** There you are! Come along leave those braces. We're going to run away.

**BILLY:** Stinkwood! (*Stinkwood growls*) But that was the name of the other puppet, the dog that Mr Mario said was carved out of stinkwo ....

**TAMBOOTIE:** Shsh!

*(Stinkwood growls again)*

If you want to be friends with him, don't say that word. He's got a complex. Now quick! Take the top-hat and let's go!

**BILLY:** The top-hat? But why?

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*Exasperated*) Why! Why! Why! Because its an unusual hat that's why! You've tried it haven't you? You saw what it did! Because Mr Big Mouth doesn't know it is! Because you're stupid and need it that's why! Can't you do anything but ask questions?

**BILLY:** I'm not stupid!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Oh come on! (*She takes the hat. Buttons enters*).

**BUTTONS:** Fetch the puppets But-tins! Do this But-tins! Do that But-tins! Yes sir, Mr Big! Yes Mr Big Pig sir! Oooh! Stick But-tins?! On the bot-tim, But-tins.

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*Taking his hand*) Run Pumpkin-face! (*She pulls him up the aisle towards the exit*).

**BILLY:** But I don't understand!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Don't try, just run. *(They exit)*.

**BUTTONS:** *(Waving)* Bye, Bye, toodle-oo! Hello dog! What you got there? *(Stinkwood growls)* Oooh! It's elastimatic for hanging pants on. Let me see. *(He picks up one end, Stinkwood backs away growling)*. Let's play tug-of-war! *(He backs away)* Pull But-tins! Stretch But-tins! Tug-some-more But-tins!

*Mr Big enters.*

**MR BIG:** Buttons! I thought I told you to fetch the puppets! *(He trips over the braces which are now stretched taught. Stinkwood lets the braces go. They pang Buttons on the chest. Stinkwood runs out after the others)*.

**BUTTONS:** Oooh! He panged me! Naughty dog! *(He staggers into Mr Big who is scrambling up. They both collapse)*.

**MR BIG:** Buttons! You idiot! You imbecile! What are you doing?

**BUTTONS:** Sorry Mr Big sir! Mr Big imbecile sir! It was the elastimatic! It panged me! Like this Mr Big sir. *(He pangs Mr Big with the braces)*.

**MR BIG:** Buttons! *(He wallops Buttons with the cane)* Just you wait till we get back to the circus! Bread and water for two days! Where are the puppets? I told you to fetch them! *(He strides to the Puppet Theatre and starts searching. M T Wessels enters.)*

**BUTTONS:** Bread and water!

**M T WESSELS:** My kruisbande! Gee hierso! *(He takes one end)* Give them to me. *(He pulls)*

**BUTTONS:** Shan't. *(He steps away)*

**M T WESSELS:** They're mine! Let go! *(He steps away)*

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**BUTTONS:** Shan't! *(Another step)*

**M T WESSELS:** Let go! *(Another step)*

**BUTTONS:** All right! *(He lets go. They pang M T Wessels on the chest.)*

**M T WESSELS:** Eina!

**MR BIG:** *(Emerging from the puppet theatre)* They've gone! They've disappeared! Where are my puppets? I've paid you for them, they're my property!

**M T WESSELS:** *(Putting on his braces)* Dis nie my skuld nie! Hulle was daar! In die Poppeteater! Agter die gordyn. They must still be there. *(He searches in the Puppet Theatre).*

**MR BIG:** *(Ominously)* Buttons?

**BUTTONS:** Oh no Mr Big sir! I didn't take them Sir! Cross my heart and hope to fly sir! But-tins, you said, fetch the puppets! And that's what I did Mr Big sir! I came and then 'pang', the naughty dog ... with elastimatic! Ping! Pang! Pong!

**MR BIG:** Dog? What dog?

**BUTTONS:** The naughty dog. *(Pointing)* It escapulated sir! With the funny lady.

**M T WESSELS:** *(Emerging)* Not a trace! Hulle's gesteel! Ons moet die polisie roep. *(To audience)* Did any of you witness a theft here while we was conducting business next door? Well speak up!

**AUDIENCE:** *(Responds)*

**MR BIG:** Right! Buttons we must catch them! Nobody makes a fool of Mr Big! And when I catch them, they'll wish they'd never been carved! Which way did they go?

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**BUTTONS:** Which way? This way? no! That way? Ooooh! Think But-tins. Eenie, meenie, minie .....

**M T WESSELS:** But these were puppets Mr Big, dolls, not living things!

**MR BIG:** Never mind. Here's ten rands *(takes a note out of the holdall)* Forget everything that happened here. I'll take care of it!

**M T WESSELS:** O dankie meneer! *(Aside)* Hy's getik!

**MR BIG:** *(To Buttons who is still pointing out various directions)* Come along you imbecile, lets get after them!

**M T WESSELS:** Ekskuus meneer, but what about this accessory here - the Puppet Theatre?

**MR BIG:** Oh keep it, or burn it! What do I care! *(To the audience)* Now, which way did they go? You must have seen them, you've been sitting here all along. Which way did they go?

**AUDIENCE:** *(Responds)*

**MR BIG:** Thank you very much! You all think I'm stupid don't you? Think I'm a fool? I'm way ahead of you! Oho! I'm too sharp for you brats! If you say they went that way, then they must have gone the other way! You have to get up early to catch me out. Come on Buttons! *(He strides up the aisle).*

**BUTTONS:** Coming Boss!

**M T WESSELS:** *(Pushing out the Puppet Theatre)* Tot siens meneer!

**BUTTONS:** Coming Mr Big Boss! *(He takes out a large magnifying glass)* But-tins the fearless bobby-guard on the track! *(He peers at the audience through the magnifying glass as he moves up the aisle).* Sniffing the scent! Tracking the track! Collecting the clews! *(He peers at somebody in the audience).* Oooh! What an ugly face! *(Mr Big has returned and stands over Buttons. Buttons peers at his boots)*

*through the magnifying glass*) Hey Mr Boss! Mr Big Boss sir! But-tins has found some ugly boots sir! Belonging to some ugly legs! It must be a criminiminal!

**MR BIG:** (*Dangerously*) Buttons, if you don't behave, I'll confiscate your helmet and your magnifying glass! Now get up at once!

**BUTTONS:** (*Peering up at Mr Big through the magnifying glass*) Sorry Mr Big nose sir! Please don't confishiate my hel-mit sir. Pa-leeze sir, Mr Big!

**MR BIG:** Oh stop whining. I can't stand it. And do behave like a bobbyguard - I mean a bodyguard. Now come along.

*(He strides up the aisle and exits).*

**BUTTONS:** Yes sir! At once sir! At the double sir! At the double bubble sir! About half-turn! Clickety-march! (*He marches up onto the stage*) Lip-la, lip-la, lip-la (*He bangs into the centre-post*) But-tins, halt! (*He examines the sign with his magnifying glass*) Oooh! A clew! (*He turns the sign around. On the reverse side is printed:*

#### AUDITIONS

*For Mr Big's famous circus troupe*

*One female singer/dancer*

*One male magician*

*Big salaries - apply within*

**BUTTONS:** See! Audimissions! That's the next scene! (*Imitating Mr Big*) Get a move on But-tins! I'll confishiate your hel-mit! Coming Mr Big Wig sir! (*He runs up the aisle*) At the double-bubble!

*(He exits).*

**SCENE TWO : MR BIG'S CARAVAN**

*Circus music. A caravan is wheeled in by Pitzi and Cato. The caravan is a painted cartoon-style cut-out, but the wheels and the door are real.*

*They then fetch two folding canvas chairs and a folding table from the caravan and place them centre. One of the chairs has "Mr Big" printed on the back. Pitzi and Cato are twin puppets, dressed identically. Their movements are neat and precise. As the music stops, Pitzi flops into one of the chairs.*

**PITZI:** I'm pooped, that's what I am. Fagged out!

**CATO:** *(Also flopping)* Work, work, work from morning till night.

**PITZI:** He's cruel that's what he is!

**CATO:** Cruel and heartless!

**PITZI:** Heartless and cruel! And if we don't do what he says ....

**CATO:** Bread and water! And the big stick!

**PITZI:** Water and bread for a week! *(Howls)* I'm so miserable!

**CATO:** *(Howls)* Me too! So unhappy!

**PITZI:** So depressed!

**CATO:** So sad!

*Ou Pierre, carrying a slap-stick, enters on roller-skates.*

**OU PIERRE:** Hey! Wat makeer met die long faces? Waarom driz julle so heh?

**PITZI:** Oh go away!

**CATO:** Can't you see we're upset!

**OU PIERRE:** Ja ek is fully aware dis net snot en trane. Maar why?

**PITZI:** Why? (*Standing*) Because we've lost our father.

**PITZI:** Because we'd rather go back to being puppets that's why!

**OU PIERRE:** Ja ek's in die same boat. Pappa Mario is mos ook my pa of hoe? Maar daar's geen remedy nie!

**PITZI:** And we're frightened!

**CATO:** Of Mr. Big's stick!

**OU PIERRE:** Moenie worry nie. As hy julle molest dan slaat ek hom plat met my slap-stick. Sommer bif-bam, bif-bam! (*He demonstrates by whacking the table, the chairs and the air around him.*) En daar lê hy, plat op sy ga ....

**PITZI & CATO:** Oooh!

**OU PIERRE:** .... gasig!

**PITZI:** Loud mouth! You're always boasting!

**CATO:** Nothing but hot air!

**PITZI:** When Mr Big speaks it's nothing but ja my baas, nee my baas!

**CATO:** Anything you say my baas!

**OU PIERRE:** Julle lieg!

**PITZI:** Oh Pierre what are we going to do?

**CATO:** How can we escape from Mr Big?

**OU PIERRE:** Hey! Mr Big! Hy's due back any minute! (*Pointing to the sign*) Die auditions!

**PITZI:** And we haven't rehearsed our new routine!

**CATO:** He'll beat us till we splinter!

**OU PIERRE:** *(Voices off)* Hier kom hy nou! Kom ons waai! *(He skates off).*

**PITZI & CATO:** Wait for us! *(They exit after him)*

*Tambootie and Billy enter from the auditorium. Tambootie still has the top-hat.*

**BILLY:** You mean that Mr Big ruined Mr Mario ... your father, so that he would be forced to sell his puppets ... children?

**TAMBOOTIE:** That's what I've just told you! What's wrong with your ears Pumpkin-face? He spread rumours, tore down our posters, even paid some bully's to cause disturbances during our performances, until finally, nobody would watch us. Poor Pappa Mario, got deeper into debt, until at last he was forced to sell my sisters and my brother! And Mr Big was ready with his money.

**BILLY:** I still can't believe that you're a wooden puppet!

**TAMBOOTIE:** You're not so good looking yourself, Pumpkin-face!

**BILLY:** I mean how did you become human? All of you? And you're much bigger than a puppet.

**TAMBOOTIE:** That's something I can't tell you. You'll have to find out, for yourself. But we're wasting time. We must find Pitzi and Cato and Pierre. I know he's holding them prisoner!

**BILLY:** Well, there's no sign of them around here!

**TAMBOOTIE:** No sign of them .... sign! What do you think this is?

**BILLY:** What?



**TAMBOOTIE:** This!

**BILLY:** That? That's a sign post.

**TAMBOOTIE:** Exactly.

**BILLY:** Exactly what?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Oh read it nit-wit!

**BILLY:** I wish you wouldn't call me names. My name is Billy!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Billy? I prefer Pumpkin-face!

**BILLY:** That's not funny!

**TAMBOOTIE:** It's not meant to be! Read it!

**BILLY:** I mean, I have a nick-name, but I don't like that either!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Oh you are infuriating! Read it!

**BILLY:** They call me silly instead of Billy sometimes because I take a while to think things out.

**TAMBOOTIE:** All right! Silly or Billy or Pumpkin-face, whatever you like. Read the sign!

**BILLY:** All right, there's no need to get excited! It says `Auditions for Mr Big's famous Circus Troupe. One female singer/dancer. One male magician ....

**TAMBOOTIE:** Well, don't you see?

**BILLY:** (*Looking around*) What?

**TAMBOOTIE:** No idiot! The sign! That means the circus must be nearby. `Apply within'! This must be Mr Big's caravan!

**BILLY:** Mr Big's caravan! Well let's get away from here! (*Starting to move*)

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*Grabbing him*) Oh don't be so wooden-headed!

**BILLY:** Well I like that! You're the one who's wooden-headed!

**TAMBOOTIE:** If the circus is nearby, then my sisters and my brother must be nearby too.

**BILLY:** But what can we do about it? Mr Big will be coming back soon and then we'll be in real trouble.

**TAMBOOTIE:** Poooh! He's just a big mouth! This is our chance to find out where they are! Where they're being kept prisoner!

**BILLY:** But how?

**TAMBOOTIE:** We .... are going to audition!

**BILLY:** We're going to what?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Audition! For those vacancies! I can sing and dance beautifully.

**BILLY:** But I'm not a magician!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Oh you'll get by. You're a bit ugly but you'll do! With my help! And the top-hat. Don't forget your higher intelligence! (*She holds the top-hat out to him*).

**BILLY:** No I won't. I don't like it one bit! Anyway he'll recognise us!

**TAMBOOTIE:** You really are a booby aren't you Pumpkin-face! He won't recognise us, he never saw us!

*Stinkwood runs down the aisle. He has a banana in his mouth.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Here's you know who! You took your time getting here!  
And where did you steal that banana? You really are a canine delinquent.

**BILLY:** A what?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Never mind.  
*(Stinkwood has settled down and is happily peeling the banana)*  
The trouble is you're a complication.

**STINKWOOD:** Is nie!

**BILLY:** He can talk! *(Stinkwood growls)*

**TAMBOOTIE:** We can audition. But what about him?

**BILLY:** *(In a huff)* He can be part of the Magician's act.

**TAMBOOTIE:** Pumpkin-face! You're full of surprises. That was an intelligent suggestion.

**BILLY:** Now you're being sarcastic!

**TAMBOOTIE:** I wouldn't dream of it! Really!

**BILLY:** He can be the whole Magician's act, as far as I'm concerned.

**TAMBOOTIE:** Nonsense! He will be part of the magician's act!

**STINKWOOD:** Wil nie! *(Tosses the banana skin over his shoulder and sniffs at the caravan wheels.)*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Now don't be difficult. It's the only way!

**STINKWOOD:** Sal nie! *(He runs off in search of further spoils)*

**BILLY:** He can really talk! It's amazing!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Well, he's a dog of few words! The trouble is ever since Ou Pierre was taken away, he's been difficult. They were close friends. Now he's obstinate and steals. It's psychological you know.

**BILLY:** Where did you learn all that?

**TAMBOOTIE:** I'm not just a pretty face. It's grain my boy, grain!

**BILLY:** You mean brain don't you?

**TAMBOOTIE:** No, I don't, I mean grain. Grain Power!

**BILLY:** Oh, I see!

**TAMBOOTIE:** No you don't! We're wasting time again! Stinkwood is out of the way for the time being. He'll be back later, so lets .....

*Mr Big's voice is heard offstage.*

**MR BIG:** Buttons! Stop lagging behind! Those are my footprints, idiot.

**TAMBOOTIE:** It's him! Mr Big! Quick let's join all these people who have come to audition. *(They move off the stage)*

**BILLY:** Do you think we have any chance with so many?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Positive thinking Pumpkin-face. Now sit! And shshsh!  
*(They sit amongst the audience)*

*Mr Big enters.*

**MR BIG:** Oh I'm in such a temper! I'm in such a fury! *(Bellows)*  
Buttons! *(He walks up and down fuming)* Of all the bumbling, incompetent, mentally-retarded nincompoops!  
*(Buttons enters, still with his eye glued to the magnifying glass)*  
Did you hear that?  
*(Buttons nods his head, then shakes it)*

*(Bellowing)* You're a bumbling, incompetent, mentally-retarded nincompoop.

*During the scene Mr Big strides up and down in anger. Just avoiding the banana skin each time without noticing it.*

**BUTTONS:** *(With wonderment)* Is that me?

**MR BIG:** Yes that's you!

**BUTTONS:** *(Exaggerated, embarrassed act - foot twisting, head hanging etc.)* Ooooh! Mr Big Bully sir! Thank you sir! But-tins is so happy!

**MR BIG:** It's not good, it's bad! It's the worst thing I can say!

**BUTTONS:** It is?

**MR BIG:** Yes it is!

**BUTTONS:** *(Tries it out)* Nin-com-poop?

**MR BIG:** You led us through a stormwater drain, up a dead-end street, down a manhole and into a ladies powder-room!

**BUTTONS:** *(Happily)* For criminiminals!

**MR BIG:** Yes! For two specific criminals and a dog! And what did you do?

**BUTTONS:** But-tins caught a bad dog with a man!

**MR BIG:** Yes, you tripped up a blind man being led by his guide-dog!

**BUTTONS:** And a lady criminiminal?

**MR BIG:** *(Sarcastically)* Certainly a lady, but not a criminal. In fact you jumped on an old lady taking her dog for a walk.

**BUTTONS:** Sorry Mr Big sir! Big sorry Mr sir! But-tins is mortified!

**MR BIG:** As a punishment I am confiscating your helmet and your magnifying glass!

**BUTTONS:** *(On his knees)* Pa-leeze Mr Big punishment sir, But-tins appollonologises!

**MR BIG:** You will hand them in at the office and tell those terrible twins and that lazy Pierrot that I will be with them shortly, and I expect their act to be perfect! Perfect do you hear! Otherwise it's bread and water and my big stick!

**BUTTONS:** *(Follows on knees)* Pa-leeze Mr Big Stick sir, don't confishiate But-tins hel-mit and maggi-frying glass!

**MR BIG:** Oh get up man, I can't stand being paw'd! Now do what I say while I get on with these auditions and see if there's anybody worth bothering about. *(He steps on the banana skin and falls flat on his back)* Aaaaah!  
*(Buttons starts laughing, then switches to a yawn as Mr Big catches him at it.)*  
Buttons!

**BUTTONS:** It wasn't me Mr Big banana sir! Promise! Cross my heart and hope to fly!

**MR BIG:** Well don't just stand there, help me up you nincompoop!  
*(Buttons helps him up and dusts him down)*  
Litterbugs! Ought to be locked up in jail! All right that's enough! That's enough! Now go about your business! And take that banana skin with you ... nincompoop!  
*(Buttons exits slowly, experimenting with the word.)*

**BUTTONS:** Nin-com-poop! Nin-com-poop! Nin-com- *(He blows a raspberry and exits.)*

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**MR BIG:** *(Does a double-take, then addresses the audience)* Due to unforeseen circumstances, two artists for whom I was negotiating, have let me down at the last moment and I am forced to search for talent. Now pay attention! I want to warn you that my standards are high. H.I.G.H. in capitals! Nothing but the best for S.O. Big Esquire! So don't waste my time if you're not outstanding! Understood! Now will all those who still feel they want to audition step up here, while I fetch my file and papers. And don't dawdle, my time is valuable! *(He exits into the caravan)*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Here pumpkin-face, put on the hat and lets go onto the stage.

**BILLY:** I won't! I'm not going to make a fool of myself and get a beating into the bargain!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Don't be such a ninny. All you have to do when it's your turn, is to put on your higher intelligence, here it is - your top-hat and things will work out, you'll see!

**BILLY:** *(He takes the top-hat)* But I don't know any magic tricks!

**TAMBOOTIE:** *(To audience)* You believe he can do it don't you?

**AUDIENCE:** *(Responds)*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Then help me persuade him. Repeat after me: 'Don't be a silly Billy, use your higher intelligence.'

**AUDIENCE:** *(Responds)* Mr Big enters during the noise.

**MR BIG:** What's going on here? What's all this noise? Be quiet at once!  
*(Pause)* Any more of that and I'll send you all packing! Now who is auditioning? *(He takes off his top-hat, places it on the edge of the table, then sits and arranges papers).*

**TAMBOOTIE:** We are! *(Takes Billy's hand and drags him onto the stage)*  
Hello! How's your uncle?

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**MR BIG:** Impertinent! And who else? *(Pause)* Come along, surely there must be somebody else? *(Pause)* Frightened you off did I? Good! I haven't time to waste! *(To Tambootie)* Now what's your name?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Tammy!

**MR BIG:** Tammy?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Short for Tambootie! It's Italian!

**MR BIG:** *(Writing)* Stupid name! What do you do?

**TAMBOOTIE:** I dance and sing!

**MR BIG:** You'd better be good! *(To Billy)* And you?

**BILLY:** *(Desperately)* I'm a magician!

**TAMBOOTIE:** And he can solve any riddle! His name is Riddles!

**BILLY:** What?

**MR BIG:** Well we'll soon see about that! *(Writes)* 'Riddles!'

**TAMBOOTIE:** And he wears a top-hat, it's part of his act!

**MR BIG:** I'm not interested in his sartorial habits! Just get on with it! Who's first?

**TAMBOOTIE:** I'll go first!

**MR BIG:** Haven't I seen you somewhere before?

**TAMBOOTIE:** No! No you haven't! I haven't seen you before so you couldn't have seen me.

*Buttons enters with a crash-helmet.*

**BUTTONS:** Mr Big audimission sir!



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**MR BIG:** Buttons! I don't like interruptions! What is it? (*Looking up*)  
And what's that ridiculous thing on your head?

**BUTTONS:** Sorry for the eruptions Mr Big sir. But-tins is now a traffic  
Bobby-guard. (*Proudly*) My new smash hel-mit sir! But-tins ree-  
porting for beauty sir!

**MR BIG:** (*Ominously*) I'll attend to you later. Sit down while I finish  
these auditions. (*To Tambootie*) Now get on with it!

*Buttons sits cross-legged in front of the table, almost underneath it.  
Tambootie launches into her song and tap dance routine. Musical  
backing can be pre-recorded and, like the circus music, can be played  
through speakers which are visible to the audience. This devise is  
compatible with the stylization of the setting.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Circus time

Is magic time  
Is the best time  
Of the year.

Now when I ask a question I want you all to shout out your answer,  
yes or no!

Do you want to see a clown  
Who is always falling down?  
Follow me  
And you'll be  
At the the circus.

Want to see a high flyer  
Who is always flying higher?  
Follow me  
And you'll be  
At the circus.

Yes circus time  
Is magic time

Is the best time  
Of the year.

Do you want to see  
A daring loop-the-loop?  
Or a horse jump through a hoop?  
Or a juggler tossing plates?  
Or a chimp with all his mates?  
Or a lady swallow fire?  
See her balance on a wire?  
Follow me  
And you'll be  
At the circus.

*Buttons applauds vigorously.*

**MR BIG:** Shut up Buttons! Not bad! Not good, but not bad! You've got a lot to learn. Under my expert eye you might develop. Isn't that right Buttons?

**BUTTONS:** Wrong But-tins!

**MR BIG:** And with the benefit of my iron discipline Buttons! *(He leans forward and whacks Buttons on the crash-helmet with his cane.)* Isn't that so Buttons?

**BUTTONS:** So, so!

**MR BIG:** I'll give you my decision after I've seen this .... what's his name?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Riddles! *(Whispering)* Put on your higher intelligence. The top-hat idiot! *(Billy does so)* Now show him what you can do Pumpkin-face! *(She pushes him towards the table. He crashes into the table and knocks Mr Big's top-hat onto the floor, together with his own)*

**MR BIG:** Clumsy clown! Give me my hat at once!

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**BILLY:** Sorry Mr Big, I tripped. *(He glares at Tambootie then picks up both hats but can't tell them apart.)*

**MR BIG:** If you're a clown, I don't want you. I've already got one and he's enough trouble.

**BUTTONS:** Me! But-tins!

**MR BIG:** *(Whacking him on the crash helmet with the stick)* Shut up Buttons! I need a magician not a clown. Now give me my hat and get on with it.

*Billy meantime has been looking at the audience for advice, holding out one hat and then the other.*

**MR BIG:** Quiet! I've had enough of this ....

**BILLY:** Here's your hat Mr Big. *(Places the wrong hat on the table)* I'm ready!

**MR BIG:** About time! *(Smugly)* Well I've got some riddles that will test your mettle, Mr Riddles! Riddles about the animals in my circus! Then, if you're as good as you're made out to be, we'll see about the magic! Ready?

**BILLY:** *(Puts on hat)* I think so.

**MR BIG:** What do you call an elephant that flies?

**BILLY:** An elephant that flies? *(Pause. He whispers to Tambootie)* It's not working!

**TAMBOOTIE:** *(Whispering back)* It's the wrong hat.

**BILLY:** What can I do?

**TAMBOOTIE:** I don't know, but do something!

**MR BIG:** *(Standing)* I've had about enough!

**BILLY:** Wait! Look there *(He rushes up to Mr Big and points a finger up into the sky)*

**MR BIG:** Where?

**BILLY:** Up there, look!

**MR BIG:** What?

**BILLY:** Look! *(While Mr Big gazes in alarm at the sky, Billy deftly switches hats.)*

**MR BIG:** I don't see anything!

**BILLY:** My finger!

**MR BIG:** *(Raising his stick)* You young ....

*Sound cue*

**BILLY:** Wait! An elephant that flies is called ... a Jumbo Jet!

**BUTTONS:** *(Clapping his hands)* Jumbo Jet! Hee Hee Hee!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Well done Pumpkin face!

**MR BIG:** Shut up buttons! *(Whacks him with cane)* All right! But cut out the clowning! Next! Why do leopards never escape from my circus?

**BILLY:** Because they're always spotted!

**BUTTONS:** Always potted! Hee Hee Hee!

**MR BIG:** *(Whacking him)* Shut up Buttons! What's the biggest mouse in my circus?

**BILLY:** The hippopotomouse!

**BUTTONS:** Shut up Buttons!

**MR BIG:** Not bad, not bad. To end with, three quick riddles about horses. Ready?

**BUTTONS:** Steady!

**BILLY:** Go!

**MR BIG:** Where do you take a sick horse?

**BILLY:** To Horsepital.

**MR BIG:** What game do horses play best?

**BILLY:** Stable tennis!

**MR BIG:** Spell a hungry horse in four letters.

**BILLY:** M.T.G.G.

**BUTTONS:** Hee, hee, hee! Shut up Buttons *(Mr Big whacks him)* Please sir, Mr big G.G. sir, But-tins knows some piddles.

**MR BIG:** Buttons, I'm warning you!

**BUTTONS:** Buttons, I'm warning you!

**BUTTONS:** *(To Billy)* What's a flying policeman?

**BILLY:** A heli-copper!

**BUTTONS:** A heli-hee, hee, hee-copper! Clever piddles! Clever Mr Piddles! *(He jumps up clapping his hands in delight. As he is sitting under the front edge of the table, his crash helmet lifts the table and all its contents into Mr Big's lap.)*

**MR BIG:** Buttons you blithering idiot, look what you've done! Get this table off me!

**BUTTONS:** Oooh! Mr Big table sir, please forgive But-tins!

**MR BIG:** Just get away from me! Go and sit as far away from me as possible, before I do something really violent!

*Buttons scampers away and sits cross-legged. Mr Big pulls up a chair and sits, then realises that the table is folded flat on the floor.*

**MR BIG:** Buttons!

*He points angrily at the table with his cane. Buttons runs back. There is a good deal of business as Buttons attempts to open the table. He becomes hopelessly tangled in it, but finally manages to set it up and then scampers away.*

**MR BIG:** Now let's see your magician's act! But keep it short. You're not a bad riddler, but I want a magician!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Show him pumpkin-face!

**BILLY:** *(Goes into a rapid patter)* Hello! Hello! Hello! Did you hear about the musician who spent all his time in bed? You didn't? Well he had to, you see he wrote sheet music! Never mind dear, you'll catch the next one. Talking about musicians though, I'm something of a musician myself. Ho yes indeed! I play an instrument that was played by the ancient Britons - it's called an Anglo Saxophone! In fact here is my Anglo Saxophone right here! You've got a naughty mind madame! *(He reaches into Button's jacket and pulls out a toy saxophone. Buttons reacts in amazement by examining all his pockets closely.)* Now observe ladies and gents, observe very closely that when I give a toot on me old sax, as I shall very shortly, I can create magic before your very eyes! You know as an expert musician I'm often asked to give me personal opinion on important musical matters! Take yesterday for example, I was asked what musical instrument I liked best. I thought about it for a while and then decided that a drum takes a lot of beating! It's all

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right, I'm getting paid for it! By the way, where's my drum? Ah! here's my drum. *(He reaches into Mr Big's top hat and takes out a toy drum that is wedged in the crown. Mr Big also reacts in amazement by peering into the hat, turning it upside down, tapping the crown etc.)* Now I shall demonstrate my musical virtuosity by tooting on this sax, beating on this drum and generally creating a lot of noise! Pity I didn't bring my pet with me though. My pet makes a lot of noise. You know what my pet is? You don't? A trumpet! Sorry! I'm trying, I really am! In fact I'm very trying! Anyway here we go! A one! And a two! An a three! *(He toots on the toy sax and beats the drum, then strides across to Mr Big)* Now, your honour, if I may have the loan of your cane for a few minutes *(he takes it)* It'll do just dandy as a magic wand! Allah Kazam! Allah Kazee! Now you'll see what I want you to see! *(He waves the cane. It is a trick cane with a switch and makes a 'bang')*

*The magic trick which follows will have to be selected within the capability of the performer. Paper flowers which expand, or multi-coloured scarves are reasonably easy to manage. The whole passage lends itself to improvisation but should be kept within reasonable limits. The intention is not to create a lengthy interlude, but simply to make his transformation into the magician's role convincing.*

**BUTTONS:** Oooh! Pretty flowers! *(Or other appropriate response depending on the trick)* Clever, clever Mr Piddles! *(Leads the audience in clapping. Billy takes off top-hat and bows. Sound cue).*

**MR BIG:** Right! You'll do! Here are the contracts. Just sign here and you'll never regret it.

**TAMBOOTIE:** *(Whispering)* Not bad Pumpkin-face. Couldn't have done better myself!

**BILLY:** Did I do all that?

**TAMBOOTIE:** You certainly did.

**BILLY:** My hat!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Yes it was, but you weren't too bad yourself.

**MR BIG:** Come along! It's not everybody has the chance to join Mr Big's famous circus troupe you know!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Come on Pumpkin-face, let's sign!

**BILLY:** I hope you know what you're doing!

**TAMBOOTIE:** You're at it again!

**BILLY:** What?

**TAMBOOTIE:** The timid mouse act. You should keep your hat on.

**MR BIG:** *(Holding out a pen)* On the dotted line!

*They all crowd around the table. Buttons has joined them.*

**BILLY:** Shouldn't we read it first?

**MR BIG:** No need! No need! Just the usual clap-trap. Sign!

**BUTTONS:** Sign clap-trap!

**MR BIG:** Shut up buttons! *(Tambootie signs)* That's it. And now you. *(Billy puts his hat on the table and signs. Mr Big snatches the documents and brandishes them.)* Thank you very much! You are now my property - for the rest of your lives! Signed and witnessed!

**BILLY:** But we trusted you!

**MR BIG:** Fools! Don't ever trust anybody in this life. That's a lesson I've taught you! And it will cost you! Always read the small print!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Big bully!

**MR BIG:** Oh no I'm not!



**TAMBOOTIE:** Oh yes you are!

**MR BIG:** Oh no I'm not!

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*Egging on the audience*) Oh yes you are!  
(*Repeated several times.*)

**MR BIG:** So, you think I'm a bully do you? Think I'm hard? Well you're right, I am, as you'll soon learn. There are only two kinds of people in this world, those that give orders and those that take orders, and I'm one of those that gives orders! Now get moving, you're going to join my other `performers'. Before I'm finished with you, you'll wish you'd never heard of Mr. Big! Buttons bring my things! Get moving! (*He whacks them with the cane and exits with them.*)

**BUTTONS:** Huh! (*Imitating Mr Big*) I'm one of those that gives orders! Get moving Nin-com-poop!

(*He picks up the writing materials, drum and toy saxophone, but leaves the top-hat on the table*)

Nin-com- (*toots the saxophone and marches out.*)

*A pause, then Stinkwood comes bounding in from the opposite direction. He has a concertina (squash box) in his mouth hanging by the straps. He flops down near the sign, shakes his head several times making noises on the concertina. He drops it, studies it with head on one side, then sniffs it gingerly.*)

**STINKWOOD:** Aaklige ding! Hy wil nie eers speel nie! Brom sommer `nes ek aan hom raak. (*He growls at the concertina*) Dink seker hy's beter as ek. Net omdat ek uit ... uit daardie hout gesny is. Ek sal jou wys jou ellendige ding! (*He places a paw on the concertina, hooking it into the strap, then wrestling and rolling with it, contrives to make it produce strange sounds. He drops it suddenly and scampers away*). Eina! Jou boelie! Jy't my seer gemaak! Ek wil mos net speel! Ag wat, traak my nie! Jy's mos net 'n basterhond! (*He sniffs at the signpost*). Waar's hulle dan nou? Hulle jaag heen en weer

tot ek heeltemaal deur die wind raak. Wag! Hier staan iets geskryf. (*He turns the signpost around. On the reverse side, now facing the audience is printed "INTERVAL". He pronounces it in Afrikaans*) In-ter-val! Dis daardie vreemde taal. Maar ek weet wat dit beteken. O ja ek's 'n slim brak! Dit beteken 'pouse'. Ek beter maar vir hulle gaan soek anders beland hulle weer in die moeilikheid. (*He starts to go then sees the top-hat*) Daar's nou vir jou 'n puikhoed! Net wat ek wil hê! Onthou dis net 'n kort poue nê! (*He exits with hat in his mouth.*)

INTERVAL

## ACT TWO

### SCENE ONE: THE CIRCUS

*During the interval the caravan is cleared and a barred cage about two metres square is placed upstage centre. Two spotlights on stands are placed on either side of the stage, directed towards the cage and switched on. A pail and broom stand in one corner.*

*Circus music as the houselights go down. Pierre enters on stilts. Pizzi and Cato ride in on a tandem bicycle. They circle the area. Some business as they ride between Pierre's stilts. Pizzi, who is on the back seat, then stands on the saddle holding onto Cato's shoulders. She jumps off on the move, runs to the sign and turns it around displaying "THE CIRCUS" in large letters. Meantime Cato has dismounted. The two link arms and brace themselves for Pierre, who climbs off his stilts onto their shoulders. Then things start to go wrong!*

*An alternative opening sequence is suggested in the appendix. However, this live version is preferable. With practise, the actors should manage it.*

**OU PIERRE:** Hey! Passop! Dis 'n long way down! Hou stil or I'll do myself an injury! Too late. Timbe-e-e-r!

*They all tumble down wailing and groaning.*

**PITZI:** Ow! My back!

**CATO:** Blockhead! I'm bruised! I'm splintered!

**OU PIERRE:** Altyd my skuld. Dis julle wat knees soos jelly het! Ek's a professional en hier moet ek sukkel met amateurs!

**PITZI:** That's the third time we've tried it!

CATO: And the third time we've fallen.

PITZI: We'll never get it right!

CATO: *(Wailing)* Mr Big will punish us!

OU PIERRE: Ha! As hy aan my raak! Bif-bam, bif-bam met my slapstick!

PITZI: Oh stop boasting!

CATO: And think of something!

*Mr Big is heard offstage!*

MR BIG: This way, and don't dawdle or you'll feel my stick.

PITZI: It's him!

CATO: Mr Big!

PITZI: Let's hide!

*Pierre dives under the table. Pitzi and Cato turn the two chairs upside-down on themselves. Mr Big enters pushing Billy and Tambootie in ahead of him. Buttons follows behind.*

MR BIG: This is where you'll work and where you'll sleep. Practise, practise, practise until you're perfect!  
*(Buttons finds the accordion and is transported)*  
And if you're as lazy as these good-for-nothings you'll get whacked! Understand? Whacked, like this! *(He gives the canvas chair a tremendous whack).*

PITZI: *(Scrambling out)* Please don't hit us!

MR BIG: And like this! *(He whacks the other chair)*

CATO: We've been practising.

**MR BIG:** And like this! *(He whacks the table under which Pierre is hiding).*

**OU PIERRE:** Eina! Asseblief my baas! Moenie slaan my baas! *(On his knees).*

*Buttons makes some sounds on the accordian.*

**MR BIG:** Shut up Buttons, or you'll be next!

**BUTTONS:** It's a squashing box!

**MR BIG:** *(To Pierre)* Why aren't you practising?

*Pitzi and Cato see Tambootie and run to her.*

**PITZI:** Tambootie!

**CATO:** Little sister!

**PITZI:** What are you doing here?

**CATO:** Has he bought you too?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Hello, how's your uncle?

**OU PIERRE:** Howzit, Tambootie ou sis!

**MR BIG:** What's this? What do you mean sister? What's going on here?

**BILLY:** Mr Big, you can't keep us here!

**MR BIG:** Of course! Tambootie the puppet! So! The two who escaped from the auction sale!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Yes, and we'll escape again, Mr Big mouth, all of us!

**MR BIG:** This time you've landed in the Lion's den, my dear. There's no escaping from here! And you've signed contracts!

*(Buttons makes more noise on the accordian).*

Buttons! Leave that instrument before I strangle you! Go and fetch Bruno! On the double!

**BUTTONS:** Don't like Bruno!

**MR BIG:** Buttons!

**BUTTONS:** Can I take my squashing-box Mr Big bubble. Pa-leeze sir, Mr double-bubble!

**MR BIG:** Just do what I say!

*Buttons exits playing the accordian.*

**PITZI:** Don't leave him alone with us!

**CATO:** Please Mr Big!

**PITZI:** He's scary! He doesn't talk!

**CATO:** He gives me the creeps!

**PITZI:** *(To Tambootie)* Bruno is the Lion Tamer.

**MR BIG:** He won't hurt you - as long as you don't try to escape. If you do - well, he has a wicked whip! *(He pokes them with his cane).* Well, well, well! Better than I could have hoped for! All the puppets under one roof. There's nothing to stop me now. I'll be rich!

*Bruno the Lion-tamer enters, followed by Buttons. Bruno is absolutely bald. He is bare to the waist, with large tatoos on his chest, arms and back. He is wearing trousers tucked into high boots and carries a whip.*

Bruno! You will keep guard over these delightful young performers and see that no harm comes to them! Especially if they have any rash and impulsive desire to escape. A little discreet

demonstration with that whip will discourage them! Let's show them, shall we my friend!

*Bruno cracks the whip. With a shriek Buttons leaps into Mr Big's arms.*

**BUTTONS:** Please Mr Big Whip, don't hurt But-tins!

**MR BIG:** Buttons, you're disgusting! Get off! *(He drops Buttons)* As a punishment you will stay here with Bruno and keep guard. Into the cage my dears! *(He unlocks the barred door and pushes them in.)* Not exactly five-star accommodation, but its all I can offer. *(He gives the keys to Bruno)* In the morning we'll start your training bright and early, so get some rest!

*He exits laughing. Bruno moves upstage and walks slowly back and forth. Buttons settles down with his accordian. The stage lights dim down slowly leaving the two spotlights as the main source of illumination.*

**PITZI:** How did you find us?

**CATO:** What's happened to Pappa Mario?

**OU PIERRE:** En ou Stinkwood? Waar's hy?

**TAMBOOTIE:** One at a time! It's a long story. But first I want you to meet my friend Pumpkin face. He helped me find you.

**BILLY:** Billy! And I wasn't much help. I just tagged along.

**PITZI:** Oh Tammy what are we going to do?

**CATO:** Now he's got all of us prisoners!

**OU PIERRE:** Moenie worry nie, as ek a chance kry, dan slaat ek hulle!  
Bif-bam, bif-bam met my slap-stick!

**PITZI:** Oh keep quiet Pierre!

**CATO:** You sound like a gramophone.

**BILLY:** But why is he keeping you prisoners? I still don't understand.

**TAMBOOTIE:** You've got a limited vocabulary Pumpkin face, 'I don't understand!'

**PITZI:** He's going to display us like some sort of circus freaks!

**CATO:** 'Mr Big's Living Puppets'! He wants to take us around the world.

*Bruno comes downstage and cracks his whip. Buttons shrieks, drops the squash-box and scampers away from him. The rest of the conversation is conducted in stage whipsers.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** I think he wants us to keep quiet!

*Bruno settles into one of the chairs with a superman comic and a lollipop.*

**BILLY:** We'd better humour him! I don't want that whip whistling about my ears.

**TAMBOOTIE:** Pumpkin face you're brilliant!

**BILLY:** What?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Ou Pierre I want you to whistle!

**OU PIERRE:** Wat se whistle is dit?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Your special whistle for Stinkwood.

**PITZI & CATO:** Stinkwood?

**TAMBOOTIE:** He's around here somewhere. He'll know that whistle anywhere!



**OU PIERRE:** Ja maar what about ou Frankenstein daar? Hy sal ook mos hoor!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Never mind, just whistle!

**OU PIERRE:** Ja all right for you! It's my funeral! O.K. here goes! *(He puts his fingers to his lips and emits a piercing whistle. Bruno who has been dozing off, leaps up and cracks his whip)* O.K. moenie panic nie. Sommer 'n ou deuntjie, jy wiet. Elke aand dan whistle ek 'n lullabye voor ek slaap. See, like so! *(He desperately whistles a snatch of 'Siembamba'. Bruno cracks his whip warningly and then sits down again.)*

**BILLY:** What now?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Just wait, you'll see!

*A snore from Buttons. Bruno yawns and settles himself comfortably. A pause, then Stinkwood with top-hat in mouth, bounds in. He sees Ou Pierre, drops the top-hat and scampers across to the cage. Sleeping noises and snores from Buttons cover his entrance.*

**OU PIERRE:** Hullo ou ding!

**BILLY:** The top-hat!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Shsh! *(Pause)*

**BILLY:** If I can get the top-hat, I can think us out of here! Stinkwood!

*Stinkwood growls, and moves around the cage. The prisoners quickly huddle together, masking him from Bruno. Bruno opens his eyes and sits up. Buttons whimpers, growls and snores in his sleep. Satisfied, Bruno settles back, closes his eyes.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Don't call him that! You'll ruin everything. Pierre!

**OU PIERRE:** Hey, ou ding, bring my daardie lelike hoed.

*(Stinkwood shakes his head)* Ag come on man. Here's a stukkie biltong.

*He takes it out of his pocket. Stinkwood picks up the hat and takes it to Pierre, then happily chews the biltong.*

**BILLY:** It won't fit through the bars!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Don't always give up Pumpkin-face! Watch!

*The top-hat is an opera hat with a crown that flattens when pressed. Tambootie flattens the hat, pulls it through the bars, presses it out again and places it on Billy's head.*

Presto!

**PITZI:** What good's an old hat?

**CATO:** Mad as a hatter!

*Sound cue. The prisoners revolve around Billy as he reacts to the hat.*

**BILLY:** The key! Pierre get Stink..... the dog to lift the keys. Bruno's got them. But quietly!

**OU PIERRE:** Hey, ou vriend, kom luister hierso, a secret tussen ons!

*Stinkwood trots across. Pierre whispers in his ear. Bruno gives a loud snore followed by a whistle from Buttons. Stinkwood "Pussy Foots" to behind Bruno.*

**BILLY:** What did you tell him?

**OU PIERRE:** Ek het sommer gesê, as hy daardie keys kan pick-pocket dan gee ons hom 'n nuwe naam - Rosewood!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Shsh!

*Timing is all important in the escape sequence and the subsequent chase. The comedy depends on disciplined physical action rather than on dialogue.*

*Stinkwood is behind Bruno, who is slumped over the canvas table. The keys are on the table beneath him. Stinkwood tries to remove the keys. Bruno shifts. Stinkwood freezes. Stinkwood has an idea. He fetches the broom.*

**PITZI:** What's he doing now?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Shsh!

*Stinkwood carefully props the inverted broom under Bruno and slides out the table with the keys on it.*

**CATO:** Clever dog!

**PITZI:** Shsh!

*Stinkwood picks up the keys, but as he moves towards the cage his foot tips up the squash-box which expires noisily. Stinkwood nips behind Bruno. Bruno half moves, then crashes forward as the broom collapses. The prisoners in the cage fling themselves down and start snoring. Bruno picks up his whip and moves cautiously towards Buttons with Stinkwood close behind him. He examines Buttons then the prisoners in the cage, with Stinkwood shadowing him. He returns to the table and examines its position, scratching his head. He moves backwards slowly to sit down, but instead sits on Stinkwood, who has kept close behind him. Stinkwood gives a yelp then bounds over Buttons and runs behind the cage. Bruno cracks his whip and starts chasing him. Buttons sits up. Bruno trips over him and the two become entangled. General pandemonium!*

**OU PIERRE:** Die sleutel!

**BILLY:** Give us the key!

**PITZI & CATO:** Quick!

**BUTTONS:** Help! Fire! But-tins and children first!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Come on boy!

*Stinkwood passes the keys through the bars. Bruno gives chase around the back of the cage. Billy opens the cage door. Stinkwood dashes inside. Bruno coming around the cage, collides with Buttons who is circling the other way. They collapse. Billy and the prisoners scramble over them. The twins climb onto the tandem and pedal offstage with Pierre and Stinkwood following. As Bruno rises, Billy puts the bucket over his head and Tammy pushes him into the cage. Billy locks the cage and throws the keys onto the table.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Come on Pumpkin-face, let's go! *(They exit after the others).*

*Mr Big storms in from the opposite direction. The stage lights gradually build to full.*

**MR BIG:** What's going on? What's all the noise about?

**BUTTONS:** *(Sitting up, rubbing his head)* Big collishimission Mr Big, sir. Traffic jamb and a bang on the smash helmet!

**MR BIG:** Stop babbling man! What are you doing in there? Where are the prisoners?  
*(Bruno points frantically offstage!)*

**BUTTONS:** *(Also pointing)* Elastimatic dog!

**MR BIG:** Idiots! Imbeciles! Cretins! You've let them escape! After them! What are you waiting for?  
*(Buttons points to Bruno. Bruno points to the keys).*  
What? I don't believe it! *(He fetches the keys and unlocks the cage)*  
You let them lock you in! I'm surrounded by nin-com-poops!

**BUTTONS:** Nin-com—

**MR BIG:** Shut up Buttons! After them! *(He rushes out with Bruno following)*

**BUTTONS:** Poop! *(He gets up slowly)* Mr Big But! *(Pointing dramatically)* After them!

*Immediately the fugitives come rushing back. Pizi and Cato on the tandem and the others running behind them. Buttons leaps out of the way of the tandem.*

**BUTTONS:** Stop! Stop! Irish stew!

*He is bowled over by the others who cross the stage and exit. While he is flat on his back the fugitives tip-toe back and hide behind the curved seating with just their heads visible.*

**BUTTONS:** Ooooh! Poor But-tins! Send for the ambunewlance!

*Mr Big and Bruno rush in.*

**MR BIG:** Which way did they go?

**BUTTONS:** *(Pointing dramatically)* After them!

*Mr Big and Bruno rush out.*

**BILLY:** Now's our chance!

**OU PIERRE:** Kom ons waai!

**BUTTONS:** Stop! Irish stew!

*He is bowled over again. Billy and the puppets rush into the auditorium and up the aisle. Billy returns and bends over Buttons who is again flat on his back.*

**BILLY:** Irish stew?

**BUTTONS:** *(Dazed)* Irish stew!

**BILLY:** What do you mean Irish stew?

**BUTTONS:** Irish stew in the name of the law!

**BILLY:** Oh I see! Very clever! *(He turns and runs up the aisle after the others. Mr Big and Bruno rush in again.)*

**MR BIG:** Buttons! Where did they go?

*Bruno heaves Buttons up.*

**MR BIG:** Speak man!

**BUTTONS:** Audimeeritorium! *(Buttons collapses again)*

**MR BIG:** Out there are they? Quick Bruno, the spotlights! *(Mr Big turns the spotlight into the audience. Bruno does the same. They pan the lights back and forth across the audience.)* Buttons, get down there and see if you can find them!

**BUTTONS:** All right! *(He scrambles up and runs into the auditorium)*  
But-tins on the track!

**MR BIG:** *(Shouts)* If you see them just yell. We'll be down there in two ticks.

**BUTTONS:** Tick, Tick! All right. I'm detectivating now! *(To somebody in the spotlight)* Hello! I'm But-tins!

**MR BIG:** Stop fooling around Buttons! This is serious!

**BUTTONS:** *(Imitating him softly)* Stop fooling around But-tins. This is semerious! *(He moves on to somebody else)* Cooee! Mr Big Tick sir!

**MR BIG:** What? Have you found them?

**BUTTONS:** Nooo! I found a girl friend. Can we keep this pretty girl friend instead?

**MR BIG:** Paah! This is a waste of time! While you two were stumbling around in the dark they escaped. Bruno, you stay here and clean up this mess. Buttons, you'll come with me where I can keep an eye on you. We're going after them! Nobody makes a fool of Mr Big. *(To Bruno)* And you! Keep your eyes open if you know what's good for you! They might still be here. If you bungle things again, I'll feed you to your own lions!

*He strides into the auditorium where Buttons is still chatting-up the audience.*

**MR BIG:** Buttons!

**BUTTONS:** Yes sir, Mr Big fool sir!

**MR BIG:** You're putting me into a temper Buttons! You're putting me into a fury! If you don't pull yourself together I won't be responsible for my actions. Now follow me and keep your wits about you! *(He strides ahead)*

**BUTTONS:** *(To audience)* Keep my whats about me?

**AUDIENCE:** *(Replies)*

**BUTTONS:** What wits? Wit my whats? *(Shrugs, then points dramatically)*  
After them But-tins! *He scampers out)*

*Circus music. Bruno clears the stilts and the accordian. The two stagehands carry off the cage and return with a striped changing booth, which is clearly marked "LADIES CHANGING BOOTH". The booth is positioned upstage centre with the canvas chairs and the table to one side. Mario Nette enters. He is dressed in a hawker's white uniform and hat. He carries a tray with toffee-apples, popcorn and peanuts and is ringing a bell. He turns the sign around to read "DURBAN BEACH", then addresses the audience.*

**PAPPA MARIO:** Yes, it's me Pappa Mario! Selling toffee-apples on Durban Beach. So? It's a job! A man's got to live. A man's got to live and beggars can't be choosers. What's that? Do I miss my

children? Of course I miss my children! Naturally I miss my children! But there are some times when fate takes a hand and a poor human being is powerless. Listen, many times I've thought of going up to Mr Big and saying 'Please, these are not puppets, these are my children!' But what's the use. He would call a policeman and they would lock me in a house for mad people and that would be that! They don't understand. They don't understand that what you create with love, from deep inside, is a living thing. They are the children of my imagination. So here I am, selling toffee-apples and popcorn. Waiting for something to come along. You see, the big thing is to have faith. "There is a destiny that shapes our ends!" Ah! Shakespeare! Now there was a man who peopled the world with his children.

*The two lifeguards enter in bright red costumes with "Lifeguard" across the chest.*

Popcorn! Toffee-apples! Peanuts!

*They stop.*

**PAPPA MARIO:** Toffee-apples? Twenty cents!

*They each buy a toffee-apple and exit.*

See, it's a living! Nothing like the theatre of course. But then again, in Durban, people prefer Toffee-apples! Arrividerci!

*A pause, then Pizzi, Cato and Tambootie come running in.*

**PITZI:** I'm out of breath!

**CATO:** I can't go on!

**PITZI:** I think I'm going to be sick!

**CATO:** Can't we stop here?

**TAMBOOTIE:** *(Looking back)* Yes! I think we've lost him.



**PITZI:** (*Collapsing into a chair*) What rotten luck!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Coming face to face with Mr Big! (*She sits*) Lucky for us he tripped over Buttons, otherwise we'd be back in that prison again!

**PITZI:** Where are we?

**CATO:** Who cares?

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*Examining the sign*) Durban Beach!

**CATO:** I didn't bring my costume!

**PITZI:** Poor old Pierre and Billy took off in the other direction.

**CATO:** I hope they're safe! And Stinkwood!

**TAMBOOTIE:** They'll be all right. Don't worry about them.

**PITZI:** (*Wailing*) But what about us?

**CATO:** (*Wailing*) Three defenceless girls!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Speak for yourself! Now come on, we must think of a plan.

**PITZI:** I'm so hungry!

**CATO:** Me too! I'm faint with hunger.

*Pappa Mario's voice is heard offstage.*

**PAPPA MARIO:** (*Offstage*) Popcorn! Peanuts! Toffee-apples!

**PITZI:** Popcorn!

**CATO:** Peanuts!

**PITZI & CATO:** And toffee-apples!

**PITZI:** (*Wailing*) I can't stand it!

**CATO:** Tammy, haven't you got any money?

**PITZI:** I'll die if I don't have a toffee-apple!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Oh stop wailing you two! Didn't you notice something strange about that voice?

**PITZI:** Strange?

**CATO:** Oh no!

**PITZI:** It said popcorn!

**CATO:** And peanuts!

**PITZI & CATO:** And toffee-apples!

**TAMBOOTIE:** No! No! That's not what I meant. There was something - something familiar about it.

**PAPPA MARIO:** (*Offstage*) Popcorn! Peanuts! Toffee-apples!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Listen! Did you hear?

**PITZI:** Of course we heard!

**CATO:** You're cruel to keep harping on it!

**TAMBOOTIE:** I could be mistaken, but I think - yes it must be - (*Pappa Mario enters*) yes, it is! It's Pappa Mario!

*She flings herself into his arms, knocking down his tray.*

**PITZI & CATO:** (*Running to him*) Pappa Mario! Pappa Mario!

**PAPPA MARIO:** My little ones! Tambootie! And Pitzi and Cato! *(He collapses as they tumble on top of him)*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Oh Pappa Mario, it's a miracle!

**PITZI:** We never thought we'd see you again.

**CATO:** We'd given up hope!

**PAPPA MARIO:** Wait! Wait! I'm an old man. You're smothering me! *(They prop him up into a sitting position)* Now tell me! How did you get here? How did you find me? I can't believe it! It's wonderful!

**PITZI:** It was just chance!

**CATO:** We didn't know!

**TAMBOOTIE:** It's a long story. We'll tell you later. But first we must find Pierre and Billy!

**PAPPA MARIO:** Pierre?

**PITZI:** And Billy!

**CATO:** And Stinkwood!

**TAMBOOTIE:** They're around here somewhere. We were being chased by Mr. Big. Then we split up!

**PAPPA MARIO:** Mr Big?

**PITZI:** Mr. Bog!

**CATO:** Mr Bug!

**PAPPA MARIO:** We must find them at once! Before Mr Big does. Now where did you last see them?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Well it was .....

**PAPPA MARIO:** Come along, lead the way. And while we're going you can tell me how you got here.

**PITZI:** Well, there was this freak called Bruno -

**CATO:** Who looked like Frankenstein -

**PITZI:** And Stinkwood stole his keys -

*They exit with Tambootie leading the way. Sybil and Victoria enter. They are two healthy, sun-seeking ladies on holiday from Johannesburg. They are dressed in summer florals with large straw sun-hats. Sybil carries a large straw bag containing their costumes and towels. Victoria carries a basket of oranges and a parasol. They are both barefoot and carry their high-heel shoes.*

**SYBIL:** I say Victoria, isn't that surf simply smashing. I just can't wait to plunge recklessly into that vast blue ocean!

**VICTORIA:** Rather! It's thrilling isn't it. Do you think it's safe though? I mean one reads simply masses of stories about people being battered on rocks and sharks and currents and all that sort of thing.

**SYBIL:** Don't be silly Victoria. Of course it's safe! You've never been the same since you saw 'Jaws'! Anyway, I'm told they have simply divine life-savers here. I wouldn't mind getting into a spot of trouble to be rescued by one of them!

**VICTORIA:** Sybil! You are naughty!

**SYBIL:** Just the thought of those bare, hairy chests, sends frissons down my spine!

**VICTORIA:** Sybil!

**SYBIL:** Come on darling, let's get changed. I'm getting goose pimples!

*They go into the changing booth. One of the lifeguards enters carrying a surf board.*

**LIFEGUARD:** Just look at you all! Enjoying the sun and the surf on Durban beach. Don't misunderstand me! I'm glad you're enjoying yourselves! It's just that it makes my job more difficult with such a crowd. You know what my job is? That's right, lifeguard ... lifesaver. It's not all beer and skittles I can tell you. In fact it's mostly hard work, keeping fit, training, ready for anything. There are always people getting into difficulties. Take my advice, don't get out of your depth. But if you do, remember I'll be around, keeping my eyes and ears open. Surf's up! See you later.

*He exits. Sybil emerges from the changing booth wearing a bathing costume.*

**SYBIL:** Come on Vickie dear, we'll miss the tide!

*Victoria emerges, also in a costume.*

You have put on weight haven't you darling! Quite dumpy round the middle!

**VICTORIA:** Sybil, you're cruel!

**SYBIL:** Come on, I'll race you. Last one in is an old maid!

*They race offstage. Pierre, Stinkwood and Billy enter from the opposite direction.*

**OU PIERRE:** Hey! Hold your horses! Ek dink ons is nou out of danger.

**BILLY:** Yes, I think we've lost him. What a chase!

**OU PIERRE:** Ja, maar keep an eye out, miskien is dit net 'n brief respite.

**BILLY:** I hope the girls are safe!

**OU PIERRE:** Moenie worry nie, hulle sal O.K. wees.

**BILLY:** Everything happened so quickly when Mr Big jumped out from behind that bush! I lost sight of them in the scramble.

**OU PIERRE:** Ja dit was net panic stations all round. Maar ou Tammy, sy's nie gister se kind nie.

**BILLY:** Oh my hat!

**OU PIERRE:** Wat?

**BILLY:** My hat! I must have lost my hat in the chase. *(He looks back)*  
My higher intelligence!

**STINKWOOD:** Onnosel! *(He trots into the changing booth).*

**OU PIERRE:** Hey oh brak! Dis vir ladies only. Kom uit daarso!

**BILLY:** Pierre! He's coming!

**OU PIERRE:** Wat?

**BILLY:** Mr Big, he's coming this way! We must hide!

**OU PIERRE:** O.K. but where?

**BILLY:** In here, it's our only chance. *(He disappears into the changing booth)*

**OU PIERRE:** Sorry ladies, hier kom ons! *(He follows Billy into the booth)*

*Mr Big runs onstage followed by Buttons.*

**MR BIG:** I saw them! A moment ago! Those brats must be here somewhere!

**BUTTONS:** *(Flopping into a chair)* But-tins is tired!

**MR BIG:** *(Whacking him with the cane)* Get up you lazy lout!

**BUTTONS:** *(Jumping up)* Please Mr Big Stick sir. But-tins is exhaustipated!

**MR BIG:** *(Pointing offstage with his stick)* Search out there. I'll have a look around here. Jump to it, or you'll feel my stick again!

**BUTTONS:** *(Goes off grumbling)* Look here, look there, look everywhere Mr Big Bum!

*Mr Big circles the changing booths.*

**MR BIG:** They're close by, I know it! I can smell them.  
*(Buttons limps back onstage.)* Well?

**BUTTONS:** Not a sausage!

*A tremendous sneeze from inside the booth.*

**MR BIG:** Ah-ha! I smell a rat! What have we in here?

**BUTTONS:** *(Pointing to the sign)* Ladies!

**MR BIG:** Who's in there? *(Whacking the booth)* Answer me!

**BILLY:** *(In a falsetto)* Amy!

**MR BIG:** Amy? Amy who?

**BILLY:** Amy fraid a've forgotten!

**MR BIG:** I don't believe you! Come out!

**PIERRE:** *(Also in a falsetto)* And Tish!

**MR BIG:** Tish? Tish who?

**PIERRE & BILLY:** Bless you!

**MR BIG:** If you don't come out of there, I'm coming in!

**BUTTONS:** Oooh! Mr Big Booby sir!

**MR BIG:** Shut up Buttons! Are you coming out?

**BILLY:** We're coming!

**MR BIG:** Stand aside Buttons.

*Mr Big stands aside with his stick raised. Billy comes out slowly. He has changed into the floral dress and high heels. Two oranges stuffed down the bodice provide the necessary 'uplift'. A towel is wound around his head, and over that a sun-hat, pulled well forward to shade his face.*

**BILLY:** How dare you! You peeping-tom! *(Billy whacks him with the bag)*  
You ought to be locked up!

**MR BIG:** I beg your pardon madame! I was looking for someone, and I thought ...

**BILLY:** A likely excuse! Tish! Call the police!

*Pierre comes out similarly attired.*

**MR BIG:** Please madame. I apologise. I assure you this is a ghastly mistake.

**BILLY:** A girl isn't safe from the likes of you! You molester! *(Billy whacks him again.)*

**BUTTONS:** *(Hiding behind the signpost)* Bim! Bam! On the bum!

**PIERRE:** *(Poking him with the parasol)* Saucy hey? *(He sits down inelegantly on one of the chairs)*

**MR BIG:** Madame I protest! I am an honourable man! I can show you ...

**BILLY:** Indeed? Did you hear that Tish? He's going to expose himself!



**PIERRE:** Hey!

**BILLY:** He is not only a peeping-tom, but a dirty old man as well! *(Billy whacks him on the head with the bag. Mr Big falls to his knees, stunned. He clutches the hem of Billy's dress to steady himself.)* Let us depart! Let us leave this monster before we're ravished! *(As he steps away, the skirt, which is fastened with velcro, tears off, revealing his trousers rolled up to above his knees.)*

**BUTTONS:** Oooh! Funny brooks!

**MR BIG:** *(Grabbing hold of him)* Just a minute! There's something funny going on here! You're not a lady! Let's have a look at you! *(He pulls off the hat and towel.)* I thought so!

**BILLY:** Run Pierre!

**PIERRE:** Hardloop brak! *(He trips and falls. One of the oranges rolls out of his dress.)* Blerry high-heel shoes!

**MR BIG:** *(Gripping them both by the arms.)* Got you! Both of you! I'll teach you to make a fool of me! Just wait 'till we get back to the circus!

*Stinkwood streaks out of the changing booth and bites Mr Big on the bottom. He shrieks and lets go his hold.*

**BUTTONS:** Oooh! Naughty dog! Big bite on the bumble!

**BILLY:** Run Pierre!

**PIERRE:** Ja kom ons waai!

*Pierre lifts his skirts and they both run off. Mr Big, on hands and knees, is struggling to get up. Stinkwood jumps over him sending him sprawling again and then runs off in the opposite direction.*

**MR BIG:** Don't just stand there you imbecile, help me up! (*Buttons comes out from behind the signpost*) I'm going after them. I'll catch them if it's the last thing I do!

**BUTTONS:** But-tins too!

**MR BIG:** No! You just get in the way! You're a liability! You're worse than that, you're a disaster! I'm better off without you! Stay here and keep watch. (*He grabs his cane and runs off.*)

**BUTTONS:** Mind your bumble! (*He picks up the parasol*) But-tins the bobby guard on duty! Ten chips! Presenting arms and legs! (*He uses the parasol as a rifle*) One-two-three! Three-two-one! Clickety march!

*Buttons marches back and forth in front of the booth. Cecil, the camera man enters. He is carrying a large camera on a tripod marked S.C.A.B. T.V. Cecil has red hair, a red beard and is wearing denims.*

**CECIL:** Marvelous! Absolutely marvelous! Couldn't be better! (*He sets up the camera*) Excuse me sir, I'm doing a feature on Durban for S.C.A.B. T.V. and you're just what I'm looking for.

**BUTTONS:** (*Pointing the parasol*) Irish stew!

**CECIL:** I beg your pardon?

**BUTTONS:** Irish stew in the name of the law!

**CECIL:** Oh I see, it's a joke. Ha, ha! Very funny! Bye the bye, are you in fancy dress?

**BUTTONS:** Bobby-guard duty! Guarding the booby tent.

**CECIL:** I beg your pardon?

**BUTTONS:** (*Peering into the lens*) Television?

**CECIL:** Yes quite! Well if you'll stand just a little further back, we'll get started. Wait a minute! I passed just the spot a little way back. Superb backdrop. Let's trip along there shall we. It won't take us long.

*They exit. Billy and Ou Pierre enter out of breath.*

**PIERRE:** Jusslaik, the old codger can run hey?

**BILLY:** Yes, luckily he ran straight into that crowd coming out of the cinema.

**PIERRE:** Kan jy hom sien? Is ons safe?

**BILLY:** I can't see anyone in a top-hat. I think it's all right.

**PIERRE:** *(Flops into a chair)* Jusslaik! I got a stitch!

**BILLY:** No time for resting now. We must change out of these clothes.  
*(He starts taking off the blouse.)*

**PIERRE:** *(Follows suit)* O.K. suits me! All this material flapping around like butterflies between your legs! Siesa!

**BILLY:** And we'll have to search for Tammy and the twins. They must be nearby.

**PIERRE:** Ja, O.K.! Ek wonder waar ou Stinkwood is?

**BILLY:** Give me your dress, quickly! And those other things. I'll put them back in the booth.

**PIERRE:** *(He collects the parasol and oranges etc.)* Dê vat! and good riddance! *(Billy disappears into the booth with the clothes.)* Toe maak gou! I don't fancy old Big stick catching us again.

**BILLY:** *(Emerging from the booth)* Right! Let's retrace our steps to where we split up. They may be waiting for us there!

**PIERRE:** Lead on Macduff! *(They exit.)*

*Buttons and Cecil, the camera man, re-enter.*

**CECIL:** You're a scream, you really are! A regular comic!

**BUTTONS:** Ice cream? Where?

**CECIL:** Oh very droll! *(Enthusiastically)* I must say this film is going to make the chaps at Awkward Park sit up! Now I'd like some footage of you gambolling in the surf. We can borrow a costume from the lifeguards. What do you say?

**BUTTONS:** Didn't say anything!

**CECIL:** You should be in a circus, you really should. Come along then, they're just around the corner. *(They exit)*

*Sybil and Victoria enter, dripping from their swim.*

**SYBIL:** I feel reborn! *(She breathes deeply)* Wasn't it simply marvelous!

**VICTORIA:** I've got sand in my costume, it's so unpleasant.

**SYBIL:** And those breakers!

**VICTORIA:** I think I have a touch of sunburn.

**SYBIL:** And the smell of the salt.

**VICTORIA:** I'm all sticky!

**SYBIL:** Oh for Pete's sake Vickie, don't be such a wet blanket. Where's your joi de vivre!

**VICTORIA:** My what?

**SYBIL:** Oh never mind, lets get changed!

*They disappear into the booth. Pappa Mario, Tambootie and the twins enter.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** We've looked everywhere!

**PAPPA MARIO:** Where can they be?

**PITZI:** I hope Mr Big didn't catch them!

**CATO:** I can't bear to think of it!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Don't worry, Billy can take care of himself.

**PITZI:** (*Nudging Cato*) Really? I thought his name was Pumpkin-face!

**CATO:** You've changed your tune haven't you?

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*Blushing*) Don't be silly! Anyway we're wasting time. There's no point in wandering around the beach any longer.

**PAPPA MARIO:** Tambootie's right, we must think of a plan.

**PITZI:** (*Looking offstage*) There he is!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Who?

**PITZI:** Billy! I can see his top-hat in the distance.

**CATO:** Yes, but he's taller than Billy.

**TAMBOOTIE:** That's not Billy, that's Mr Big!

**PITZI:** And he's coming this way!

**PAPPA MARIO:** We must hide!

**CATO:** But where?

**TAMBOOTIE:** (*Pointing into the auditorium*) Look the beach is packed with people. If we mingle with them he'll never see us!

**PITZI & CATO:** Quick!

*They run into the auditorium and hide amongst the audience. Buttons and Cecil enter.*

**CECIL:** (*Holding out the costume*) Most obliging chaps weren't they? Now just slip into this and we'll be ready to go!

**BUTTONS:** (*Horrified*) In the booby-tent?

**CECIL:** Why not? It will only take a second, I'll keep guard outside in case someone comes. (*Buttons hesitates*) Oh be a devil!

*He pushes Buttons into the booth. Immediately there is a shriek from Victoria, followed by "Get out" from Sybil. Buttons comes flying out.*

**CECIL:** Oh I say, I'm most dreadfully sorry! I didn't realise there was anyone in there!

*Mr Big enters in a temper.*

**MR BIG:** Lost them again, curse it! Buttons have you been guarding that booth?

**BUTTONS:** (*Rushes to him*) Two ladies Mr Big shot sir! Like before! In the booby tent!

**MR BIG:** Like before? Wearing the same clothes? (*Buttons nods violently*) Thank you Buttons, you've done well! I won't let them escape this time! Stand back! (*He raises his cane*) Come out of there you devils!

**CECIL:** (*Rushes to his camera*) Marvelous! What a scoop! This should make the evening news!

*Sybil comes storming out with Victoria keeping well behind her. They are both fully dressed and wearing their sun-hats.*

**SYBIL:** How dare you! You peeping-tom! You ought to be locked up!

**MR BIG:** Do you really think you can fool me with the same trick twice?  
Take off that dress! And you too!

**VICTORIA:** I think I'm going to faint!

**SYBIL:** It's a madman! You're mad! *(To the others)* He's mad! *(Mr Big takes a step forward)* Don't come near me, you despicable thing!

**MR BIG:** If you won't take them off, I'll have to take them off for you!  
*(He grabs hold of Sybil)*

**SYBIL:** Help! Help! Unhand me you monster! Help!

*Sybil swings her bag at him but he catches her arm and whacks her with his cane. Victoria faints. The two lifeguards come running in and grab hold of Mr Big. He wrestles with them but is eventually subdued.*

**MR BIG:** *(During the struggle)* You're making a mistake! Can't you see, they're in disguise!

**SYBIL:** He's a lunatic! He assaulted us! He would have done worse!

*Billy and Pierre enter.*

**MR BIG:** I tell you they're two young hooligans ... *(He catches sight of Billy and Pierre)* ... who have dressed up ... *(His voice fades. He looks from the two boys to the outraged Sybil and back again.)*

**FIRST LIFE-GUARD:** Come along quietly now!

**PIERRE:** Hey Billy, kom ons waai!

**BILLY:** Wait Pierre!

**MR BIG:** But this is absurd ... I ... I'm innocent. Buttons tell them!

**BUTTONS:** Shut up But-tins! *(He joins Cecil)*

**SECOND LIFE-GUARD:** You can tell it to the judge!

**SYBIL:** Monster!

**MR BIG:** You don't understand! These boys will tell you. Pierre?

*Pierre and Billy look at each other, then at Mr Big and shake their heads innocently.*

**CECIL:** What drama! Tremendous!

*Tambootie and the twins run onto the stage followed by Pappa Mario.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** Pumpkin-face! *(She runs to him.)* How's your uncle?

**PITZI & CATO:** Pierre!

**MR BIG:** They're all in this together!

**FIRST LIFE-GUARD:** Come along! *(They start moving off)*

**BILLY:** Wait!

**TAMBOOTIE:** What are you doing Pumpkin-face?

**BILLY:** You'll see! *(To Sybil)* Madame you can help an old man who has been kept from his children by this villain.

**MR BIG:** They're not his children, they're puppets!

**SYBIL:** Puppets? The man's quite mad!

**PAPPA MARIO:** They are my children!



**BILLY:** They were forced to sign contracts making them his slaves.

**MR BIG:** It's all legal! I have proof here! I have it in writing! *(He takes some documents from his pocket.)*

**BILLY:** *(To Sybil)* You can help us. If he tears up those contracts will you withdraw the charges against him?

**PIERRE:** Go on Merrem, be a sport!

**PITZI & CATO:** Please help us!

**PAPPA MARIO:** The boy is speaking the truth!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Pumpkin-face, you're not bad! You're not bad at all!

**BILLY:** Will you help us?

**SYBIL:** Of course we'll help you! Either he tears up those contracts or we're going to the police station!

**MR BIG:** Never! You won't get away with this!

**SYBIL:** Assault and battery! Attempted rape! There are many witnesses!

**BUTTONS:** But-tins too! Salt and batteries!

**BILLY:** You'd better reconsider Mr Big. Think of the publicity, the scandal, the rumours, the headlines! `Mr Big, the well-known Circus-Master sentenced to a term of imprisonment for unmentionable acts outside a ladies changing-booth.!'

**SYBIL:** You have no choice!

**MR BIG:** All right, curse you, take them! *(He throws down the documents)*  
But you haven't seen the last of me. I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you! *(He storms out.)*

**SYBIL:** That sounds familiar!

**PAPPA MARIO:** Shakespeare!

**SYBIL:** Ah yes, he thought of it first.

**LIFEGUARDS:** We'll just see him on his way. *(They exit)*

**PITZI & CATO:** We're free. We're free! *(They tear up the documents and fling the pieces into the air. Buttons joins them.)*

**CECIL:** Cut! *(He rushes forward)* That was fantastic! Tremendous! What drama! What tension! What pathos! We might even make the Nartjies award!

**SYBIL:** Vickie we're on telly! Vickie? Oh for Pete's sake, she's still out cold. Vickie! Wake up Vickie! *(She tries to revive her)*

**CECIL:** What I need is a grand finale. Some sort of celebration. The viewers always love a happy ending.

**PITZI:** Let's do our routine!

**CATO:** But what about our gear?

**PIERRE:** We can sommer fetch it in a jiffy!

**PAPPA MARIO:** This time, Pappa Mario's coming with you, to see you don't get into any more trouble. We'll be back soon. *(They exit.)*

**BUTTONS:** Wait for But-tins! Coming on the double-bubble!

**CECIL:** Wonderful! I'll put a new film in my camera. *(He moves upstage.)*

**SYBIL:** Vickie, it's all over. Wake up dear!

**VICTORIA:** *(Reviving)* Don't let him near me! Keep away!

**SYBIL:** It's all right dear, nothing's happened. He's gone now!

**VICTORIA:** I hate this place! I hate this beach! I'm never coming here again!

**SYBIL:** Just calm down dear. Here, I have some smelling salts in my bag. Come into the changing booth. You'll be right as rain in a few minutes.

**VICTORIA:** I'll never be the same again!

**SYBIL:** Come along. I'll tell you what happened.

*They disappear into the changing booth. Billy and Tambootie are left alone.*

**BILLY:** Hello! How's your uncle?

**TAMBOOTIE:** Hello Pumpkin-face! *(Pause)* I'll call you Billy if you want me to.

**BILLY:** Well, I've rather grown to like Pumpkin-face!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Have you? You've also grown up a bit I think.

**BILLY:** Well, I've learned one thing.

**TAMBOOTIE:** That's a big step forward!

**BILLY:** You're making fun of me again!

**TAMBOOTIE:** No, I mean it. To make a real discovery is a big step. Not many people do. What is it?

**BILLY:** I've learned that if you really want to do something, I mean really deeply, nothing can stop you!

**TAMBOOTIE:** And what did you want to do?

**BILLY:** I wanted to prove to you that I wasn't just a block of wood ... sorry, I didn't mean it that way.

**TAMBOOTIE:** Yes, you did. But then, you see, I knew it all along. Otherwise I wouldn't have bothered with you.

**BILLY:** *(Taking her hand)* I'm also beginning to understand about you.

**TAMBOOTIE:** Well, that's a great improvement on 'I don't understand!'

**BILLY:** It's the same for you, isn't it? I mean, wanting to do something really deeply.

**TAMBOOTIE:** You're not bad Pumpkin-face. Yes, when Pappa Mario brought us to life, it was an act of love. He lent us something of himself. That was one part of it. The other part had to come from us. We didn't want to remain puppets. We wanted to show him that we weren't just blocks of wood, but individuals; and so we had to prove it by becoming human.

**BILLY:** I understand.

**TAMBOOTIE:** You can let go my hand now.

**BILLY:** What? Oh sorry!

**TAMBOOTIE:** Only because they'll be coming back soon.

*Stinkwood runs in with the top-hat in his mouth.*

**BILLY:** It's Stink ... Rosewood! He's found my top-hat!

**TAMBOOTIE:** You won't be needing that any more, will you?

**BILLY:** No, I don't think I will. *(He places the hat on Stinkwood's head. Sound cue. Stinkwood goes through some amazing contortions.)*

**CECIL:** *(Coming forward)* Right! Where is everybody? I'm all set. Oooh! A rabid dog!

**SYBIL:** *(Emerging from the booth)* Oh stop titivating Vickie! He's not going to film us!

**BILLY:** *(Looking offstage)* Here they come!

**CECIL:** Lights! Camera! Action!

*Circus music. The changing booth is cleared. Pierre enters on stilts. Pizzi and Cato ride in on the tandem. Buttons follows with his police helmet and magnifying glass. He trips and does several forward rolls. Pappa Mario enters last of all, with a paper hoop, on which is printed "Pappa Mario's famous circus troupe". (Mr Big's name has been crossed out.)*

**PAPPA MARIO:** Hoop-la!

*Stinkwood races around in a circle and then leaps and crashes through the paper hoop. Pizzi and Cato ride between Pierre's stilts. The dismounting sequence is carried off without a hitch. Pierre stands astride their shoulders and then jumps to the ground. They take a bow. The music stops. Buttons drums with his fists on the floor.*

**PAPPA MARIO:** And now ladies and gentlemen, by special request ... by my request that is ... a young lady who has done much to make this a happy ending. Some people say she has too much cheek! Others that she talks too much! I say she has a heart of gold! I give you - my little Tambootie, with a song to end our revels.

*The company form a circle and clap in time to the tune. Tambootie draws Billy into the centre.*

**TAMBOOTIE:** When I was just a little sapling, I used to whisper a song to myself. It went like this:

I'd rather be a puppet on a string  
A simple puppet who can sing  
I'd rather be, than anything,  
Oh yes I would!  
A puppet on a string.

I'd rather wait for him to pull the string  
I'd rather wait before I sing  
I'd rather be, than anything,  
Oh yes I would,  
A puppet on a string.

I'd rather put my trust in him up there  
I'd rather swing without a care  
I'd rather be, than anything,  
Oh yes I would,  
A puppet on a string.

But later the words changed and my life changed. I think Pappa Mario will understand why. I know Billy does.

I'd rather be adrift and cut the string  
I'll cut the string before I sing  
I'd rather be, than anything,  
Oh yes I would!  
Adrift, before I sing.

I'd rather be a person who can dance  
I'd rather live and take a chance  
I'd rather be, than anything  
Oh yes, I would!  
A person who can dance.

And not  
A puppet on a string  
A puppet on a string  
A puppet on a string  
On a string -  
On a string -  
On a string -

*They all dance offstage. Pappa Mario is alone.*

**PAPPA MARIO:** Well, there you are you see! Somewhere, at some time, for some people, there is a happy ending. Oh, it's a surprise all right, when it does happen. Who would have thought at the beginning of the play, that things would have turned out like this. But that's life isn't it? Always keeps you on your toes. Well, I must be going, they'll be wondering what's happened to me. But remember, if a Puppet Show or a Circus comes your way - well, go and see it. You might just be lucky and see Tambootie and her friend Billy. Arrividerci!

*He exits.*

*Circus music as the houselights go up indicating the end of the play.*

#### **APPENDIX.**

*(Alternative opening sequence for Act Two).*

*A back-projection cloth has been erected or flown in during the interval. A spotlight throws the silhouettes of Pitzì, Cato and Pierre onto the cloth. Circus Music. As the houselights go down, Pitzì, Cato and Pierre can be seen practising. Their silhouettes are enlarged and diminished as they move between the spotlight and the cloth. By carefully arranged grouping and patterned movements, effective results can be achieved. Tight-rope walking, acrobatics and even trapeze work can be simulated. The sequence ends with a pyramid. Pierre stands on the shoulders of Pitzì and Cato. The pyramid starts rocking.*

APPENDIX NO. 2

**SAMANTHA SEAL**

**A Play for Young Audiences**

by

Pieter Scholtz



**SAMANTHA SEAL**  
**A Play for Young Audiences**

**CHARACTERS:**

**SEAGULL** (Nicknamed Scrounger), a nosey, chattering gull

**THE WALRUS** (Uncle Wally), an old salt, with a proverb for every occasion

**SAMANTHA SEAL**, a seal with a lot of spunk and a pronounced lisp

**CAPTAIN BLUDGEON**, a villainous seal-hunter with a secret fear

**WILLIE WHATSIS**, his short-sighted crony with a blarney tongue

and several other characters played by the same actors.

ACT ONE

*(The setting should be stylized to harmonize with the parachute concept of the ice-pool.)*

*A semi-circular arrangement of rostra, creating different levels, incorporating possibilities for the ice-slide, and painted in white and shades of pastel blue, would be appropriate. The floor-cloth should be a feature of the setting.*

*The Seagull is learning her part while the audience assembles. Beside her is her head-dress, a cap with a curved beak, which is the only outward indication of her character. She wears a grey-and-white track suit.)*

SEAGULL:

*(Throwing down the script)* A seagull! How do you play a seagull? Do I look like a seagull? Well do I? Of course not. For one thing I'm much larger than a seagull. Well that's obvious isn't it. I mean a seagull is a bird, a bundle of feathers no bigger than your shoe. And look at me, a great, galumphing . . . girl - makes you laugh doesn't it? And another thing, I can't fly. I mean a seagull spends its time in the sky, well most of it, hovering, swooping, wheeling, diving. Oh I suppose I could flap my arms about, but it wouldn't be very convincing would it. Well how would you pretend to fly if you were acting a seagull? Like this? Why don't you all pretend to be seagulls. I really do need some help, its a very difficult role. Just stand where you are and try it. Oh that looks good. That looks very good.

And that one's very convincing indeed. I can almost see you leaving the ground. Thank you, you've all been a great help. *(Or)* Well you haven't been much help have you.

*(She picks up the head-dress)* This is my beak. No it's true, I'm not joking this is my whole costume. I mean it's all very well being subtle but this is ridiculous. Shoestring budget if you ask me. *(She puts it on)* Does it do anything for me? It's a clear case of miscasting if ever I saw one. *(Picking up the script)* Let's see! *(She reads)* The Seagull, nicknamed Scrounger, a nosey, chattering gull!

Nosey? Chattering? Me? I hardly ever say a word! I don't think much of the script. Actually . . . this play is about a seal, about a particular seal to be exact, Samantha Seal. Now where do you find seals? In the desert? Of course not, you find camels in the desert. You find goats in the desert, but seals you find . . . in the snow, that's right! on the ice, in the cold . . . at the South Pole. Now you've got to imagine it's very cold, so cold you're shivering, so cold you've got goose-pimples, so cold your teeth are chattering. Let's hear your teeth chatter. That's better. Imagine you're inside a fridge. White all around you. The temperature is not just freezing, it's minus! It's minus 70 degrees! And let me tell you when it's that cold your nose drips and your fingers burn. When it's that cold your breath hangs in the air like a plastic bag. When it's that cold your best friend is a hot-water bottle. You think I am exaggerating? You think I'm fibricating? Well I don't care, it's true. In fact, I know a song that might convince you.

---

*(If possible Seagull accompanies herself on the guitar. As she sings the other members of the company enter and join her, as actors, not as the characters they play.)*

SEAGULL: Would you like to climb an ice-cream mountain  
Gaze in wonder at a crystal fountain  
Do you want to see the snow fall  
Drifting in a slow fall

*(The actors enter singing)*

COMPANY: Follow, follow-follow  
Oh yes, follow, follow-follow  
Follow the whisper of the breeze  
Follow the echo of the seas  
And meet Samantha Seal, if you please.

*(Each actor throws a handful of frosted gel fragments into the air and watches in wonder - a tinkling accompaniment from the guitar.)*

SEAGULL: Would you like to walk on sugar-icing  
Would you find an igloo-hut enticing  
Do you want to have a ride  
On a sleigh you'll softly glide

*(The company forms a sleigh with white parasols for wheels.)*

COMPANY: Then follow, follow-follow  
Oh yes, follow, follow-follow  
Follow the whisper of the breeze  
Follow the echo of the seas  
And meet Samantha seal, if you please

SEAGULL: Would you like to find a secret ice-pool  
Dip your toes in and your nose in to be ice-cool  
Meet a seal and make a friend

## An adventure without end

*(The Company billows a large white parachute into the air. As it settles they create ripples, waves, splash in it and frolic in it. Finally it is billowed into the air again. The walrus dons his head-dress and moves centre under the parachute. As it settles around him, it forms a large circular cloak with just his head protruding through the centre hole. The rest of the company withdraw slowly singing.)*

- COMPANY: Then follow, follow-follow  
Oh yes, follow, follow-follow  
Follow the whisper of the breeze  
Follow the echo of the seas  
And meet Samantha Seal, if you please
- SEAGULL: *(Who has also remained behind)*  
Follow, follow-follow . . .
- WALRUS: *(Interrupting)* That's quite enough of that thank you, quite enough! All I want out of life is a little peace and quiet, that's all, it's not much to ask is it?
- SEAGULL: Pardon?
- WALRUS: It's not much to ask. And what do I get? An empty vessel!
- SEAGULL: Pardon?
- WALRUS: Empty vessels make the most noise.
- SEAGULL: You're not a seal. I've been singing about a seal. Everybody's expecting a seal. Who are you?
- WALRUS: Of course I'm not a seal. Naturally I'm not a seal. Any fool can see I'm not a seal.

Do seals have tusks? Do seals have wrinkles?

SEAGULL: I don't know. I don't think so. Who are you?

WALRUS: If you really must know, I'm a Walrus.

SEAGULL: Walrus . . . Walrus . . . *(paging through the script)*  
Here you are . . . 'Uncle Wally the Walrus: gloomy,  
ponderous, full of wise saws'. . . saws? What are  
saws?

WALRUS: Saws, you foolish seagull, are sayings, like . . .  
'When ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise',  
if you take my meaning.

SEAGULL: Oh you mean boring old proverbs . . . wait, there's  
something else about you here . . . 'sometimes  
falls asleep in the midst of a speech!' *(she  
giggles)* Do you really? In the middle of a  
speech?

WALRUS: Foolish and impertinent. I have many weighty  
matters to consider . . .

SAMANTHA: *(Calling off)* Uncle Wally! Uncle Wally!

WALRUS: At last, my breakfast. Better late than never I  
suppose.

*(Samantha enters with a tub of fish. She is petite  
with enormous brown trusting eyes. Her feet should  
resemble flippers. She speaks with a pronounced  
lisp and has a lazy "R". Her first phrase would  
be spoken thus: 'I thaw an ekthwadinauy wainbow')*

SAMANTHA: Uncle Wally, I saw an extraordinary rainbow, really  
extraordinary, it was so brilliant, and it ended  
right here in our pool.

WALRUS: Samantha . . .

SAMANTHA: And then I saw the sun playing in the snow, making myriads of sparkling jewels.

WALRUS: Samantha . . .

SAMANTHA: And then I slid down an ice slide on my bot-tim, so fast I was extraordinarily dizzy.

WALRUS: Samantha we have a visitor!

SAMANTHA: And that's why I'm so . . . *(she turns, almost bumping into Seagull)* Oh dear, how extraordinary . . . I mean . . . I . . . oh dear . . .

*(She lowers her head shyly, making patterns in the snow with her toes.)*

SEAGULL: You must be Samantha Seal *(Referring to the script)* It says here 'Samantha Seal: shy, trusting, speaks with a pronounced lisp!' That's you!

SAMANTHA: *(In a rush of anger, her eyes sparkling)* And does it say she's ugly? With two great protruding popping-out eyes? And whiskers? It's true! I saw my face in an ice-mirror this morning and it was so extraordinarily ugly . . . and I . . . oh dear . . . *(She again lowers her head shyly)*

WALRUS: Vanity, that's what it is. Remember Samantha, beauty is only skin deep, as the saying goes.

SEAGULL: Another boring old proverb. Don't you ever get tired of them?

WALRUS: *(Dropping the parachute mantle and moving ponderously towards the seagull)* As for you, you pesky Seagull, you're nothing but a nuisance, a windbag, a nosey chatterbox.

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*(He takes a swipe at the seagull who easily evades him.)*

SEAGULL: Nosey! That's the second time.

WALRUS: Seagull delinquent! Bird-brain! Parasite!  
*(He takes another swipe, again Seagull evades him)*

SEAGULL: Steady on old fellow, don't get your whiskers in a knot.

SAMANTHA: Oooh Mister Seagull, you are extraordinarily rude!

WALRUS: No respect, that's what it is, no respect. Why don't you fly away and leave us in peace. *(He yawns)* Why don't you . . . flap your wings . . . buzz off . . . disappear . . . *(He nods off)*

SEAGULL: What's happened to him? Is he dead?

SAMANTHA: No of course not! He's just fallen asleep, that's all.

SEAGULL: Of course, it's in the script.

SAMANTHA: He only falls asleep when he's telling a story, or when he's angry, and you've made him extraordinarily angry.

SEAGULL: Well its his own fault for being so touchy. Anyway, I didn't come here for my own amusement. I didn't come to this desolate,dismal, deserted spot for my own pleasure. I came to warn him.

SAMANTHA: To warn him?

SEAGULL: And that's the thanks I get. Denigrated, yelled-at, insulted! I don't have to put up with that you know. There are others who appreciate my efforts, thank you very much. I'm leaving. Goodbye!



SAMANTHA: Wait! Please! What did you mean, to warn him?

SEAGULL: I don't get any rewards for my efforts you know, not even a tit-bit, not even a scrap of nourishment.

SAMANTHA: Warn him about what?

SEAGULL: Even though I'm ravenous, even though I'm starving, even though I'm weak with hunger.

SAMANTHA: Oooh, you are an extraordinarily infuriating bird. Warn him about what? Tell me before I wring your neck!

SEAGULL: Temper, temper. If I tell you, would you let me taste some of those scrumptuous fish delicacies I can spy in that tub?

SAMANTHA: That's Uncle Wally's breakfast!

SEAGULL: Oh well, I must be on my way.

SAMANTHA: Alright, alright, but just a taste mind.

SEAGULL: The merest soupcon.  
*She immediately dips her beak into the tub and slurps away with great satisfaction*

SAMANTHA: Well? Warn him about what?

SEAGULL: Well you see . . . *(slurping noises)* you see I flew over a ship heading in this direction . . . *(slurping noises)* Mmm! Absolutely delicious . . .

SAMANTHA: You said just a taste!

SEAGULL: A ship! Aren't you listening? A ship that I recognized, a terrible ship. *(Slurping noises)* Oh yes, truly delectable . . .

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SAMANTHA: That's enough! Stop!

SEAGULL: *(Picking at her beak, obviously satisfied)* Alright.

SAMANTHA: Why terrible?

SEAGULL: Because it belonged to Captain Bludgeon that's why.  
*(She belches)* Pardon.

SAMANTHA: Who's Captain Bludgeon?

SEAGULL: You don't know? Of course you're far too young to know. Well it's a most horrifying subject . . . no distasteful that's the word, distasteful subject, especially after a meal. You'd better wake your uncle and ask him.

SAMANTHA: You know what I think? I think you just made it up, that's what I think. I don't think there's any Captain Bloodskin . . .

SEAGULL: Bludgeon! As in bash your skull in. Bludgeon!

SAMANTHA: . . . Bludgeon. And I do intend to wake Uncle Wally, it's time for his breakfast. He'll be extraordinarily hungry.

SEAGULL: *(Nervously)* Yes, well, I'd better be off. Duty calls and all that. Ships to sight. Fish to fright, it never ends *(She belches)* Pardon!

*(She disappears. Samantha moves to wake Uncle Wally)*

SAMANTHA: Captain Bloodskull! Huh, poppycock! *(She shakes Uncle Wally)* Uncle Wally! Uncle Wally wake up! It's time for your breakfast.

WALRUS: What? . . . breakfast . . . oh yes, about time.  
*(He yawns)* I must have dozed off. *(He looks*

*about*) I'm glad to see that pesky Seagull's not about. Took my advice, did he, and buzzed off? *(He yawns)* I'm extremely hungry, in fact I'm so hungry I'll finish off this tub of fish before you can say: Sixty six stealthy seals steal past Samantha Seal.

SAMANTHA: What fun. *(Lisping heavily)* Sixty six stealthy seals . . .

WALRUS: *(Ominously, peering into the tub)* Samantha!

SAMANTHA: . . . steal past . . .

WALRUS: Samantha Seal! What is the meaning of this?

SAMANTHA: *(Peering into the tub)* Oooh Uncle Wally, you finished it. How extraordinary.

WALRUS: I never finished it. In fact I never started it. There was nothing in the tub.

SAMANTHA: Nothing?

WALRUS: *(Turning it upside down)* Nothing! Not even a morsel.

SAMANTHA: Oooh that odious Seagull! That greedy, grasping bird! He ate it all.

WALRUS: What? Ate my breakfast! Where is he? Just let me get my flippers on him. I'll teach him. I'll pluck out his feathers! I'll pound him to pulp! I'll . . . I'll . . .

SAMANTHA: He's gone. Don't worry Uncle Wally, I'll catch you more fish *(Taking the tub)*

WALRUS: I knew he was trouble, the moment I set my eyes on him. This one's trouble I said to myself.

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SAMANTHA: He said I should ask you about Captain . . .  
Bubblegum . . .

WALRUS: Captain Bubblegum?

SAMANTHA: No, Captain . . . Bloodskin . . .

WALRUS: Captain Bloodskin?

SAMANTHA: No . . . oh what was it?

AUDIENCE: *(Responds)*

SAMANTHA: Of course. Thank you, you've been extraordinarily  
helpful. Bludgeon. That was the name. Captain  
Bludgeon.

WALRUS: *(Alarmed)* What did he say about Captain Bludgeon?

SAMANTHA: Oh I knew he was just . . . fabricating, that's the  
word, making it up.

WALRUS: Samantha, this is serious. Very, very serious. What  
did he say about Captain Bludgeon?

SAMANTHA: *(Surprised)* Well, he said his ship was heading in  
this direction, that's all.

WALRUS: *(Sitting heavily on the up-turned bucket)* We are  
doomed! We are undone! It's the end of everything.

SAMANTHA: *(Alarmed)* Uncle Wally, what is it? Who is this  
Captain Bludgeon?

WALRUS: It's a catastrophe! It's a calamity! It's a  
disaster! It's a tragedy!

SAMANTHA: *(Shaking him)* Uncle Wally, stop this, at once! Who  
is Captain Bludgeon?

WALRUS: *(Dolefully)* Samantha, I think the time has come for

you to learn the facts about life.

SAMANTHA: You mean where I come from?

WALRUS: No I certainly don't! I mean the harsh facts of life, the bitter ironies of life. Now sit beside me and pay attention.

SAMANTHA: Yes Uncle Wally.

WALRUS: And above all don't interrupt!

SAMANTHA: Yes Uncle Wally.

WALRUS: I'm an old walrus. I've lived through many winters and I've learned many things. Experience is the best teacher, that's what I've always said.

SAMANTHA: I know Uncle Wally, you are extraordinarily old.

WALRUS: And wise. But don't interrupt.

SAMANTHA: Sorry.

WALRUS: Every year the most terrible, the most ghastly, the most cruel and horrific slaughter takes place right here where we are and the ice runs red with blood.

SAMANTHA: *(Faintly)* Blood.

WALRUS: Yes blood. The blood of innocent seals like yourself. You were just a puppy seal when the last slaughter happened. They came with their clubs. It was awful. You had wandered away from your mother and I was able to hide you when I saw them coming. They weren't concerned about a tough old hide like mine, they wanted young seals with white fur like yours.

SAMANTHA: *(Tearful)* And my mother?

WALRUS: They killed indiscriminately. Old and young,

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brutally clubbed, bludgeoned to death.

SAMANTHA: *(Sobbing she throws herself into Uncle Wally's arms)*  
Oh Uncle Wally, why? Why did they do it? Why?

WALRUS: I've often wondered about that, and I've come to the conclusion that the reason is they have no fur themselves, they have pink smooth skins, and they want our fur to keep them warm.

SAMANTHA: But its cruel . . . and . . . horrible *(she sobs)*  
Barbaric!

WALRUS: And now they're coming again. When I heard the name Captain Bludgeon I feared the worst. He's heartless and cruel. He wears galoshes and has a black eye-patch. Our only hope is to hide.

SAMANTHA: No! We can't go on hiding forever. You've been extraordinarily kind Uncle Wally, you saved me once, but now I must fend for myself. We must fight this evil Captain Bludgeon.

WALRUS: *(Aghast)* Fight him! Do you realize what you're saying? Fight boots and clubs and brute force! How could we possibly fight them?

SAMANTHA: We must think of a plan, an extraordinary plan, otherwise all my friends and playfellows will perish too.

WALRUS: Oh my tusks and toenails! What are we to do? If I weren't so hungry and so terrified, I think I would fall asleep immediately.

*(Seagull appears above)*

SEAGULL: Ahoy there me hearties, lower the mainsail, there's a storm brewing.

WALRUS: Oh its you again. Can't you see we have enough trouble without you pestering us. (*Remembering*) And what about my breakfast?

SAMANTHA: Uncle Wally please, we haven't time to squabble. And he did warn us about that villain Captain Bubblegum.

SEAGULL: Bludgeon! Captain Bludgeon.

WALRUS: (*Grumbling*) Only because he wanted something in return - my breakfast.

SEAGULL: What a fuss over a few mouthfuls.

WALRUS: They were my mouthfuls.

SAMANTHA: Stop it both of you!

SEAGULL: Anyway, if you can take your mind off your tummy, you might be interested to know that Captain Bludgeon's ship has moored just beyond the next iceberg. It won't take him long to reach here.

SAMANTHA: Then we haven't much time. We must warn all the seals to hide, in the ice-cave. I've thought of an extraordinary plan to foil that villainous Captain Plugpin.

SEAGULL: Bludgeon! Captain Bludgeon.

WALRUS: Oh my tusks and toenails! I hope you know what you're doing. Remember, fools rush in . . .

SEAGULL: Oh no, not again, I can't stand it.

WALRUS: . . . where angels fear to tread!

SAMANTHA: (*Hastily*) Come on, I'll tell you my plan as we go. (*To the Seagull*) You can fly ahead and warn them we're coming.

SEAGULL: I don't know why I bother. Nobody appreciates me. All I get is insults and innuendos. Still that's life I suppose *(She flies off)*

WALRUS: I don't see why we have to take him along. He's just a nuisance, a scrounger.

SAMANTHA: Come along Uncle Wally, take my flipper. Its extraordinarily slippery around here. Now this is my plan . . .

*(They move off. A ship's fog-horn sounds. Then Willy Whatsis blunders in, followed by Captain Bludgeon. Willie is short and wears an enormous anorak which almost envelops him. On his head he wears a knitted woollen hat with a pom-pom. He has small, round pebble-glasses and is extremely short-sighted. Captain Bludgeon is as described previously. He wears a fur coat and a balaclava rolled-up on his head. They both carry padded, rubber clubs.)*

WILLIE: Hey Boss, I tink I've sighted dem. *(He sets about an ice-block with his club)* Take dat, you stupid seals, and dat, and dat!

BLUDGEON: Stop it you idiot, that's a block of ice.

WILLIE: Oh, is it? *(He peers at it)*

BLUDGEON: Why don't you get your eyes tested? Get yourself some new spectacles.

WILLIE: 'Cause I don't need dems, I can see perfickly.

BLUDGEON: Idiot!

WILLIE: Pity, if dat had been a seal, I'd have whacked him and thwacked him, I'd have smacked him and cracked him.



**BLUDGEON:** Keep quiet you idiot and listen. There must be some seals about. Listen for their barking.

**WILLIE:** Barking? I tink you got da wrong animals boss. Its dem canine dogs dat bark.

**BLUDGEON:** Are you trying to teach me about seals? Why don't you teach your Grandma to suck eggs!

**WILLIE:** Eggs? Nooo, me gran can't stand eggs. She likes porridge for her breakfast.

**BLUDGEON:** Look, never mind about your Grandma. Just keep your little mind on the seals ... and your ears. Listen for their barking.

**WILLIE:** Oh yeah. I'll prick up me ears. If dere's one ting dat's sharp about me it's me ears.

*(They circle the ice-pool warily. Suddenly Bludgeon sneezes)*

What was dat? Boss did you hear dat? I tink it was a bark!

**BLUDGEON:** It was a sneeze you moron, my sneeze. On top of everything else I'm catching a sneezing, snivelling cold. *(He takes out a large red handkerchief and blows his nose vigorously)*

**WILLIE:** Oh what a shame, you must have got your tootsies wet. Dat's a shure way to get a cold. Me mam told me never to get me feets wet.

**BLUDGEON:** I did not get my feet wet. Why do you think I wear wellies? Everywhere I go? If there's one thing I dread its getting my feet wet. I can put up with anything but that. I have nightmares about it.

**WILLIE:** Is dat so! Hey Boss, tell me again, why are we killin' dese seals. I got it in me head but its

just evadin' me.

**BLUDGEON:** If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times, because they eat all the fish in the sea, and then our poor fishermen go home with empty nets, and then the big nob's can't have smoked salmon at their do's.

**WILLIE:** Oh yeah, dat's terrible.

**BLUDGEON:** That, and the fact that we can sell their fur, but that's a minor consideration of course.

**WILLIE:** Yeah, and da baby seals wit da white fur, da ones we have to whack, dey eat more fish den da udders I suppose.

**BLUDGEON:** Can't you stop babbling and just do what you're told to do.

**WILLIE:** What was dat?

**BLUDGEON:** Give me patience (*Shouts*) Look for the seals you nincompoop.

**WILLIE:** Oh yeah, sorry Boss.

**BLUDGEON:** There's something very strange going on here, this place is usually packed with seals.

**WILLIE:** (*Seeing the audience*) Boss! Hey Boss dere's hundreds of dems!

**BLUDGEON:** What? Where?

**WILLIE:** Dere! Look at dem all. (*He waves his club about*) Let's get at 'em, whackity, smackity, thwackity . . .

**BLUDGEON:** Wait, you cretin, that's the audience, can't you see!

**WILLIE:** Audience? Audience? (*Squinting*) Dey look more like seals to me.

**BLUDGEON:** *(Whacking him)* Well they're not. That's all we need. We'd be arrested for assaulting young children! Are you out of your mind!

**WILLIE:** Sorry boss, I taught dey was baby seals. Dere wouldn't be anyting wrong wid bashing dere brains out would dere?

**BLUDGEON:** Of course not, they're a menace. Now forget about the audience and concentrate on finding the seals, if that's not too much for you.

**WILLIE:** O.K Boss, anyting you say.

*(They continue around the pool in silence)*

Look boss!

**BLUDGEON:** What is it this time?

**WILLIE:** Dere's a hole! In da middle of da pool.

**BLUDGEON:** Hmm you're right. It's a hole in the ice.

**WILLIE:** Dat's what I taught.

**BLUDGEON:** Yes well, edge out to the centre of the pool, and see if there are any seals lurking beneath the water.

**WILLIE:** Who me?

**BLUDGEON:** No, I'm talking to this block of ice.

**WILLIE:** Oh, for a minute I taught you was referrin' to me.

**BLUDGEON:** Of course I'm talking to you numbskull, who else would I be talking to?

**WILLIE:** But boss, what if da ice is 'tin. What if me body weight, which is considerable, was to burst trough, I'd be plunged into icy, freezin' water wouldn't I?

BLUDGEON: I imagine you would.

WILLIE: Well I was tinken, a man of your superior skill and intellect would surely be able to manage a tricky task like dat, far better den a clumsy oaf like me.

BLUDGEON: What, and risk getting my feet wet. Never! Now come along Willie, some of us, like me, are in charge because we do the thinking, and some of us, like you, get ordered about because you do the doing, so its logical that you should crawl out to the hole. Besides if you don't I'll dock one month's pay, so get on with it.

WILLIE: Oh I don't like dis, I don't like it one little bit I can tell yer.

*(A lot of business as he pussyfoots to the centre of the parachute, then goes onto his knees to peer into the hole.)*

Oh, if me mam saw me now, she'd 'tink I was round da bend, off me nut, stark, starin' bonkers . . . Oh I felt dat . . . I felt da ice movin - its breakin' up under me feet . . . me last moments come I know it.

BLUDGEON: If you'd just stop jabbering and concentrate you might get the job done.

WILLIE: *(Kneeling)* Oh, I can see one! I can see a great ugly face starin up at me. Where's me club? Pass me me club!

BLUDGEON: Here you are. Well done. Bash his skull in.

WILLIE: Oh no, its me own reflection starin' up at me. He's not so bad lookin' after all.

BLUDGEON: You idiot, you imbecile, you're just wasting my time. Come along, we'll look for them somewhere else.

WILLIE: It's all very well for you. I'm da one dat's stuck out here. I'm da one riskin' me life. I'm da one on da 'tin ice!

BLUDGEON: Oh very well, give me your hand and let's get on with it.

*(More business as Captain Bludgeon almost gets pulled in)*

Steady . . . I said steady! Watch out you idiot! Let go you'll pull me in.

WILLIE: Oh mother, if I fall 'trough I'll drown . . . I can't swim. Pull boss, pull!

*(Finally they both end in a heap on the edge)*

BLUDGEON: You are without exception, the most stupid, clot-brained, addle-headed nincompoop, it has ever been my misfortune to encounter.

WILLIE: Chee boss! Where did you learn all dem big words?

BLUDGEON: What's the use. Come on let's search elsewhere.

WILLIE: Boss, I been 'tinkin . . .

BLUDGEON: Well don't, it will only get us into trouble. *(He stops)* Wait! Look at this!

WILLIE: What boss?

BLUDGEON: Footprints.

WILLIE: Footprints?

BLUDGEON: Yes footprints. Two pairs. Flipper-prints to be exact.

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- WILLIE:** Wow look at dat! Hey boss dese are great big elephant prints. I don't like da look of dis.
- BLUDGEON:** Not those numbskull! Those are our own prints. These! Here! See, two sets leading in that direction.
- WILLIE:** Oh yeah, I see dem.
- BLUDGEON:** That's the way we're going. Come along.  
*(He strides off)*
- WILLIE:** Oh dis is hard work dis seal-huntin' business.  
*(Willie follows him off. After a pause Seagull enters, flapping her arms)*
- SEAGULL:** Clear the decks, I'm coming in to land. *(She settles)* I'm getting the hang of it now . . . as a matter of fact I feel quite graceful. How do I look? I still think this beak is a disaster, but I can't do anything about that. Well, are you all holding thumbs for Samantha? I don't know what her plan is, but for her sake I hope it works. Otherwise her fate is sealed. That's good - sealed! *(She flaps closer to the audience)* Perhaps you think this is just a play, just make-believe. Well let me tell you, there are many young seals like Samantha, hundreds, thousands each year, callously clubbed, bludgeoned to death. Captain Bludgeon! Nasty piece of work isn't he? I wonder how things will turn out. Shall I take a peek at the script? It couldn't do any harm could it? Just a quick peek? I'll tell you what, there's nobody about is there? Right you keep a look-out and I'll take a quick eyeful. Here goes: *(She pages through the script)* Ah, here it is . . . 'Captain Bludgeon and Willie Whatsis exit' . . . Oh no! This is terrible! It says . . . 'Interval'.

We'll just have to wait for the second half to see what happens. Just keep holding your thumbs during the interval. I'm sure that will help. *(She exits)*

*INTERVAL*

## ACT TWO

*(During the interval the trap has been set. It is an extremely complicated paraphernalia as will become evident. Samantha and Uncle Wally are applying the final touches. The Seagull is supervising and generally getting in the way)*

- SEAGULL: Ahoy me hearties! Batten the hatches! Brace the mainsail! There's a fair wind and we're ready to sail.
- WALRUS: Oh do keep quiet! All he can do is jabber, jabber, jabber! Why do we put up with it, that's what I'd like to know.
- SEAGULL: Because I have a very responsible position, that's why. I'm the official look-out.
- WALRUS: When it comes to hard work, then he doesn't stir a feather. When it comes to setting this trap, then Mister Seagull is nowhere to be seen.
- SEAGULL: I like that, after all I've done. I've a good mind to fly away and leave you to flipper-flapper on your own.
- SAMANTHA: Mister Seagull, will you please keep watch and stop being so extraordinarily provoking. Now, is everything ready?
- WALRUS: It all seems very complicated. I'm not sure I understand it exactly.
- SEAGULL: It looks elementary to me.



WALRUS: Bird brain!

SAMANTHA: Shoo! Both of you. Let's go over it once more step by step. Now, we'll need a substitute to stand in for Captain Mudskin.

SEAGULL: Bludgeon! Captain Bludgeon!

SAMANTHA: Thank you Mister Seagull, I knew you'd volunteer.

SEAGULL: But I didn't. It's not fair. I protest.

SAMANTHA: Now you stand there, you're Captain Puddle-tin.

SEAGULL: I'm not saying a word.

SAMANTHA: Bludgeon, I was only teasing.

WALRUS: Why would he stand there?

SAMANTHA: Because I'll be the bait, that's way. Me and these two stuffed dummies that look like me. He'll come up here after me . . .

WALRUS: And when he does?

SAMANTHA: And when he does, when he stealthily stalks me, when he raises his nasty club to wallop me, at the very last minute . . .

WALRUS: You run away!

SAMANTHA: No! I yell "Thumpity-Thump!"

WALRUS: Why do you yell "Thumpity-Thump?"

SAMANTHA: Uncle Wally, we've been through all this before.

SEAGULL: That's right, there's no need for me to be a substitute.

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SAMANTHA: No, Uncle Wally's right, we should test the trap. When I yell "Thumpity-Thump", then somebody in the audience pulls this rope . . . Gracious me! We haven't chosen our accomplice yet!

WALRUS: Accomplice?

SAMANTHA: Yes, it will have to be somebody extraordinarily responsible, otherwise it could be a disaster, it could be the end of Samantha Seal.

WALRUS: Oh my tusks and toenails, who will it be?

SEAGULL: Why not me? I volunteer. I really do this time.

SAMANTHA: No Mister Seagull you must keep watch. Who would like to help us teach that odious Captain Bludgeon a lesson?

*(The Accomplice is selected and the procedure carefully explained)*

WALRUS: I think I understand the first part now.

SEAGULL: Bravo!

WALRUS: *(Glaring)* What happens after that? What happens when you yell 'Thumpity-Thump'?

SAMANTHA: Well, it will take too long to explain. Why don't we just demonstrate it. Are you ready Seagull?

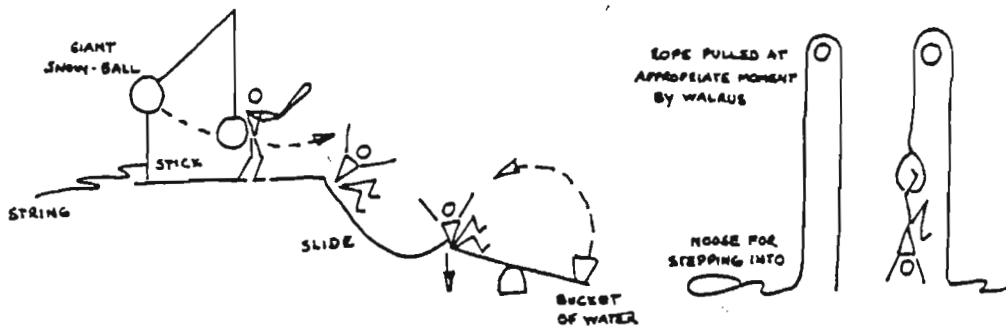
SEAGULL: No I'm not ready. I never volunteered and I think this is grossly unfair. It's cruelty to seagulls.

SAMANTHA: Just stand right there, on that spot.

SEAGULL: I protest!

SAMANTHA: Thumpity-Thump!

(When the rope is pulled, the giant snowball is released which triggers off the elaborate sequence of events, culminating in the capture of Captain Bludgeon and Willie Whatsis. The diagram below illustrates the paraphernalia, but the more complicated it can be made to appear, the more fun will be had by all)



(At the end of the trial run, Seagull lies groaning at the foot of the slide)

- SEAGULL:** Oh agony! I think I've sprained my wing!
- SAMANTHA:** Well done Seagull! Let me help you up.
- WALRUS:** (Clapping his flippers in delight) Oh what a splendid sight. Ingenious, most ingenious.
- SEAGULL:** Aaah, my leg! It's bruised black and blue!
- WALRUS:** Oh stop being such a sissy. Stop making such a fuss.
- SEAGULL:** Sissy! You didn't get thumped on the bottom by that great snow-ball did you? You didn't get hurtled at neck-breaking speed down that diabolical slide did you? And at the end of it all you didn't

get drenched with freezing-cold, icy water, did you? Making a fuss! Hah! I've had enough, I'm leaving.

*SAMANTHA:* It was all in a good cause Seagull. Now we know it works.

*SEAGULL:* *(Groaning)* It works alright.

*WALRUS:* And after that, I do my bit don't I?

*SAMANTHA:* That's right Uncle Wally, your bit's extraordinarily important. You see Mister Seagull, I didn't want you to get hurt so we didn't go right through to the end. There's something extra in store for Captain Bludgeon.

*SEAGULL:* I don't want to know about it! Oh my back!

*SAMANTHA:* Now please keep watch while we set the trap again. Who knows, there might even be an enormous tub of fish for you at the end, if it all goes well.

*SEAGULL:* Did you say fish? A tub of fish? Well, perhaps I'll consider keeping watch after all. Though I don't know whether my wings will flap after that battering.

*(He limps to a high vantage point while Samantha and Uncle Wally re-set the pendulum snow-ball and the bucket of water)*

*SAMANTHA:* *(To the audience)* Remember its extraordinarily important not to pull the string until I shout "Thumpity-thump". You must wait for that signal otherwise all will be lost.

*SEAGULL:* Ship Ahoy! I mean Captain Bludgeon Ahoy! He's approaching on the starboard bow, and he looks decidedly mean.

SAMANTHA: Action stations! To your places. Are you ready Uncle Wally?

WALRUS: Nothing ventured nothing gained.

SEAGULL: Oh no, spare me!

SAMANTHA: *(To audience)* And you can all help by holding your thumbs.

*(Samantha stands with the two dummies near the ice-slide. Uncle Wally is ready with his weights and Seagull is well out of the way. Willie Whatsis and Captain Bludgeon enter stealthily, Willie is in front)*

WILLIE: *(Loudly)* Hey boss . . .

BLUDGEON: Shsh, you idiot!

WILLIE: Oh yeah. *(Whispering)* Hey boss.

BLUDGEON: What is it?

WILLIE: Can we stop for a breather? Me glasses are all fogged up an' I can't see a ting.

BLUDGEON: No we can not stop for a breather. We are following their footprints, which, incidentally have led us around in a circle. We are back at the ice-pool.

WILLIE: Is dat true? I can't see a ting.

BLUDGEON: That's not unusual. *(Seeing Samantha)* Look! There they are!

WILLIE: *(Looking in the wrong direction)* Where? Just let me at dem, I'll whack dem, and I'll . . .

---

BLUDGEON: Not there you nit-wit, There! There are three of them. The others are bound to be close by.

WILLIE: Good 'tinkin boss.

BLUDGEON: Keep down, I want to surprise them.

WILLIE: Oh dis is excitin'!

BLUDGEON: We can reach them by climbing up this way . . .  
*(Indicating the direction of the trap)*

WILLIE: O.K. let's go!  
*(Restraining him)*

BLUDGEON: . . . or! . . . or we can circle around that way and reach them from the back.

WILLIE: Oh-ho dat's sneaky.

BLUDGEON: Which way should we choose?

WILLIE: *(Heeding the promptings of the audience)* I 'tink boss, if I was to venture a suggestion, I would choose. . . 'dis way.

BLUDGEON: Right. Not a sound, we'll creep up on them.

WILLIE: I'm wid you boss.  
*(Slowly and stealthily they creep up on Samantha and the two dummies)*

BLUDGEON: Attack!  
*(They both jump up and start beating the two dummies with their clubs. Samantha, who is further back, doesn't move)*

WILLIE: I'll whack 'em, I'll smack 'em, I'll thwack 'em!

BLUDGEON: *(Stopping)* These aren't seals!

WILLIE: I'll wallop dem, I'll dollop dem, I'll lollop dem!

BLUDGEON: Stop you idiot, they're dummies!

WILLIE: I'll bash 'em, I'll smash 'em, I'll dash 'em!

BLUDGEON: *(Hitting him with his club)* Stop it you dummy!

WILLIE: Ow! What did you do dat for boss?

BLUDGEON: They're dummies!

WILLIE: Dummies? Like me?

BLUDGEON: No nit-wit, real dummies, full of padding, look!

WILLIE: Oh yeah! Perhaps dat's how dey're born.

BLUDGEON: Don't be idiotic! There's something very strange going on here, and I'm going to get to the bottom of it. *(He moves towards Samantha)*

SAMANTHA: Thumpity-Thump!

*(Captain Bludgeon stops, astounded. Samantha moves aside. The snow-ball strikes Willie, catapulting him into Captain Bludgeon, who in turn is propelled down the slide and onto the plank and bucket which showers him with water. Willie lies groaning above)*

BLUDGEON: Aaah! Heeelp! It's an avalanche! I'm drenched! [cy, freezing water! It's trickling into my wellies! Heeelp!

*(He blunders up, is snared by the lasso and ends*

*hanging upside-down by one leg)*

WILLIE: What happened? Was it an avalanche? What do you 'tink boss . . . boss? Boss! What're you doin' down dere?

BLUDGEON: Help me! Get me down from here!

WILLIE: Why are you hangin' upside-down for?

*(He crawls to the slide on his hands and knees. Samantha swings the ball from behind, sending him down the slide on his tummy. Uncle Wally, having completed his task, is waiting at the foot of the slide for Willie)*

Heelp! Dere's a great, ugly monster wid elephant's tusks glarin' at me. I 'tink me last day's come.

BLUDGEON: It's a Walrus, you imbecile. Get me down from here! He can't harm you.

WILLIE: Nòoo. I'm not movin' a muscle wid dis rapacious monster starin' me in da eye.

BLUDGEON: We walked into a carefully laid trap, and I want to know who's behind it.

SAMANTHA: That's my cue. I'm Samantha Seal.

WILLIE: Boss, I 'tink I'm going cuckoo. First I taught I heard a seal say 'Tumpity-tump', and now I 'tink I hears a seal sayin' it's name is . . . what did you say yer name was?

SAMANTHA: Samantha Seal.

WILLIE: Yes, sayin' its name is Samantha Seal. I must be hearin' tings.



- BLUDGEON:* It's a trick. It's a diabolical trick to cheat me out of my seals. I don't know who you are, but if you think you can fool me with that disguise, you're making a mistake.
- SAMANTHA:* (*Passionately*) Now you listen to me. I'm Samantha Seal, or if you prefer to be more scientific, I'm an amphibious, furred, carnivorous mammal with flippers as limbs. And I represent all the seals in the world. I'm here to tell you that what you do is brutal, is barbaric, is a crime against humanity. You are murderers, worse than that, you kill babies, you beat their brains out in the name of science or conservation or whatever you want to call it. And then you skin them, you take their skins and leave the ice stained with their flesh and blood. People like you are sick Captain Bludgeon. How can you look at your own children with such unspeakable deeds on your conscience?
- WILLIE:* (*Softly, after a pause*) Boss, I'm ashamed of what I done. I didn't 'tink of it in dat way.
- BLUDGEON:* Don't get taken in by all that clap-trap. It's a trick I tell you.
- SAMANTHA:* It's no trick. You must swear an oath never to go hunting seals again, ever, if you want to be released from that position.
- WILLIE:* Go on boss, do what she says. You don't want to be hangin' dere 'till Christmas.
- BLUDGEON:* Coward! You can't frighten me. I'm not going to swear your oath, whoever you are.
- WILLIE:* It's true miss. He's a tough boss da Captain. Dere's nuttin' in da world will frighten him. Nuttin' dat is except . . .

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**BLUDGEON:** Keep quiet you idiot!

**WILLIE:** Oh dear! I nearly done it dat time, didn't I.  
I nearly blew it.

**SAMANTHA:** What's the only thing that will frighten Captain Bludgeon? *(To the audience)* Can anyone help me?  
*(The audience responds.)*  
Water in his wellies? *(To Willie)* What do they mean, water in his wellies?

**WILLIE:** Don't worry boss, I'm not stupid. I would never tell her dat water in your wellies is da only ting in da world dat would . . . oh dear, I done it again, didn't I!

**BLUDGEON:** Oh no! You Judas! Actually it's ridiculous, absurd! Why should I care about a little water . . . in my wellies.

**SAMANTHA:** Water in his wellies!

**BLUDGEON:** I tell you I couldn't care less.

**SAMANTHA:** I think I'll just fill this bucket with water.

**BLUDGEON:** You wouldn't really . . . would you?

**SAMANTHA:** *(Filling the bucket)* Freezing, frigid, icy water.

**BLUDGEON:** Oh no! I can put up with anything but that. My toes will freeze off. I'll catch my death!

**WILLIE:** If I were you I'd do it boss. Just 'tink, your toes will be little blocks of ice. Oh your poor tootsies.

**SAMANTHA:** *(Taking his free leg)* We'll just fill this wellie right to the top.

BLUDGEON: Nooo! Stop! I'll do it. I'll do anything, only don't put water in my wellies. I beg you. Don't wet my toes.

SAMANTHA: Swear you will never go hunting seals again.

BLUDGEON: Yes I swear! Anything! Just let me down from here.

WILLIE: And I swear too. May all me hair fall out if I ever tink of it again.

SAMANTHA: Just remember there are hundreds of witnesses who heard you swear. *(To the audience)* You did didn't you?

WILLIE: Me too, I heard you swear Boss, an' me too, I swaired. Sorry Boss, but I couldn't tell a lie.

BLUDGEON: Alright, alright I swore. Now just get me down from here. I'll deal with you later.

SAMANTHA: Alright Uncle Wally, untie the weights, and if he gives you any trouble just give him a poke with your tusks, that will teach him.

WILLIE: We won't be given' any trouble miss, isn't dat right boss? Oh dear, I don't like da look of dem tusks.  
*(Uncle Wally unties the weights and Captain Bludgeon crashes down)*

BLUDGEON: Aaah, my head . . .

WILLIE: Poor Boss.

BLUDGEON: . . . I've injured my skull . . .

WILLIE: Dat was a big bump on da brain-box.

BLUDGEON: . . . I must be concussed.

SAMANTHA: Now you just head straight for your boat and sail it right back to where you came from.

- 
- WILLIE:* Right away Miss. Come along Boss, I'll give you a hand.
- BLUDGEON:* I don't need your help, traitor! I can manage on my own. *(He limps off)*
- WILLIE:* Don't mind him miss, he's just feelin': a bit peeved. Well, I'll be on me way, it was nice meetin' you Miss . . .
- SAMANTHA:* Samantha Seal.
- WILLIE:* Oh yeah, dat's right. *(He walks off a few paces, then turns back)* Excuse me Miss, I hope you don't mind me askin' but is you a real seal? I mean for one 'ting, I never heard a seal talk before.
- SAMANTHA:* Yes, I promise I'm a real seal. Just because you've never heard one talk before, doesn't mean we can't.
- WILLIE:* Well, if I'd a known dat before, I never would have tried to . . .
- SAMANTHA:* Does it make any difference whether we talk or not? We're still living creatures, we feel pain and suffering just like you do.
- WILLIE:* True! Dat's very true. Well I'd better be goin! Da boss will be wonderin' what's happened to me. And I want to 'tank you for helpin' me to see tings differently. It was a real pleasure meetin' you.
- (He exits. Seagull, who has been peeping from behind an ice-block, now appears)*
- SEAGULL:* Hurrah! We did it. We taught those scoundrels a lesson.
- WALRUS:* We? All you did was peep from behind that block.

SEAGULL: Well that was my job wasn't it, keeping watch!

WALRUS: It was Samantha who did it. *(To the audience)*  
Didn't she? Samantha saved the seals.

SAMANTHA: No, I don't think so.

WALRUS: Don't be modest Samantha. We defeated those two,  
and it was your plan that did it. They'll never  
come back again.

SAMANTHA: Yes, but how many others like them are there?  
Hundreds. Thousands. If it isn't Captain Bludgeon,  
it will be Captain Basher or Mister Smasher.

WALRUS: Then there's no hope!

SAMANTHA: Yes there is!

WALRUS: But you just said . . . I don't understand. I must  
be getting old.

SAMANTHA: Don't you see, it's just a beginning, we've won  
ourselves some time. But there's much more to do.

WALRUS: What else can we do?

SEAGULL: I'm not doing anything more until I get my fish.  
I've risked life and limb; and you promised a great  
big tub of fish.

WALRUS: You know Seagull, I have been ruminating and con-  
sidering, and I have come to the considered con-  
clusion that you are supercilious, superficial and  
superfluous. Why don't you just twit-off!

SAMANTHA: Goodness, gracious Uncle Wally, Mister Seagull's  
not so bad. Don't take him so seriously.

SEAGULL: I'm not sure that's a compliment!

---

SAMANTHA: You'll get your fish. A promise is a promise. But first there is some extraordinarily important business to attend to.

WALRUS: What are we going to do?

SAMANTHA: No Uncle Wally, I have to do this alone. You have both taken extraordinary risks for me, and now it's the final test. This is my cause, and it's my responsibility.

SEAGULL: But what are you going to do?

SAMANTHA: I'm going into the world of people.

WALRUS AND  
SEAGULL: What!

SAMANTHA: And I'm going to convince them that what they're doing to us seals is criminal, despicable.

WALRUS: But how? How will you convince them?

SEAGULL: It's madness. I've been there. They don't care, they're ruthless!

SAMANTHA: I'll go to the very top, where all the important people in the world meet, to discuss their problems, and I'll put our cause.

WALRUS: But . . .

SAMANTHA: No more buts. It has to be done. Uncle Wally, you toddle off and tell those seals they can come out of hiding now. They are safe for the present.

WALRUS: Very well, if that's what you want. Take care Samantha. *(He blows his nose loudly)* I must be catching a cold.

SAMANTHA: Good-bye Uncle Wally. I'll miss you, I really will. You've been an extraordinary friend to me.

WALRUS: You just follow your instinct Samantha . . . and remember . . .

SEAGULL: No please! I couldn't bear it.

WALRUS: . . . Where there's a will . . .

SAMANTHA: . . . there's a way! Bye.

*(She waves sadly as Uncle Wally exits)*

Don't worry Mister Seagull, Samantha Seal never breaks a promise. I'll be back, and you shall have a great big tub of succulent sea-food. Goodbye for now.

SEAGULL: Oh don't say goodbye. I might just tag along to see what happens. But I'll keep out of your way. Good luck Samantha, you'll need it.

*(Samantha exits)*

Huh, I think Samantha Seal is biting off more than she can chew, don't you? I mean it's hopeless, what can one, defenceless, little seal do against a world of mean and greedy men? Precious little. Anyway it's her choice, who am I to argue? Nobody listens to me. Do you know where she's going? Do you? That's right to the United Nations. *(Taking up the script)* It says so in here, see . . . *(She finds the place)* 'After many, many days and weeks and months, first swimming, then stowing away, Samantha finally reaches the United States of America.'

*(The parachute is removed)*

---

She caused quite a stir I can tell you. You should have seen the headlines: *(Spoken by three of the Cast)*

'Talking Seal accuses men of mass murder!'  
'Seal called Samantha challenges the conscience of the world'  
'Don't destroy us, pleads Samantha Seal'  
and  
'Samantha Seal: is she part of a Communist plot?'  
Everybody had something to say.

*(The actors playing Captain Bludgeon, Willie Whatsis and Walrus, now assume different roles)*

- ACTOR A: *(With microphone)* Excuse me sir, what is your opinion of Samantha Seal?
- ACTOR B: I think it's disgusting, seals should stay in the sea, they're so smelly.
- ACTOR A: And you sir, do you agree with what she has been saying?
- ACTOR C: Yes well, I think clearly the issue here is not what she is saying, but that she is able to say anything at all! I mean here is a seal actually talking. Speaking as a scientist, I would support vivisection . . . you know, cutting her up, to see how she does it.
- ACTOR A: Very interesting, we certainly have a variety of views. And you sir, what do you think.
- ACTOR B: I think she's cute. I'd like her as a pet.
- ACTOR A: Time for one more opinion. This gentleman looks sympathetic. Excuse me sir . . . sir, have you read about Samantha Seal?
- ACTOR C: What's the big deal? I say if they're eating our



fish, kill them all!

*SAMANTHA:* *(Running in)* Don't you listen? Don't you understand? Don't you feel anything, anything at all? I'm talking about the murder of thousands, of hundreds of thousands of living, breathing creatures . . . mammals . . . baby seals like me!

*(They exit silently)*

I don't think I can go on. I'm so tired. So tired of explaining, of pleading. They just don't want to listen. *(She sits disconsolately)*

*SEAGULL:* You see I told you. She's bitten off more than she can chew. Nobody's interested in her tale of woe, they've all got their own problems. Now if she'd listened to me . . .

*SAMANTHA:* *(Standing)* No! I won't give in. Uncle Wally was right, where there's a will there's a way!

*SEAGULL:* And where has all her stubbornness got her?

*(From the rostra encircling the central area, the flags of many nations are unfurled. Seagull consults the script)*

'To the World Court.

*(A lectern and high stool are placed centre for the judge)*

The most learned and respected judge in the world will hear the case. Only he has an unfortunate habit, just like old Walrus, of falling asleep at the most critical moments.

*(The judge, who is indeed played by the same actor, totters in, sits, and nods off)*

---

The most shrewd, and the most expensive lawyers have been briefed to represent the many powerful and influential people whose reputations and welfare would be affected by Samantha's accusations.'

*(The two actors who previously portrayed Bludgeon and Willie Whatsis, now play the two lawyers)*

You want to know what I think? I think Samantha's way out of her depth.

FIRST LAWYER: Your honour, it is our contention . . . your honour!

*(Samantha tugs at the Judge's sleeve. He wakes with a start)*

SAMANTHA: Your honour, he's talking to you.

JUDGE: Yes I know. What is it?

FIRST LAWYER: As I was saying your honour, it is our contention that this case should be dismissed, thrown out of court.

JUDGE: On what grounds?

SECOND  
LAWYER:

Your honour, this . . . creature, claims to be a seal. But it's a well-known fact that seals can't talk.

JUDGE: It sounded to me like talking. Can you talk?

SAMANTHA: Yes your honour.

JUDGE: There! And she looks like a seal. Are you?

SAMANTHA: Of course I'm a seal. And my name is Samantha, your honour. I'm pleased to meet you.

JUDGE: Don't try and influence the Court. And you two, get on with it, I don't want to be here all day. I've a birthday party this afternoon and I don't intend to be late for it.

SECOND  
LAWYER: Very well, your honour.

JUDGE: *(Whispering to Samantha)* My name is Herbert, but you have to call me your honour. It's my birthday today, I'm eighty years old.

SAMANTHA: *(Whispering)* Many happy returns, your honour.

FIRST LAWYER: Your honour, ladies and gentlemen of the jury. I have in this file *(He holds up a thick file)* all the details of the enormous benefits that have accrued to mankind over the past century, through the careful and scientific culling of seals. *(He opens the file)* In 1905 . . .

JUDGE: Never mind all that, just get to the point.

SECOND  
LAWYER: Your honour I protest, this is most irregular.

JUDGE: I'll give you precisely three minutes to tell me, in the simplest possible language, why you should be allowed to go on killing seals.

FIRST LAWYER: Culling your honour, not killing.

SAMANTHA: It's the same thing!

JUDGE: Don't interrupt! *(He takes out an enormous alarm clock)* I'm setting my alarm. Exactly three minutes. Start now!

FIRST LAWYER: But this is . . .

SECOND  
LAWYER:

Quiet! Just get on with it.

JUDGE:

Yes, get on with it. You've already wasted thirty seconds.

FIRST LAWYER: Very well, your honour, as briefly as I can then. .  
One: if seals were not culled, the seal population  
would increase to such proportions, that they would  
devour all the fish within 100 nautical miles of  
the continent in a few years.

JUDGE:

Stop! Simple language. You mean there would be so  
many seals they would eat all the fish?

FIRST LAWYER: Well yes, in essence, your honour.

JUDGE:

Then why didn't you say so. Go on, you have two  
minutes left.

SECOND  
LAWYER:

Your honour, thousands of poor fishermen would  
starve. It is their livelihood.

FIRST LAWYER: Second: although it seems brutal, it has been  
scientifically proved . . .

SECOND  
LAWYER:

*(Whispering)* Keep it simple.

FIRST LAWYER: I'm trying, I'm trying! . . . it has been proved  
that a sudden blow to the head with a club, is the  
most painless way to kill . . . I mean to cull a  
seal. It's humane.

SECOND  
LAWYER:

And it doesn't damage the fur.

FIRST LAWYER: Shut up you idiot. Your honour . . . it is, of  
course, also true that the fur of these carnivorous

creatures, is used to keep the starving and the destitute warm. In fact . . .

*(The alarm rings. The Judge, who has been dozing, wakes)*

JUDGE: That's enough. You've had your three minutes.

SECOND  
LAWYER: But your honour, we have prepared several files of information . . . facts . . .

JUDGE: I'm sure you have. But I've heard enough. Sit down! Samantha, what can you say to all this? And to anything else they might say?

SAMANTHA: Your honour . . .

JUDGE: Think carefully. It had better be good. *(Setting the alarm again)* I'm a fair judge . . . you also have three minutes.

SAMANTHA: Your honour, I can say only this . . . they are asking for your permission to kill me, to smash my skull in, because I eat too many fish. I can't believe it! You must have countries where there are too many people, do you seek out their children and smash their skulls in, to stop them eating the food? Do you cut the hair off their heads and make coats out of their hair, to keep others warm? That's all I have to say.

JUDGE: But you've used up only one minute. You still have two minutes left.

SAMANTHA: Your honour, I have an extraordinary request to make.

JUDGE: I don't like the sound of that. What is it?

- 
- SAMANTHA:* I would like the audience to speak for me. Those who want to. I am content to put my life in their hands.
- FIRST LAWYER:* Your honour, I object . . .
- JUDGE:* Sounds like a reasonable request to me. You've only had one minute, they can have the other two.
- SECOND LAWYER:* We object, your honour . . .
- JUDGE:* Objection over-ruled! What are you frightened of? I want to know what they think.
- FIRST LAWYER:* But your honour, they respond emotionally, not rationally . . .
- JUDGE:* Be quiet! *(To the audience)* First, the children. You have one minute. Why not kill, or cull the seals? That is the question. *(The Judge should allow three or four replies)* And now the adults. Keep your answers simple. I can't stand long-winded replies. *(After a few responses, the alarm rings)* Right, that's enough! *(He stands with difficulty)* And now I'll deliver my judgement. *(Addressing the lawyers)* I've listened to your clever arguments. I'm sure there were many more, and I'm sure they were very expensive. *(To Samantha)* And you, young lady, perhaps you think your cute lisp and your winning ways will get my sympathy?
- SAMANTHA:* Oh no! I hate my lisp! I hate my face!
- JUDGE:* You're interrupting again.
- SAMANTHA:* I know your honour, I just can't help it . . .
- JUDGE:* Well, don't do it again. As I was saying . . .

What was I saying?

SAMANTHA: The judgement your honour. Sorry.

JUDGE: Oh yes. *(To the audience)* You are going to be the jury, and I am now going to ask you for your verdict. All those who believe that Samantha and all other seals should be protected, put up your hands. *(Hopefully the response will be overwhelming)* And all those who believe that we should go on killing seals to keep their numbers down, put up your hands. Well your verdict agrees with mine. Samantha, you have earned the right to live in peace, you and all your friends. *(Pause, Samantha sobs)* Why are you crying? Aren't you happy?

SAMANTHA: Oh yes! I can't believe it, that's all. Its extraordinary.

JUDGE: *(Handing her a handkerchief)* And you're invited to my birthday party. We'll have ice-cream especially for you.

SAMANTHA: Thank you your honour . . . Uncle Herbert. *(She blows her nose)* You've been so kind, but I must get back, I must make a start immediately. I must tell my Uncle Wally and all my friends. You are an extraordinarily wise, old judge, and I will never forget you.

*(The Judge and the lawyers exit)*

SEAGULL: Hurrah, we did it! Didn't I say we could do it? Didn't I?

SAMANTHA: If I recall correctly Mister Seagull, you said exactly the opposite. *(To the audience)* Didn't he?

SEAGULL: Facts that's all, tactics. All's well that ends well.

- 
- SAMANTHA: That's not a proverb, that's a play! And this one's nearly over.
- SEAGULL: Not quite. What about my fish.
- SAMANTHA: I told you. When we get home you shall have your fish. Now let's get started.
- SEAGULL: I've certainly earned it. I don't know how you would have managed without me.
- SAMANTHA: Oh do stop! You are so extraordinarily self-satisfied. Remember, pride comes before a fall.
- SEAGULL: Oh no, not you too.
- SAMANTHA: *(To the audience)* Thank you for sharing my adventure. You've all been extraordinarily helpful, really you have. Just remember, you can also do something positive to help us. Just think, if everyone in this audience wrote a letter, or convinced someone else . . .
- SEAGULL: . . . and if many more audiences saw the story of Samantha Seal . . .
- SAMANTHA: . . . and did something about it, there would be such an extraordinary wave of indignation . . .
- BOTH: . . . that all the Captain Bludgeons in the world wouldn't dare to touch another seal.
- SAMANTHA: And now we must get started on our journey. Come along Mister Seagull. Bye.
- (She flips off waving)*
- SEAGULL: Just a moment. *(He picks up the script)* Let's see what happens next. *(Paging through)* Oh dear.



According to the script, that's the end of the play. Anyway, it's a happy ending so I don't mind. Oh, just a minute, there's something else here! It says: 'The cast re-enter and sing a song!' Well come along you lot, I'm not singing by myself.

*(The Cast re-enter, without head-dresses and sing the opening song again for the curtain call)*

END

APPENDIX 3

# **THE TRIALS OF KEENO**

by  
Pieter Scholtz

(Recommended age : 13 years and over)

**THE TRIALS OF KEENO**  
**A Play for Young Audiences**  
**by Pieter Scholtz**

CHARACTERS

*BROCK* : The Master

*KEENO* : The Servant

*MISTRESS BROADBEAM* : The Neighbour

*CHERRY* : The Maid

*MUSICIAN*

## The Trials of Keeno

TWO HOUSES FACE EACH OTHER ACROSS A COBBLED STREET. EACH HOUSE HAS A DOORWAY AT STREET LEVEL AND A FLIGHT OF STAIRS LEADING TO THE UPPER LEVEL. FROM THE UPPER LEVEL A SMALL BALCONY OVERHANGS THE STREET. AT THE REAR OF THE UPPER LEVEL IS A CURTAINED RECESS. THE DESIGN OF THE STRUCTURES SHOULD BE HIGHLY STYLIZED, IN KEEPING WITH THE PRODUCTION AS A WHOLE. TUBULAR STEEL OR SCAFFOLDING WOULD BE APPROPRIATE MATERIALS FOR THE SET.

BETWEEN THE TWO STRUCTURES HANGS A LARGE WHITE DISC - THE SUN - WITH AN AMBER LIGHT FOCUSED ON IT.

THE PIANIST IS SEATED DOWNSTAGE. HE IS A KEY CHARACTER IN THE PLAY, INITIATING, REINFORCING AND PUNCTUATING THE ACTION IN MUSICAL TERMS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE PIANIST SHOULD NOT ONLY INTERPRET THE ACTION MUSICALLY, BUT ALSO THAT HIS RESPONSES SHOULD BE INTEGRATED INTO A CHARACTER. SOMETIMES THE OTHER CHARACTERS SPEAK TO HIM, SHARE CONFIDENCES WITH HIM, VENT THEIR ANGER ON HIM, OR SIMPLY IGNORE HIM. HE IS ALWAYS THE MUSICAL ALTER EGO, ALWAYS A PART OF THE ACTION, NEVER DETACHED FROM IT.

THE OVERTURE AND APPROPRIATE MUSIC FOR EACH CHARACTER HAVE BEEN SCORED, BUT IN MOST CASES THE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS OR SEQUENCES IS SIMPLY INDICATED AND THE PIANIST SHOULD IMPROVISE APPROPRIATE SOUNDS.

BROCK'S OPENING MONOLOGUE PROVIDES A TYPICAL INDICATION OF THE MUSICAL REQUIREMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE. THE PIANIST IS REQUIRED TO INITIATE HIS PALPITATIONS:

*'Flutter, flutter, flutter.'*

AND BROCK SWALLOWING A HANDFUL OF PILLS:

*'Aah! Aahh! That's better. That's calmed me down. Now I can breathe again!.'*

AND THE PAIN IN BROCK'S GOUTY FOOT:

*'... Like a great sack of potatoes.... There they go, stab! And again, stab!.'*

ALL THE PROPERTIES ARE MIMED - KEENO CARRYING THE TRUNK, CHERRY CARRYING THE BIRDCAGE, BROCK EMPTYING THE CHAMBER POT ETC. THIS PLACES AN EVEN GREATER ONUS ON THE PIANIST TO REINFORCE THE ACTION WITH APPROPRIATE SOUNDS.

ONE LAST POINT; THE CHARACTERS ALL WEAR A REDUCED VERSION OF THE HALF-MASK, COVERING AND ACCENTUATING THE NOSE AND THE CHEEKS ONLY, LEAVING THE EYES AND THE MOUTH FREE FOR EXPRESSION. THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH TYPE CAN STILL BE CLEARLY DEPICTED *e.g.* BROCK'S HOOKED NOSE, CHERRY'S RETROUSSE NOSE, AND KEENO'S BROAD, FLATTENED NOSE. THE MASKS AND THE COSTUMES MAY BE INDICATIVE OF THEIR COMMEDIA COUNTERPARTS BUT THE OVERALL EFFECT SHOULD NOT BE PERIOD, BUT RATHER VAUDEVILLE OR CIRCUS ORIENTATED. THUS KEENO MAY WEAR CHECKED DUNGAREES, A HARLEQUIN PATTERNED SHIRT WITH SNEAKERS AND A JAUNTY CAP.

BROCK ENTERS TO THE FINAL BARS OF THE OVERTURE. HE IS IMMENSELY WEALTHY AND PERPETUALLY ILL-TEMPERED AND SUSPICIOUS, THE PROVERBIAL PANTALOON. HE WEARS A BLACK BOWLER HAT AND A BAGGY SUIT WITH A WAISTCOAT AND LARGE GOLD CHAIN. HE SUFFERS FROM GOUT, EVIDENCED BY HIS HEAVILY BANDAGED RIGHT FOOT, AND HOBBLER WITH THE AID OF A WALKING-STICK.

BROCK:

Just a few streets, she said. A five minute walk, she said. You'll enjoy the exercise, she said. And here I am, with my delicate condition, traipsing for miles along dingy streets and stinking gutters. It's a wonder I haven't collapsed. It is! It's a miracle... a miracle I haven't passed out with a heart-attack. *(Piano)* I've got palpitations! *(Piano)* My heart is fluttering like a butterfly! *(Piano)* Flutter, flutter, flutter. I can feel it, bursting out of my shirt. Must take my pills. The pink ones. Where are they? *(He searches in his pockets, finds a bottle of pills and peers at them shortsightedly.)* Yellow. Those are for my liver. Where are my pink pills? *(He finds another bottle)* Ah, there you are my little pink pills. My little heart-throb pastilles. *(He swallows a handful - piano)* Ah! Aahhh! That's better. That's calmed me down. Now I can breathe again. *(Pause - piano)* But now my foot's aching. *(Piano)* Unbearably. *(Piano)* Throbbing! *(Piano)* It feels like a great sack of potatoes, all lumps and bumps.

*(Piano)* And each bump is stabbing away. *(Piano)* There they go, *(piano)* stab! *(Piano)* My little white pills. *(He takes out another bottle).* My little gout pastilles. *(He swallows a handful - piano)* Good thing I had the presence of mind to pack all my little bottles. Ah! Now I can feel my toes again. Poor little swollen toes. *(Piano)* One, *(piano)* two, *(piano)* three, *(piano)* four... four? *(Piano)* Ah, five of them. They're all there. *(He calls)* Keeno! Where's that scoundrel? Keeno! Lazy good-for-nothing. I've a good mind to cut his wages in half. The parasite. The blood-sucker. He's getting fat on my hard-earned money. Lazy and fat, that's a bad combination. Keeno! I'm too kind-hearted and good-natured. And he takes advantage of it. But I'll teach him. I'll show him what it is to have a hard master. Tomorrow I'll cut his wages. Keeno! *(Piano - a jaunty tune, Keeno enters, staggering under the weight of a huge mimed trunk. It is so high that he is walking blind.)*

- KEENO: Here Master. Always at your beck-and-call Master. *(He bumps into the house - piano.)* Pardon!
- BROCK: Be careful you idiot. You'll damage my trunk. If there's a scratch you'll pay for it, out of your wages.
- KEENO: *(Muttering)* They haven't been paid for four months.
- BROCK: *(Rapping the trunk with his cane.)* What did you say?
- KEENO: I said I've got sore lumps! On my feet. From walking so far.
- BROCK: You've got sore lumps! What about me, with my delicate condition? I'm on the verge of collapse. I've over-taxed my strength.
- KEENO: The skin-flint! The miser! He wouldn't pay for a taxi.
- BROCK: *(Rapping the trunk.)* What did you say?
- KEENO: I said I'm an infant, you're wiser. Not to pay for a taxi.

- BROCK:** Ten shillings for the fare! It's daylight robbery. Think I'm a fool?
- KEENO:** Of course.
- BROCK:** What?
- KEENO:** Of course you're not.
- BROCK:** Of course I'm not!
- KEENO:** A fool.
- BROCK:** Of course. *(He is momentarily fazed, then dismisses it.)* And where have you been? I've been shouting myself hoarse. In fact, I think I've strained my throat. *(He feels his throat and speaks hoarsely)* I have! I may even have laryngitis! And it's your fault. You'll pay for this, out of your wages. *(He sprays his throat with a small throat-spray - mimed.)*
- KEENO:** *(Beginning to sag.)* Can I put the trunk down now? Please Master Brock? It's rather heavy.
- BROCK:** Heavy? It's light as a feather. You're too fat, that's the trouble. Bring it here.
- (Keeno staggers forward with the trunk and bumps into Mr. Brock - piano.)*
- You clown! You buffoon! Look where you're going.
- KEENO:** Pardon.
- BROCK:** Hand me the key.
- KEENO:** Pardon?
- BROCK:** The key!
- KEENO:** The key?
- BROCK:** The key, the key! The key to the door. Hand me the key.
- KEENO:** Oh the key. It's in my pocket.
- BROCK:** Well, give it to me!

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KEENO: I'll have to put down the trunk then.

BROCK: Of course you'll have to put down the trunk. Do you think you can fish them out with your toes? Put down the trunk.

KEENO: Here?

BROCK: Here.

KEENO: Now?

BROCK: Now.

KEENO: All right.

*(He drops the trunk with considerable force on Mr. Brock's gouty foot - piano.)*

BROCK: Aaah! Oooh! Oooh! *(He hops about like a dervish. Keeno retreats behind the upended trunk - music continues during this whole routine)* It's broken. It must be. The pain! The agony! I'm disfigured. I'm crippled for life.

KEENO: Hooo! Look at him go. That's nimble footwork.

BROCK: *(Runs at him)* You clumsy lout. *(He swipes with the cane.)*

KEENO: *(Ducks)* Pardon.

BROCK: You numbskull! *(Swipes.)*

KEENO: Master Brock desist..... *(Dodges.)*

BROCK: You blockhead! *(Lunges.)*

KEENO: Olé *(Runs around.)* Master Brock, you said... listen... stop! *(He runs to the pianist)* Stop! *(pianist stops.)* You said put down the trunk. And I did.

BROCK: I said put down the trunk. Not drop the trunk on my toe-oh-oh-oh-oh! *(Piano, he hops about again.)*

KEENO: Your pills, master, your pills.

BROCK: *(Stopping.)* My pills?



- KEENO: Your little white pills, for your leg. Or is it the blue ones?
- BROCK: My pills! *(He searches.)* Must take my pills.  
*(He swallows a handful - piano.)*
- KEENO: *(Advancing cautiously)* Does it feel any better now?
- BROCK: No of course it doesn't feel better. Oh, the unbearable agony! How could it feel better? I've only just swallowed them. They haven't had time to reach my foot yet.
- KEENO: They can't be much good then.
- BROCK: Don't talk rubbish. What do you know? These little blue pills... blue? I've taken the wrong ones. I should have taken white. The blue ones were for constip... they were the wrong ones!  
*(He swallows a handful of white pills - piano.)*
- KEENO: Here's the key Master.
- BROCK: Key? What key?
- KEENO: The key to the door.
- BROCK: Have you any idea.. have you any conception... of the pain I'm in?
- KEENO: You asked for it.
- BROCK: What!
- KEENO: The key. You asked for it.
- BROCK: *(Snatching it.)* I know what I asked for. Don't tell me what I asked for. *(He hobbles to the door.)*  
Number one. This is the place.
- KEENO: *(Reading the name above the door.)* Honey-Suckle Haven!
- BROCK: It's a slum. First thing tomorrow morning we move out! *(He raps the door with his cane.)*  
I'm not staying in a slum.
- KEENO: But Master, the old doctor gentleman said one month. For your health. Think of your health.

- BROCK:** I am thinking of my health. That's why we're moving out. Look at this filth. *(He wipes his finger across the door, then on Keeno's shirt - piano.)* With my delicate constitution. And the view! Facing that hovel across the road. I paid for a charming, secluded residence with unparalleled views. And what do I find?
- KEENO:** Honey-Suckle Haven.
- BROCK:** Exactly, Honey-Suck... hold your tongue!
- KEENO:** Maybe there's a parallel view from upstairs.
- BROCK:** *(Unlocking the door.)* Bring the bags. And don't dawdle. *(He enters and climbs the stairs - piano, a weighty tune.)*
- KEENO:** *(Flings down his cap.)* Bring the bags! Don't dawdle! Yes Master Brock sir. Anything you say Master Brock sir. Bags? He calls this great ton weight a bag? *(He pushes over the trunk - piano - he mimes climbing over it and sitting on it.)* The old fossil! My back's broken. My stomach's empty. And my purse has shrivelled. It hasn't felt the weight of two coins since Christmas. Why do I stay with him? Why? *(Piano - questioning note.)* That's a good question. Well, on the one hand he's stinking rich. Two, I have a great weakness for money, a great partiality for it so to speak. In short, I worship it. So far, so good. Now, on the other hand, he's tight. Oh, he's tight-fisted all right, he's a miser, a scrooge. And then he's suspicious and watchful on top of it *(Piano - strong chord.)* Ergo! I must find a way to relieve him of some... small portion of it. But how? Think Keeno my lad, think.  
*(Brock appears on the balcony with a chamber-pot - mimed)* What I need now is some inspiration from above. *(He stands. Brock empties the chamber-pot over him - piano.)*
- BROCK:** Remember me? I'm your employer. I'm the one who pays you to obey my instructions. And my instructions were to bring my bags. At once! Immediately! On the double!
- KEENO:** *(Spluttering.)* I'll get him for that.

**BROCK:** So, get to work, you idle good-for-nothing, or you'll feel something weightier on your head. *(He stamps off.)*

**KEENO:** That's done it. That's really done it! Now I'm angry. Now I'm enraged. *(He wrings out his cap)* I could wring his neck, like this, *(Piano.)* and like this! *(Piano - he stops suddenly.)* Ah....Ah.... *(He sneezes violently - Piano - cheeky note. Keeno glares at the Musician.)* On top of it all I've caught a sneezing, snivelling cold. And no wonder, I'm drenched to the skin, I'm shivering. *(He sniffs.)* Poooh! Chamber-pot! *(He shakes a fist at the balcony.)* All right, old money-bags, you asked for it. This is war. Total war! But on my terms. I'll play the cowering servant, I'll bide my time, but I'll get even, or my name isn't Ali Keeno.

*(Piano - Jaunty music, Keeno's 'Theme'. He picks up the trunk and staggers into the house. The music changes - lyrical, light - Cherry's 'Theme'. Cherry appears on the balcony of the house opposite, carrying a small cage with a canary - mimed - which she hangs on a projecting beam. She has red hair and wears a low-cut dress, which reveals her ample charms to advantage. She performs a little dance with the cage.)*

**CHERRY:** I don't care if she throws one of her tantrums, you can't stay cooped up in that stuffy old room. Don't you agree? *(Piano - chirpy response)* Of course you do. It's bad enough being in a cage. I know just how you feel. *(Piano - variety of chirpy responses during the rest of the speech as indicated.)* Don't argue, I do. In fact you're better off than I am. *(Piano)* Oh yes you are. I'm her prisoner as well, just in a different cage that's all. *(Piano)* How? Well if you'd allow me to explain instead of interrupting, we'd get somewhere, Just listen. *(Piano)* Sssh! At six o'clock, while it's still dark, I have to creep shivering to the kitchen to light the stove, while she sleeps. At seven o'clock, I have to brave the damp mist and the Milkman's clammy hands, to fetch the milk, while she sleeps. Are you still listening? *(Piano)* Good. Between eight and ten, I have to do countless menial tasks about the house, while she sleeps. At ten, I prepare her breakfast, which takes me an hour, on account of her gargantuan appetite, while she sleeps.

At eleven - wait for it - I wake her, gently of course, for fear of getting an ill-tempered cuff for my pains. And for the next hour, while my stomach is rumbling with hunger, *(Piano)* I have to wait on her, while she stuffs enough food down her throat to feed an army. Are you getting my drift? *(Piano)* At twelve, I run her bath, and while she wallows like a whale, I give myself heart-burn by bolting down a crust of bread and scald my tongue with coffee that's been stewing for hours. At one o'clock she starts her toilette, the only comic moment in a dreary day. I struggle to stifle my laughter, while she applies pots of cream in the vainest attempt to smoothe her sagging wrinkles. 'It is necessary', says she, 'to preserve our beauty when it is generously bestowed' and with that she cakes her face with powder 'till her eyes become two raisins on a mound of sugar icing. *(Piano)* Oh, that's not all! Then begins the ritual of the day. She tries on one ridiculous gown after another, leaving me with a mountain of crumpled clothes and her boudoir in total disarray. Then she sallies forth, in full sail, to the beauty parlour, where she has been these past three hours, having her hair tinted and teased and curled.... are you listening? Wake up, you ill-mannered bird.

*(Piano - Mr Brock's 'theme'. His voice is heard from the house opposite.)*

**BROCK:** Keeno, bring me my little spotted pills, I feel a cold coming on.

*(He appears on the balcony, wearing a smoking-jacket and slippers. He is puffing at a long-stemmed pipe - mimed.)*

**CHERRY:** Look little song-bird, we have some new neighbours.

*(Their eyes meet. Piano - a tinkling run, romantic)*

**BROCK:** Can it be true. Are my eyes deceiving me? Am I delirious? A nymph! An Angel! A Goddess!

**CHERRY:** Oh, what a repulsive old man! Do you see him leering at me? Look! His eyes are popping out.

**BROCK:** Her eyes invite me. And those cherry lips! Ah, I'm young again. I am uplifted. *(Piano - a vigorous chord. He clutches his groin.)*

I thought I was past it, but it's happened. For the first time in fifteen years.

CHERRY: Poooh! What a disgusting smell. *(She fans the air.)*  
There should be a law against old men with evil-smelling pipes.

BROCK: She's waving at me. The little darling. She's attracted to me, I know it. She's attracted, irresistibly. *(He waves back.)*

CHERRY: Oh! Did you see that? *(Piano - chirpy note)* He waved! How revolting! The old lecher.

BROCK: And her breasts! Two ripe apples waiting to be plucked.

CHERRY: I'm not staying out here to be.... ogled by that drooling scarecrow. *(She exits into the house. Piano - flouncy music.)*

BROCK: Vanished! She's disappeared. Oh my heart! And how demurely she withdrew, flushed with excitement. My heart! What pain! What ecstasy!

*(He clutches his heart. Keeno enters with a bottle of pills.)*

KEENO: Another attack Master Brock?

BROCK: Attack? Yes, I've been attacked and conquered. What? No, no of course not. What are you talking about?

KEENO: Well, you were clutching yourself and hopping about. I thought.....

BROCK: Never mind what you thought. What do you want?

KEENO: Me? Nothing. I brought your pills. *(He sneezes)*  
For your cold.

BROCK: Pills? Who needs pills? Throw them away. Better still take them yourself. Ha-ha-ha! You sound as if you need them.

KEENO: Are you feeling all right, Master Brock?

BROCK: Of course I'm feeling all right. On top of the

world. Never felt better.

KEENO: Shouldn't you... uh... sit down for a while. You're acting rather strange.

BROCK: Nonsense. You should keep in trim Keeno. Follow my example.

*(Piano- a sprightly tune. He does a little jig, then collapses against Keeno.)*

KEENO: Master Brock.....

BROCK: Just stumbled. Now bring me my best suit, the striped one. And my best bowler. And... a red carnation for my lapel.

*(He turns to exit. Keeno restrains him.)*

KEENO: Master Brock, if I unpack now, I'll have to pack again tomorrow morning, before we leave.

BROCK: Leave? Whose leaving?

KEENO: You are. We are.

BROCK: I'm leaving?

KEENO: Tomorrow morning. You said so.

BROCK: You're dreaming. We're staying for a month. It's a delightful apartment. And the view. What a view! Now bring me my suit.

*(He exits within. Keeno absently swallows a handful of pills - piano.)*

KEENO: He's finally flipped. *(He taps his head.)* Gone cuckoo! *(Piano - cuckoo)* Round the bend. I'll have to handle him carefully. With kid gloves. *(He follows Brock inside, then returns.)* View? What view? All I can see is a rickety old balcony and a brick wall. *(He sneezes.)* Definitely bonkers.

*(He exits. Piano - a heavy blues version of the tune - Mistress Broadbeam's 'Theme' - Mistress Broadbeam puffs into view. She is as gross as Cherry's description. She is in considerable distress through her exertions and is fanning herself*

*with a large straw fan.)*

M/BROADBEAM: Aye feel quayt faint, aye do declare, quayt out of breath. May little heart's going pit-a-pat.  
*(Piano - she tries the door and finds it locked.)*  
 How vexing, locked out of may own maison! *(She rings the bell - piano.)* Where is that tiresome gel. Fast asleep aye do declare. *(She puts down a large box she has been carrying, on the doorstep and raps on the door - all mimed - piano.)* Cherry! Where can she be? *(She moves back a few paces to call up to the balcony.)* Cherry! Descend and open the portal!

*(Piano - Cherry flies down the stairs, opens the front door and steps out, flattening the cardboard box - piano rumbles.)*

CHERRY: Here Mistress.... Oh dear....

M/BROADBEAM: You wicked gel, look what you've done. May new chapeau!

CHERRY: *(Picking it up.)* Sorry Mistress, I didn't expect a whopping great box on the doorstep.

M/BROADBEAM: *(Snatching it.)* You didn't expect! Never maynd what you expect. Just open your ayes in future. *(Taking out a sadly crushed feather hat - piano - a 'sad' chord.)* It's ruined! Aye could weep with vexation.

CHERRY: *(Taking it from her.)* Oh it's not too bad. *(Punching it out - piano.)* There, good as new, almost.

M/BROADBEAM: What a trayle the day has been. Ay'm excessively fati-gayed!

CHERRY: *(Indicating Mistress Broadbeam's hair, which is covered with a large scarf.)* Not much joy at the beauty parlour?

M/BROADBEAM: Joy? He well-nay scalped me! He should be grooming animals, not tending ladies of quality. Behold!

*(She removes the scarf. Her hair is bright pink and springs out in tight coils - piano.)*

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- CHERRY: It's... um... *(She stifles a giggle.)* It looks... um... springy... and... pinkish!
- M/BROADBEAM: Aye was mortifayed. My hair, that once inspired a poet to write, 'Behold her... something, something, something... with silken hair!' Those were his very words.
- CHERRY: Very poetic!
- M/BROADBEAM: And so aye purchased this chapeau to console mayself. And now you've ruined it.
- CHERRY: *(Changing the subject.)* Mistress, I have news for you. We have some new neighbours.
- M/BROADBEAM: Aye have already been informed. Madame Bonnipate, the Milliner told me. A wealthy gentleman. A man of means. Aye do believe his name is Mister Brock.
- CHERRY: Brock. That's very apt. He looked very Brock.
- M/BROADBEAM: You have seen him? Describe him to me. Ay'm overcome with curiosity.
- CHERRY: Well, he's.... not young.
- M/BROADBEAM: Mature! Aye knew it. Aye do so admire maturity in a man. And his personage?
- CHERRY: I can only say, it was... remarkable!
- M/BROADBEAM: Remarkable! Aye knew it. Distingay! Aye do declare, ay'm partial to gentlemen with a distinguished air.
- CHERRY: Mistress Broadbeam, I don't think you quite understand....
- M/BROADBEAM: Aye feel quayte agitated. Come, we may catch a glimpse of him from above. *(She exits within.)*
- CHERRY: Well, she'll soon see for herself. *(She puts the hat on her head.)* Aye do declare she'll be quayte ill with disappointment.
- (She exits. Piano. Brock appears on the balcony followed by Keeno. He is wearing a garishly striped suit with a large red carnation on the lapel.)*



**BROCK:** So you see Keeno, I am determined to have her for my own. I know she likes me. Nay, more than that, she couldn't conceal her admiration when she beheld me.

**KEENO:** She must be blind.

**BROCK:** What?

**KEENO:** I said... how sweet and kind.

**BROCK:** Yes, she waved. Such dainty little hands. How do I look? I must be at my best.

**KEENO:** Oh very ... spruce. Very spruce indeed sir.

**BROCK:** My hat and gloves!

**KEENO:** Your hat and gloves?

**BROCK:** In the bedroom idiot. Fetch them.

**KEENO:** Anything you say Master Brock.

*(He exits within. Piano - Mistress Broadbeam appears, carrying a hand-mirror.)*

**M/BROADBEAM:** Aye can't let him see me layke this! Aye must repair the ravages wrought bay that monster.

**CHERRY:** *(Handing her a brush.)* Here's your brush mistress.

**M/BROADBEAM:** Where's Georgie Porgie? Where's may little song-bird?

**CHERRY:** I hung him up on the balcony. To get some air.

**M/BROADBEAM:** You wicked gel. Fetch him in at once. You know aye positively forbade you to expose him to the elements.

**CHERRY:** But Mistress, he's just a stuffed bird after all.

**M/BROADBEAM:** Stuffed! How can you be so unfeeling. He's... preserved. Poor little Georgie Porgie. It's two years since he... fetch him in at once.!

**CHERRY:** Well I think it's grotesque.

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M/BROADBEAM: At once aye say!

CHERRY: Oh, very well.

*(Mistress Broadbeam withdraws. Cherry moves out onto the balcony. Cherry and Brock see each other - piano.)*

BROCK: There she is again, the angel.

CHERRY: There he is again, the scarecrow.

*(Brock waves and blows her a kiss.)*

Oh! I think I'm going to be ill. *(She takes down the cage.)* You're just like that old bird across the way. Old and moulting.

*(She exits behind the curtain. Keeno appears on the balcony.)*

KEENO: I found your hat Master Brock, but no trace of the gloves.

BROCK: I've seen her again. She appeared like a vision, an angel.

KEENO: I said I can't find...

BROCK: I heard what you said! You're a numbskull! Wait here, she's bound to come again, to exchange little glances, little signs of love. If she appears, call me at once. *(He stops in the doorway.)* And prepare to be transported!

*(He exits behind the curtain.)*

KEENO: So, that's the game. He's bewitched. He's besotted with this crumpet...*(piano - chiding)* pardon, this angel across the way. The randy old goat! I must find some way to turn this to my advantage. *(He puts the bowler on his head and leans on the balcony rail.)* Think Keeno, think. *(Piano.)*

CHERRY: *(Emerging.)* Oh Mistress, our new neighbour is on the balcony opposite, taking the air. If you want a view of him, now's your chance.

M/BROADBEAM: *(Emerging.)* Ay'm all agog.

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- CHERRY: But Mistress, prepare yourself for a shock. *(She giggles.)* I'm sure he's not what you expect.
- M/BROADBEAM: Never maynd what I expect. Ay'll form may own opinion.  
*(She moves onto the balcony.)*
- KEENO: Now, if I could somehow get acquainted with this enchantress... *(He sees Mistress Broadbeam - piano.)* Good God! I don't believe it.
- M/BROADBEAM: Oh! Divinity in the shape of man.
- KEENO: I must be seeing double. *(He rubs his eyes.)*
- M/BROADBEAM: Aye can't believe may ayes.
- KEENO: She's enormous! *(Piano)* Grotesque! *(Piano)* Hideous! *(Piano.)*
- M/BROADBEAM: He's devine! *(Piano)* Apollo! *(Piano)* Adonis! *(Piano.)*
- KEENO: Can this... mountain be the object of his fancy?
- M/BROADBEAM: Ay'll greet him, demurely. *(She waves.)* Hellooo!
- KEENO: Horrors! I'll have to play cupid for him, if that's his fancy. *(He waves back.)* Hellooo!
- M/BROADBEAM: He responded! Quayte passionately. Aye do declare, ay'm all acquiver.
- KEENO: I'd better tell the old goat she's back again.  
*(He waves again.)*
- M/BROADBEAM: Aye must withdraw and compose myself.  
*(She withdraws into the boudoir. Piano - M/Broadbeam's 'Theme'.)*
- KEENO: Master, she's back again. Large as life.
- BROCK: *(Entering.)* Good. Impatient to see me again, no doubt. My hat!
- KEENO: Your hat?

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BROCK:           *(Cuffs him.)* How dare you wear my hat!

KEENO:           Oh, pardon. *(Hands it to him)* Master Brock, have you had your eyes tested recently?

BROCK:           What do you mean?

KEENO:           Well, you said her hair was red. And you described her as an angel, a nymph.

BROCK:           So I did, what of that?

KEENO:           Nothing, nothing. Only she seemed to me rather... large. And her hair was sort of... pink!

BROCK:           Pink? Large? Have you been drinking?

KEENO:           Master Brock!

BROCK:           Then you should have your eyes tested. *(Keeno exits, shaking his head. Brock puts on his gloves carefully.)*

M/BROADBEAM:   *(Entering.)* Cherry! Cherry! Aye feel quayte flushed, quayte daycomposay. *(Cherry enters.)* Cherry, ay'm speechless.

CHERRY:          I warned you mistress. *(She giggles.)* He's quite a sight.

M/BROADBEAM:    He's everything a gel could wish for. His personage, his bearing.

CHERRY:          What!

M/BROADBEAM:    Ay'm quayte overcome! May salvolatile! *(She exits.)*

CHERRY:          I don't believe it. She can't be serious.  
*(She rushes out onto the balcony.)*

BROCK:           Large? He can't be serious.  
*(He steps out onto the balcony. They look - piano.)*

CHERRY:          There, just as I said!

BROCK:           There, just as I said!

CHERRY: Repulsive!

BROCK: Beautiful!

CHERRY: There's no accounting for tastes. I'd better humour her. Mistress, where are you? *(She exits.)*

BROCK: I'll send her flowers, with a little note. I'll declare my love for her. Keeno! *(Keeno enters.)* Keeno, run down to the market and buy a bunch of flowers. *(He takes out his purse.)*

KEENO: You still think she's a nymph?

BROCK: *(Cuffs him.)* And get yourself some spectacles!  
*(Brock hands him a coin. Keeno stares at it.)*

KEENO: Were you thinking of one flower or two?

BROCK: *(Grudgingly hands him another coin.)* Nothing too extravagant mind.

KEENO: Extravagant? Master Brock, do you want her to think you a miser, a skinflint? *(He takes two notes out of Brock's purse.)* Smother her with roses. Overwhelm her with your passion.

BROCK: Ten pounds!

KEENO: Of course, if you want her to get the impression that you're tight-fisted ..... *(He makes to hand the notes back.)*

BROCK: No.... no.. but ten pounds!

KEENO: Love is an expensive commodity.

BROCK: Very well. But see you get value for my money. The best roses, mind.

KEENO: Of course, Master Brock.

BROCK: I'll write a note while you're away. And then I'll go across and smother her with roses.

KEENO: Master Brock, that will never do.

BROCK: What?

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- KEENO: Take my word for it. She would think you forward, unmannerly. Oh no, that's not the way.
- BROCK: What then?
- KEENO: Ladies of quality expect gifts to be borne by a messenger. It's more genteel. I'll do it.
- BROCK: Hey?
- KEENO: Then, when she's dazed by your generosity, by your passion, you appear. She'll be putty in your hands.
- BROCK: Putty! (*His hands twitch.*) All right, all right. Wait while I write the note, then take them to her. And mind, you come straight back to tell me how she receives them.
- (*They exit. Piano. Mistress Broadbeam appears with Cherry following.*)
- M/BROADBEAM: Go at once gel, and collect may new gown from the dress-maker. Tur-quoise, with little roses on the bodice. Ay'll wear it and dazzle him with may beauty.
- CHERRY: It will dazzle him all right.
- M/BROADBEAM: Make haste gel, and bring it to me directly. (*She exits.*)
- CHERRY: There's something going on here that I don't understand. Anyway, they're well-suited to each other.
- (*She pulls up her stockings.*)
- KEENO: Ten pounds. And that's only the beginning. I'll make him pay. I'll tickle his purse 'till it's empty.
- (*Piano - They descend the stairs together, open the front doors simultaneously, step into the street and collide.*)
- CHERRY: Ooof! Look where you're going.
- KEENO: Pardon.

- CHERRY: You!
- KEENO: Cherry! Ha-ha-ha, what a surprise!
- CHERRY: Yes, isn't it?
- KEENO: I haven't seen you since... since....
- CHERRY: (*Sweetly.*) Don't you remember. Since you left me in the lurch. You wretch! (*She gives him a ringing slap and then attacks him. Piano.*)
- KEENO: Now Cherry, you don't know all the facts. (*He grabs her arm.*)
- CHERRY: Facts! I'll give you facts. Fact one, we had a partnership remember. Keeno the Magician and his assistant Cherie. Fact two, the disappearing trick. All the gentlemen place their watches in your hat. A flick of the wrist, a flare of magnesium and poof! (*Piano*) The watches disappear. And so does Keeno. Down the trap-door. Fact three, Cherry is left to face the music. Fact four, Keeno has disappeared for good. Until today.
- KEENO: There's one more fact you've missed. Fact five, as I fell through the trap-door, I bumped my head. Amnesia. I lost my memory, just like that. I crawled away and walked the streets for hours...days.
- CHERRY: With the watches.
- KEENO: Yes. No! I was ill, desperately ill. When I recovered I tried to get in touch with you, but you had moved.
- CHERRY: The same old Keeno. Smooth as oil and honey-tongued. What mischief are you plotting now?
- KEENO: Mischief? Me? Cherry, Cherry you're still as suspicious as ever. (*He pulls her close*) And as bewitching.
- CHERRY: That's enough of that. (*She pushes him away.*)
- KEENO: Where did you spring from so suddenly?
- CHERRY: I'm working for a 'lady of quality'. Mistress Broadbeam. This is her house, Rose Lodge.

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KEENO: Here?

CHERRY: I'm her maid and general dogsbody.

KEENO: You work here?

CHERRY: I said so didn't I? You should see her. Huge and comical.

KEENO: Wait a minute, wait a minute. You work here, in this house, for a large lady?

CHERRY: Keeno, have you gone deaf? What's the matter with you?

KEENO: Red hair. A sylph. It's you!

CHERRY: What? Have you gone mad?

KEENO: *(He bursts out laughing - piano.)* Oh, that's perfect.

CHERRY: *(Shaking him.)* What is it? Tell me or I'll shake you 'till your teeth rattle'.

KEENO: My master thinks you.... *(He splutters.)* are the lady of the house.

CHERRY: Your Master?

KEENO: Brock. He's besotted. He wants to marry you.

CHERRY: Brock?

KEENO: This has possibilities. This definitely has possibilities.

CHERRY: You work for Mister Brock? Here? At Honey-suckle Haven?

KEENO: Cherry, there's no need to echo me. He imagines that you're ga-ga over him.

CHERRY: That bag of bones.

KEENO: That's him exactly. *(He slaps his thigh.)* Of course! And when I saw your Mistress, I thought....

CHERRY: You saw my Mistress?



- CHERRY: Cherry, have you gone hard of hearing? I saw your Mistress, what's her name.....?
- CHERRY: Broadbeam.
- KEENO: On the balcony.
- CHERRY: It's you! Apollo! Adonis! *(Piano - she shrieks with laughter.)*
- KEENO: Would you mind telling me what's tickled your fancy?
- CHERRY: *(Spluttering.)* Apollo! You?
- KEENO: Stop calling me Apollo. *(She doubles-up again.)*  
Cherry I'm a man of infinite patience, but it's wearing rather thin. Tell me! *(He shakes her - the piano stops.)*
- CHERRY: My Mistress thinks..... *(She's off again.)*
- KEENO: *(Warmingly.)* Cherry!
- CHERRY: All right. *(She dries her eyes.)* I'm over it now.
- KEENO: Good.
- CHERRY: She thinks you are Mister Brock.
- KEENO: What?
- CHERRY: She's infatuated. She called you...  
*(She giggles - piano.)* Apollo.... Adonis!
- KEENO: I don't see what's so funny about that. She has impeccable taste.
- CHERRY: If only she knew!
- KEENO: All right, let's sheathe our daggers, shall we. So, he thinks... and she thinks... Cherry, I think we're onto something.
- CHERRY: We?
- KEENO: It's coming. It's coming.  
*(He paces to-and-fro. Piano, in time to his pacing.)*
- CHERRY: Keeno, I don't like you when you get that glint in

your eye.

KEENO: I've got it! Cherry my lovely, we've got it made. I have thought of a brilliant plan, that will get us both lots of lovely lolly. *(He whirls her off her feet. - piano.)*

CHERRY: Here we go again.

KEENO: Only, I'll need your help, your co-operation.

CHERRY: What makes you think I'll help you, after that last fiasco?

KEENO: Cherry, Cherry. We'll be in this together. Word of honour. Look, I'm sorry about that other business, but now, it's been handed to us on a plate. It would be a crime to pass it over. Now listen, this is my plan.

*(He puts his arm around her and leads her up the street. His words are drowned by the music, which continues until they are out of sight. The music changes - lyrical - Keeno re-appears carrying a large disc with a crescent moon painted on it. He gestures for the sun to be lowered, detaches the sun and hangs the moon in its place. He points upwards - the moon is raised into position and Keeno exits carrying the sun. Change of music, Brock appears on the balcony.)*

BROCK: Where can that scoundrel be? Two hours since he left and still no sign of him. I was a fool to trust him with ten pounds. Ten pounds! What if he's gone, stolen away, with my ten pounds clutched in his greasy palm? No, I owe him two months wages, he'll stick like a leech until that's paid. More likely spent it getting drunk, and now he's lying in a stupor somewhere, while I wait. The thought of it makes my head ache and my leg throb. Or is it the other way round? My pills! *(He swallows a handful of pills - piano - the music changes as Keeno appears in the street.)* There he is. Keeno, where have you been? It's almost dark.

KEENO: Shsh Master, not so loud! *(To the Pianist)* Shsh! *(The piano stops.)* You want her to hear you yelling?

BROCK:           *(Whispering.)* Where have you been?

KEENO:           *(Also whispering.)* Oh Master Brock, I have such news for you.

BROCK:           What is it? Tell me.

KEENO:           Not here, in the street, with every ear flapping. What can you be thinking of!

BROCK:           Well, come upstairs directly.

KEENO:           You'll be overjoyed when I tell you.

BROCK:           Come up at once.

KEENO:           You'll be ecstatic.

BROCK:           At once I say!

KEENO:           You're a lucky man, Master Brock.

BROCK:           Keeno, if you don't come up immediately, I won't be responsible for my actions.

KEENO:           Oooh, such impatience. Coming, Master Brock, coming. *(Piano. He enters the house and runs up the stairs.)*

BROCK:           Sometimes I almost suspect he provokes me deliberately. But he's too stupid, too simple-minded. His news is good, that much is clear.

*(He appears from behind the curtain.)*

KEENO:           What a climb, I'm out of breath.

BROCK:           Well, what's your news?

KEENO:           I bought the roses.

BROCK:           Yes?

KEENO:           Two dozen gorgeous roses.

BROCK:           Yes, yes?

KEENO:           With blossoms the size of saucers.

BROCK:           Yes, yes, yes?

- 
- KEENO: And a perfume to intoxicate.
- BROCK: Keeno, forget the trimmings, just give me the news? How did she receive them?
- KEENO: Master, you take all the pleasure out of story-telling. (*Brock clenches his fists.*) All right, all right, I'll be brief. When she saw the roses and read your note, she was overcome. A blush crept into her cheeks. She sighed and said, 'the darling man'.
- BROCK: (*Clapping his hands.*) She did?
- KEENO: Those were her very words, 'the darling man'. And then, 'return his love', says she, 'tell him I am his', and she rushed out of the room.
- (*Brock does a little jig - piano.*)
- KEENO: There's something else.
- BROCK: Something else?
- KEENO: As I left, I encountered her maid, (*he cues in the pianist for M/Broadbeam's 'Theme'.*) a large, gross woman, and she told me.....
- BROCK: Yes?
- KEENO: I hope you weren't anxious because I was away so long?
- BROCK: No, no. She told you what?
- KEENO: You see, it was because of the maid. I had to handle her with care.
- BROCK: Keeno, what did she tell you?
- KEENO: Oh yes, she said her Mistress, your lady-love, was an incurable romantic. She advised me, to advise you, to follow up the roses with something really romantic, something that would clinch the deal... I mean set the seal... on your success.
- BROCK: Weren't the roses enough?
- KEENO: Master Brock, fair ladies must be wooed. Before the knot is tied they must be pampered. Afterwards...

well, then you're the master.

*BROCK:* What did she suggest?

*KEENO:* The advice wasn't given free Master Brock.

*BROCK:* What do you mean?

*KEENO:* I had to pay for it. *(He holds out his hand.)* Five pounds from my own meagre resources.

*BROCK:* Five pounds!

*KEENO:* To ensure her co-operation. I had to buy her support. It's worth it.

*BROCK:* *(Reluctantly handing him a note.)* It had better be.

*KEENO:* Oh, no question. She said her Mistress would be won entirely if she were serenaded.

*BROCK:* Serenaded! But I can't sing. Do you expect me to stand beneath her balcony and squawk?

*KEENO:* Oh no, that would be disastrous. I mean, that's not the way.

*BROCK:* What then?

*KEENO:* Don't worry, I've arranged it. I've engaged a professional troubadour to sing for you tonight. Masked of course, for that extra touch of mystery and romance.

*BROCK:* Good, good. That should do the trick.

*KEENO:* Undoubtedly. His fee was fifty pounds.

*BROCK:* What?

*KEENO:* But I beat him down to forty five. *(He holds out his hand.)* Payment in advance.

*BROCK:* Forty... ! I won't pay it. It's outrageous!

*KEENO:* *(Sighs.)* Very well, I'll tell her maid you can't afford it. Though Heaven knows how she'll interpret that.

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*(He moves down the staircase and into the street. Brock rushes onto the balcony and calls down to him.)*

- BROCK:** No wait, wait! It's not that I can't afford it, but forty five pounds! *(Pleading.)* He wouldn't make it forty?
- KEENO:** *(Starts moving away.)* He's a professional.
- BROCK:** Damn it, will you wait! *(He tears his hair.)* Forty five pounds!
- KEENO:** *(Sadly.)* I should have known.
- BROCK:** All right, all right, I'll pay. *(Keeno runs back up the steps - piano.)* But if this doesn't work, you'll live to regret it. That I can assure you.
- KEENO:** *(Taking the money.)* Trust me Master. I'll pay him straight away. *(He moves to the staircase again, then stops.)* Oh, there's one other little thing, a trifle really. She said her Mistress had set her heart on a trinket. You know what ladies are. She said she vowed, her Mistress that is, that if ever she were married, she would wear that trinket. 'Now', Says the maid, 'if her young swain', that's you, 'were to make her a gift of that trinket, her joy would know no bounds'.
- BROCK:** A trinket? Well, I don't mind giving her a trinket.
- KEENO:** A bracelet, set with precious stones. Seventy pounds.
- BROCK:** Seventy pounds! You call that little?
- KEENO:** I was referring to the bracelet.  
*(He holds up two fingers.)*  
No bigger than that.
- BROCK:** You must be mad! Out of your mind!
- KEENO:** Consider Master, what's her's is yours, when you're married that is. You'll have her beauty, her body *(nudges him)* her wealth. What's a bracelet measured against all that?
- BROCK:** There's something in what you say.

- KEENO: It's an investment for the future.
- BROCK: Keeno, you're not a bad lad. Sometimes I could strangle you, but all in all, you're not too bad.
- KEENO: Oh Master, when it's a question of your happiness, no effort is too much, no sacrifice too great.
- BROCK: Yes, well.... hmm.... I believe I inadvertently forgot to pay your wages last month. Here you are.  
*(Hands him twenty pounds.)*
- KEENO: Thank you Master, and the month before?
- BROCK: Don't be so greedy. Now get on with your business.
- KEENO: *(Holding out his hand.)* Umm.... the little matter of the bracelet.... seventy pounds,
- BROCK: Didn't I give that to you?
- KEENO: I don't believe you did, Master Brock.
- BROCK: *(Grumbling.)* Bankrupt, that's what I'll be.  
*(He counts it out.)* ... fifty, sixty, seventy. There.
- KEENO: I'll pay the Troubadour his fee.
- BROCK: And the bracelet?
- KEENO: Of course, first thing in the morning.  
*(He runs down the steps - piano - then stops.)* Oh Master.....
- BROCK: Keeno, not a penny more, d'you hear me!
- KEENO: I was only going to say Master, the Troubadour will serenade your lady *(he looks at his watch)* in half an hour. Stay tuned in.

*(He exits down the stairs, whistling. Brock exits within. A few bars of music. Mistress Broadbeam appears from behind the curtains with Cherry following - piano. She is carrying the new turquoise gown, which is a sight to behold. Her hair is tied in girlish ribbons. Cherry is carrying a single wilting rose.)*

*(He bows)* Twenty pounds for wages overdue, and seventy pounds for a trinket, not yet purchased.

CHERRY: That's ... one hundred and fifty pounds!

KEENO: Not bad for a start.

CHERRY: *(Takes the notes out of his hand.)* I'll take charge of that. *(She stuffs them down her bodice.)*

KEENO: Cherry! Cherry... now be a good girl and give them back.

*(He tries to retrieve them. She slaps his hand.)*

CHERRY: A-a-a! No time for a grope now.

KEENO: Cherry, don't be childish. Don't you trust me?

CHERRY: Of course I trust you. It's just your amnesia I don't trust.

*(He grabs her arm angrily.)*

CHERRY: Now Keeno, you wouldn't want me to give the game away, would you?

KEENO: *(Releases her.)* All right, all right. Just remember, we're partners.

CHERRY: *(Sweetly.)* Of course. *(She kisses him.)* Now, you play Romeo and I'll see how Juliet's getting on upstairs.

*(She exits giggling - piano.)*

KEENO: Trouble! I smell it. My nose is twitching, always a bad sign. That girl's nothing but trouble. You'll have to keep your wits about you, Keeno my lad. *(He picks up the guitar.)* Right, let's get this concert on the road. *(He strums a few dramatic chords - piano.)*

KEENO: That should wake him up. *(He repeats them and does some vocal exercises.)* La-la-la-la-la! *(Brock appears on the balcony.)* Mezzetino at your service sir. *(He bows.)* For a fee I will sing you sad songs, glad songs and, at a push, even bad songs.



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- BROCK:** I've already paid your fee, forty-five pounds!
- KEENO:** True, true sir, so you have. And for that I'll sing you an original song, a Mezzetino special. I'll improvise. Now what would you like?
- BROCK:** A love song.
- KEENO:** If you prefer, I can do you a marching song, a song of war. (*Piano - He drums on his guitar.*)
- BROCK:** A love song fool.
- KEENO:** On the other hand, if you've a mind to dance, I can set your toes tapping with a lively tune. (*Piano - He plays a snatch.*)
- BROCK:** A love song, a love song! Are you deaf?
- KEENO:** I heard you sir, a love song. But there's a complication. Love has many guises. I can sing to you of young love, old love, unrequited love and love fulfilled, to mention just a few.
- BROCK:** Just sing a plain, simple love song, if that's not too much to ask!
- KEENO:** No sir, it's not too much. It's a great deal to ask, but not too much. Plain and simple. Right, here we go. (*He strums a few chords, then stops.*) May I ask sir, what your name is? So I can get the lyrics right, you understand.
- BROCK:** Brock, Mister Brock.
- KEENO:** Did you say Crock sir, Mister Crock?
- BROCK:** No, B! B! Brock!
- KEENO:** Oh, B for Bully, Brock. I've got it now.
- BROCK:** Well, get on with it then.
- KEENO:** Right away, sir. (*He strums a few more chords, then stops.*) Oh, one more thing sir, your lady's name? I must know that.
- BROCK:** Give me patience! Mistress Broadbeam.

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- KEENO: Broad... you're joking sir.
- BROCK: I am not joking. I never joke. Her name is Broadbeam.
- KEENO: You're not joking? How can I sing of love to a name like that, Mister Crock?
- BROCK: Idiot, it's not the name that matters, it's the lady. And my name is Brock, with a B.
- KEENO: Right! Brock with a B. It's a difficult assignment sir.
- BROCK: Just play! Play, before I lose my temper.
- KEENO: *(Shaking his head.)* Broadbeam!
- (He plays an introduction - piano - While he is playing, Cherry and Mistress Broadbeam enter the boudoir.)*
- M/BROADBEAM: Hark! He's started his amours and ay'm not ready. What shall aye do? Ay'm all deshabelle!
- CHERRY: Take your time, Mistress. Keep him waiting a while. You must not seem too eager.
- M/BROADBEAM: You're rayt, aye must be calm, collected and magnanimous when aye appear.
- CHERRY: That's the way. I'll go onto the balcony in the meantime, just to be sure, and call you when the time is ripe.
- M/BROADBEAM: Cherry, you've been quayte helpful. Remynd me to give you one of may old gowns as a reward.
- CHERRY: Mistress, I'm speechless.
- (Mistress Broadbeam exits within. Cherry steps onto the balcony.) During the song she plays up to Brock, blowing him kisses and generally encouraging him - piano.)*
- KEENO: Oh beauteous, beauteous... Broadbeam,  
Your name, fairest dame, is a shock,  
It conjures a dozen or more dreams,  
In the bosom of old Mister Crock.

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- BROCK:**           *(Hissing.)* With a B!
- KEENO:**           In the bosom of Bold Mister Crock.
- BROCK:**           *(Hissing.)* Brock, with a B!
- KEENO:**           In the bosom of old Mister Brock.
- What passion, what joy you inspire,  
                    Behold, it's as hard as a rock,  
                    You awaken the flame of desire  
                    In the... bosom of old Mister Crock.
- (The exchange with Brock is repeated.)*
- KEENO:**           He lies moaning each night in his bed-room,  
                    Only you hold the key to his cock...uh... lock,  
                    The longing, the urge to be wed soon  
                    In the bosom of old... B, B... Brock!
- Oh, sweet Broadbeam, sweet dame, do have pity,  
                    Alas, at his tears do not mock,  
                    But take heed and take hold of his titty... uh...  
                    ditty!  
                    It's the love-song of old Mister Brock.
- BROCK:**           *(Hissing.)* That's enough. I paid for a love song,  
                    not to hear your smut.
- KEENO:**           Smut sir? Tut-tut sir. You must judge the worth of  
                    my song, by the effect that it has on your lady.  
                    *(Cherry blows him kisses, and shows her leg  
                    coquettishly - piano.)* See, she's in raptures.
- BROCK:**           *(Waving.)* Yes, well, I can't deny that she's in  
                    high spirits. She seems quite elated.
- KEENO:**           Then the song was good value. Now Mezzetino's task  
                    is done. Farewell Monsieur Block.
- (He withdraws into the shadows. Mistress Broadbeam  
                    appears - piano.)*
- M/BROADBEAM:**   Cherry? Are you there child? Ay'm ready. Is it  
                    the rayt moment to appear, do you think?
- CHERRY:**           Just a minute Mistress, just a minute more.
- (She waves goodbye to Brock and withdraws into the*

*boudoir.*)

**BROCK:** Check... mate! We've won the game. Keeno! Keeno, where are you? *(He withdraws into his room and exits within.)*

**CHERRY:** Now, Mistress, he's down below, panting with love. Did you hear his song?

**M/BROADBEAM:** Aye heard. 'Beauteous, beauteous Broadbeam.' The melody lingers on in my heart.

**CHERRY:** What are you waiting for Mistress? Blind him with your beauty.

*(Mistress Broadbeam moves out onto the balcony. Keeno steps out of the shadows, no longer disguised. He kneels and sings. Alternatively, he can launch straight into the proposal - piano.)*

**KEENO:** My love, I truly, truly love you,  
My love, I truly, truly do-ooo-ooo-ooo!  
It may seem unruly  
To tell you so unduly  
How truly, truly, truly,  
I love you.

**M/BROADBEAM:** Can this be true?  
What shall I do?

**KEENO:** Marry me, fair dame. Link the name of Brock and Broadbeam with an everlasting bond.

**M/BROADBEAM:** Oh sir, ay'm overwhelmed.

**KEENO:** Madame....

**M/BROADBEAM:** However, aye do accept.

**KEENO:** My joy is bottomless, sweet Mistress Broadbeam.

**BROCK:** *(Appearing)* Keeno! Where can he be? Keeno!

**KEENO:** That's my old servant. He's searching for my dog Keeno. I'm very fond of him. The dog that is.

**BROCK:** *(Bellows.)* Keeno!

**KEENO:** Keeno! Keeno! *(He whistles.)*

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M/BROADBEAM: Sir...

KEENO: I must find him. Goodnight, my enchantress. Keeno!  
Keeno! *(He enters the house.)*

M/BROADBEAM: How very odd!

*(Brock steps onto the balcony.)*

BROCK: Keeno! *(He sees Mistress Broadbeam - piano.)* It's  
that old tub of lard, her maid. *(He nods to her.)*

M/BROADBEAM: It's that old scarecrow his servant. *(She nods back)*

BROCK: She'll have to go. As soon as we're wed.

M/BROADBEAM: Ay'll get rid of him, rayt after the wedding.

*(M/Broadbeam disappears behind her curtain. Keeno enters.)*

KEENO: Master Brock! Ah, there you are. I've been  
searching for you, everywhere.

BROCK: Searching for me? I've been searching for you!

KEENO: How very strange sir. We must have missed each  
other, like ships in the night.

BROCK: Keeno, it worked. I came, I saw, I conquered!

KEENO: Not only that sir. I have here a billet-doux.

BROCK: What's that?

KEENO: A letter sir, that she gave me to give to you.  
That's why I was searching for you. Read and  
rejoice.

BROCK: Let me see. *(He opens it and reads.)*  
'To my lord and master....'

KEENO: That's you.

BROCK: '.... from your blushing violet....'

KEENO: That's her.

- BROCK:* 'If you love me, for I believe that was the sentiment expressed in your song....'
- KEENO:* True!
- BROCK:* '...and wish to marry me, likewise expressed in your song...'
- KEENO:* True again.
- BROCK:* 'Then you must indulge the romantic whim of a love-lorn maid...'
- KEENO:* That's her again.
- BROCK:* 'Tomorrow morning, ten minutes before the clock strikes six, appear outside your door, wearing the cloak and mask your servant bears....'
- KEENO:* That's me. Here they are.
- BROCK:* 'I will be clothed in like manner. So will the Priest, I have engaged to perform the ceremony. Dear husband-to-be....'
- KEENO:* That's you.
- BROCK:* '.... dear handsome Mister Brock....'
- KEENO:* I told you so.
- BROCK:* 'I long to be your blushing bride.'
- KEENO:* Undoubtedly, that's her.
- BROCK:* 'P.S. The Priest's fee is £30. I leave that to you and to your serving-man.'
- KEENO:* (*Holds out his hand.*) That's me.
- BROCK:* What an extraordinary arrangement!
- KEENO:* Like she said, sir, a romantic whim. Humour her, and the prize is yours. Thirty pounds sir!
- BROCK:* I am to wear this garment and this mask?
- KEENO:* Most impressive. Thirty pounds, sir, for the Priest.

---

BROCK: *(Counting out thirty pounds.)* That's it then Keeno, everything is settled.

KEENO: That's right sir, tomorrow is the day.

*(They exit. Mistress Broadbeam appears, with Cherry following - piano.)*

M/BROADBEAM: How extraordinary. He proposed in one minute, went in search of his dog the next, and before aye could collect may thought, he sends this note. Ay'm exceedingly confused.

CHERRY: It's the way with gallant gentlemen Mistress, they sweep you off your feet.

M/BROADBEAM: And that's the gown and mask ay'm to wear.

CHERRY: Yes, isn't it romantic? At ten minutes before six in the street below.

M/BROADBEAM: Aye shan't sleep a wink this night, may nerves are all on edge.

CHERRY: Mine too, I can tell you.

*(They exit. Music - Keeno enters carrying the sun. He gestures for the moon to be lowered, detaches it and hangs the sun in its place. He points upwards - the sun is raised into position. He exits with the moon then reappears immediately. It is morning. Keeno steps into the street. He is carrying his suitcase.)*

KEENO: Five forty five a.m.! Time flies, doesn't it? Well, last lap and my last disguise. *(He opens the suitcase and dons the mask and cloak.)* Doctor Graziano, Physician or Priest, as the occasion demands, administering to the spirit or the flesh, responsible for births, deaths and marriages. Now, a deep voice, and an impressive vocabulary and all should go smoothly, as long as Cherry keeps out of sight. *(He hides the suitcase.)* I wonder which of the love-birds will be first? Ah, Keeno my lad, this is your finest hour.

*(Piano - Brock descends the stairs unsteadily and totters out, masked and cloaked.)*

Good morrow my son, do not be nervous.

**BROCK:** I'm not nervous, I can't see through this confounded mask, that's all. I suppose you're the Priest?

**KEENO:** Father Graziano at your service. Earliay birdium catchiay wormium, as the saying goes.

**BROCK:** What's that?

**KEENO:** Latin my son. The early bird catches the worm. And you are early.

*(Piano - Mistress Broadbeam gropes her way down the stairs masked and disguised. She opens the door and stumbles into the street.)*

And here comes the wormium... the bride-to-be. *(He takes her hand.)* Blessings on you, fair virgin.

**M/BROADBEAM:** Oh sir, ay'm altogether blaynd. Aye cannot see. Are you the Priest?

**BROCK:** Her voice sounds quite different. Must be the mask.

**KEENO:** Think of me as a gardener. I scatter manure and make the rose, from Rose-Lodge and the honeysuckle, from Honeysuckle Haven, grow together.

**M/BROADBEAM:** Oh may, that's tray eloquent.

**KEENO:** Now let us begin the nuptial rite. *(He nods to the Musician - music.)* Clasp hands. *(Circling them, he intones an incantation)* Dominoes and monop-oh-ly. *(He turns to Brock)* Now my son, do you promise to love-est and protectiay this womanium till anno domine do you partium?

**BROCK:** Hey?

**KEENO:** Say, I do.

**BROCK:** Oh. I do.

**KEENO:** And do you, my daughter, promise to love-est and obeysiance this manium, for betterairay or for worsata, etceterata, till anno domine do you partium?



---

M/BROADBEAM: Aye do.

KEENO: I now pronounce you manium and wifium.

BROCK: Is that all?

KEENO: Ah my son, what need is there for meaningless rhetoric, when duplicity... er... simplicity will suffice.

BROCK: Then can we remove these trappings?

KEENO: No! Not yet. Our lives are governed by the meridian. Six o'clock. It is the hour when Hymen awakes. In one minute, when the clock strikes six, you may remove your masks and kiss each other as man and wife.

*(He withdraws on tip-toe and disappears up the street, leaving the two masked figures holding hands.)*

BROCK: *(Aside.)* Just one minute more. I'm weak at the knees.

M/BROADBEAM: *(Aside.)* Half a minute. Ay'm all a-tremble.

BROCK: *(Aside.)* What a feast she'll be, like a plump little pigeon, plucked and pink.

M/BROADBEAM: *(Aside.)* Ay'll pet him and ay'll pamper him.

*(The piano strikes six - they count off the chimes together.)*

BROCK: One... two... oh my heart!

M/BROADBEAM: Three... four ... aye feel faint!

BOTH: Five ... six!

*(They take off their masks simultaneously. A moment's stupified silence.)*

BROCK: Aaaagh!

M/BROADBEAM: Eeeee!

BROCK: Horrible!

M/BROADBEAM: Hideous!

BROCK: Where's my wife? Where's Mistress Broadbeam?

M/BROADBEAM: Aye am Mistress Broadbeam.

BROCK: You?

M/BROADBEAM: Where's my husband, Mister Brock?

BROCK: I am Mister Brock.

M/BROADBEAM: You? You disgusting old ... crock!  
*(She strikes him.)*

BROCK: You revolting old hag! *(Piano - She chases him. They both stop simultaneously. A pause. Realization.)*

BROCK: Keeno!

M/BROADBEAM: Cherry!

BROCK: We've been tricked.

M/BROADBEAM: Cheated!

BROCK: Keeno! My money! Wait 'till I catch him, I'll flay him alive. *(He rushes up the street.)* Keeno!  
*(He exits.)*

M/BROADBEAM: Ay've never been so humiliated in may layf. If aye lay may hands on her, she'll rue the day she was born. Cherry! Slut! Trollip!

*(Piano - She follows Brock off. A short pause. Keeno emerges, clutching his sides.)*

KEENO: Ha-ha-ha ... the pain ... ha-ha-ha ... I'm choking ... he-he-he ... oh, that was worth every insult, every blow he ever gave me. *(He imitates them.)* You disgusting old crock! You revolting old hag! What a performance. *(He dries his eyes, then calls up to the balcony.)* Cherry, you can come down now, the concert's over. *(He fetches his suitcase.)* You've been repaid in full, old moneybags.

One hundred and fifty pounds. Not bad for a day's work. What's keeping her? Cherry! It's time to go, disappear, before they return. *(Piano - pause.)* Cherry? *(He goes to the door. A note is pinned to it - piano.)* What's this? A note addressed to Father Graziano! *(He tears it open and reads.)* 'Dear Father Graziano, you will understand my absence when I tell you I have suffered a sudden attack of amnesia. I am sure you will sympathize, truly it is a most distressing affliction. There may be one hundred and fifty other reasons for my absence, but I can't remember them. Just one keeps humming in my head, though I can't remember why. Tit-for-tat! What do you think it means? Perhaps we will meet again when I have recovered. Regretfully yours, Cherry!' Tit-for-tat! The little.....! *(He screws up the note and flings it down.)* Oh Keeno, Keeno, you have been put down. You have been couzened and beguiled by a pretty face, a scheming minx. *(Piano - a sympathetic chord. A long pause, Keeno looks slit-eyed at the Musician, then he smiles wryly.)* Ah well, at least I have my freedom, and there's always tomorrow. *(The Musician starts playing the song.)* So I shall sing you a song before I go, about the wicked ways of the world.

*(He sings. The lights fade slowly during the song.)*

Poets will tell you  
That a pretty face can launch a thousand ships,  
Musicians will tell you  
That a pretty face is like a melody,  
Philosophers will tell you  
That a pretty face mirrors the soul.

Don't you believe it!

It isn't the way she looks that counts,  
It isn't the smile that's sunny,  
It isn't the way she takes your hand,  
It's the way she takes your money.

Oh, oh, Keen-oh  
You've learned your lesson well,  
Oh, oh Keen-oh  
Nothing's changed since Adam fell.

It isn't the way she looks that counts,  
It isn't the hair like honey,  
It isn't the way she robs your heart,  
It's the way she robs your money.

Oh, oh Keen-oh  
You've learned your lesson well,  
Oh, oh Keen-oh  
Nothing's changed since Adam fell.

Believe me!  
It's the same since Adam fell.

*(He exits. The music continues while the house-  
lights build slowly.)*

*Music and Songs*

*Page 44 : Overture*

*Page 46 : Keeno's song*

*Page 48 : Mezzetino's song*

*Page 50 : Brock's music*

*M. Broadbeam's music*

OVERTURE


$\text{♩} = 104$

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 104. The music begins with a piano (*f*) dynamic. The upper staff features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the lower staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. A fermata is placed over a note in the upper staff towards the end of the system.

The second system continues the musical piece. The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff continues the accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The dynamics remain consistent with the first system.

The third system continues the musical piece. The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff continues the accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The dynamics remain consistent with the first system.

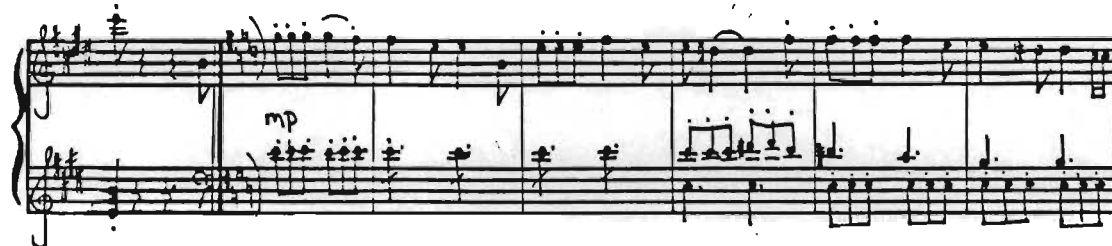
The fourth system concludes the musical piece. The upper staff has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff continues the accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The dynamics are marked as mezzo-piano (*mp*) at the end of the system.

10 CODA: 



Handwritten musical notation for the first system, featuring piano (pp) dynamics and various musical notations.


A little slower.

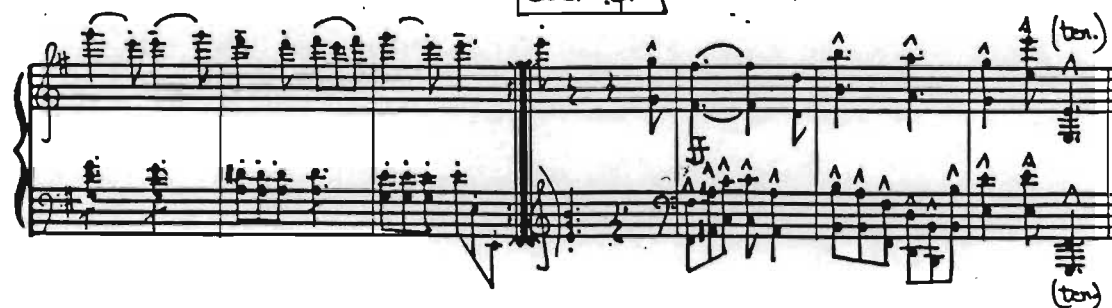


Handwritten musical notation for the second system, featuring mezzo-piano (mp) dynamics and a tempo marking "A little slower."



Handwritten musical notation for the third system, featuring various musical notations and dynamics.

CODA: 



Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system, including a Coda section and dynamic markings like (ten).

KEENO'S SONG

(Quasi Recitative)

The first system of music consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by a melodic phrase with lyrics "(Po-ets will re-lym)" and "(QUASI RECITATIVO)". The piano accompaniment starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and features a steady eighth-note bass line. The system concludes with a forte (f) dynamic.

The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The vocal line features a series of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment uses long, sweeping slurs across the chords, creating a sense of continuous motion.

The third system includes the vocal line with lyrics "Soul. Don't you be-leave-it-It". The piano accompaniment features a more active bass line with eighth-note patterns. A double bar line is present in the middle of the system.

The fourth system continues the vocal and piano parts. The piano accompaniment features a complex, rhythmic bass line with many sixteenth notes, while the upper right hand plays chords and moving lines.



Handwritten musical score system 1, featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes complex textures with triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. The system concludes with a double bar line and a Coda symbol.

CODA

Handwritten musical score system 2, continuing the vocal and piano parts. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line. A rehearsal mark (Bc) is present, with the instruction "Note no-top changed since" written below the vocal line.

(Bc) Note no-top changed since

Handwritten musical score system 3, showing the vocal line with the lyrics "A - dam fel" and the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *mf*.

A - dam fel

Handwritten musical score system 4, the final system on the page, featuring the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*, and accents over notes.

(ten)

(ten)

10 Moderato

MEZZETINO'S SONG 1

The first system of music consists of a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves. The piano part begins with a dynamic marking of **mf** and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The vocal line starts with a whole rest followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes.

The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a more active right hand with various rhythmic patterns and chords.

The third system includes the following lyrics: *B. - beau, sweet dove do him pity - A - las etc. ....*. The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of **f** and features a complex texture with many chords and moving lines.

The fourth system includes the following lyrics: *la - la etc.*. It features performance instructions: **(AD LIB)** above the vocal line and **(AD LIB)** above the piano line. The piano part ends with a dynamic marking of **f** and a final chord. On the right margin, there are handwritten notes: **ENC**, **OP**, **F**, and **KEYS**.

MEZZETINO'S SONG 2

GRANDIOSO..

The first system of music consists of a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The piano accompaniment features a complex, rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a simpler bass line in the left hand.

The second system continues the piece. The vocal line is marked with "Con Moto" and includes the lyrics "Can this be". The piano accompaniment is more intricate, with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes in the right hand. The system concludes with a double bar line.

The third system features a vocal line with the lyrics "me? What I do? (Dialogue)". The piano accompaniment includes a section with a circled "f" dynamic marking. The system ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final notes.

BROCK'S MUSIC

SLOW & PONDEROUSLY

Musical score for Brock's Music, consisting of three systems of piano and grand staff notation. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 6/8 time signature. It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamic markings such as *ff* and *f*. The second system continues the piece with similar notation and includes a *mf* marking. The third system concludes the piece with a final cadence and a *f* marking.

M. BROADBEAM'S MUSIC

Moderato (Terty)

Musical score for M. Broadbeam's Music, consisting of two systems of piano and grand staff notation. The first system is in common time (C) and begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamic markings such as *mp*, *ff*, and *f*. The second system continues the piece with similar notation and includes a *mf* marking. The score is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic contrasts.

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

- i) *THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET*  
Written and directed by Pieter Scholtz  
A circus-routine lazzo.
- ii) *SAMANTHA SEAL*  
Written and directed by Pieter Scholtz  
Make-up and costumes for Wally Walrus and Samantha Seal.
- iii) *THE TRIALS OF KEENO*  
Written and directed by Pieter Scholtz  
Masks and costumes for Brock and Mistress Broadbeam.
- iv) *THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA*  
written and directed by Pieter Scholtz  
Skeletal representation of Zulu hut with Da (the Hadedda) perched on top.
- v) *THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT*  
written and directed by Pieter Scholtz  
The enormous scale of the match-box reduces the characters to the size of ants.
- vi) *PRUNELLA PENGUIN*  
Written and directed by Pieter Scholtz  
An audience participation scene.
- vii) *DINAH THE DINOSAUR*  
Written and directed by Pieter Scholtz  
Dinosaur costume and make-up.
- viii) *THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET*  
Written and directed by Pieter Scholtz  
Make-up and costumes for Stinkwood and Ou-Pierre.



FIG i THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET  
A Circus-routine lazzo.



FIG ii SAMANTHA SEAL : Make-up and costumes for Wally Walrus and Samantha Seal



FIG iii : THE TRIALS OF KEENO : Masks and costumes for Brock and Mistress Broadbeam.





FIG iv : THE LA-DI-DA HADEDA : A skeletal representation of a Zulu hut,  
with Da (the Hadedda) perched on top.

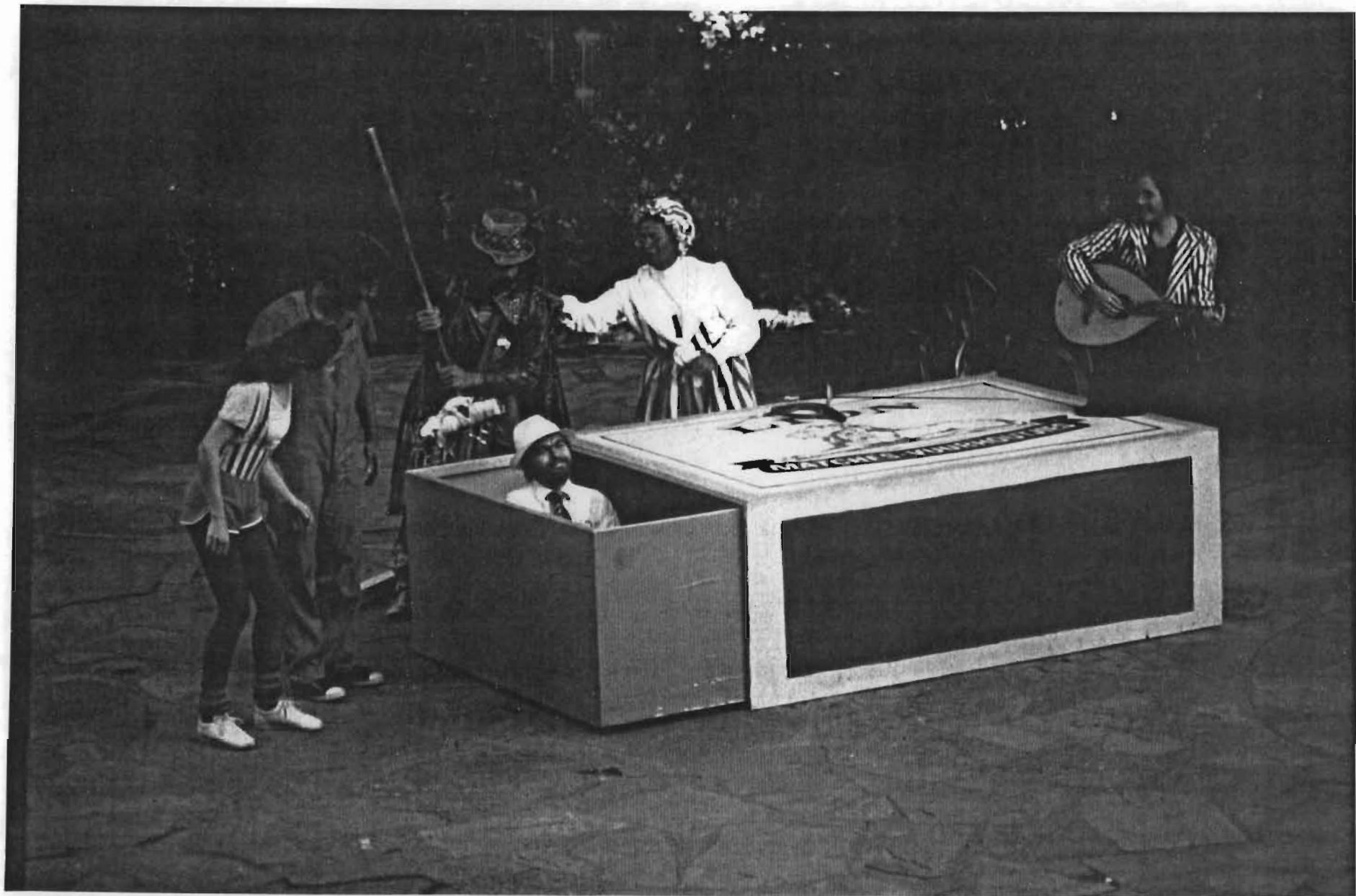


FIG v : THE ASTOUNDING ANTICS OF ANTHONY ANT : The enormous scale of the Match-box reduces the characters to the size of the ants.



FIG vi : PRUNELLA PENGUIN : An audience participation scene.

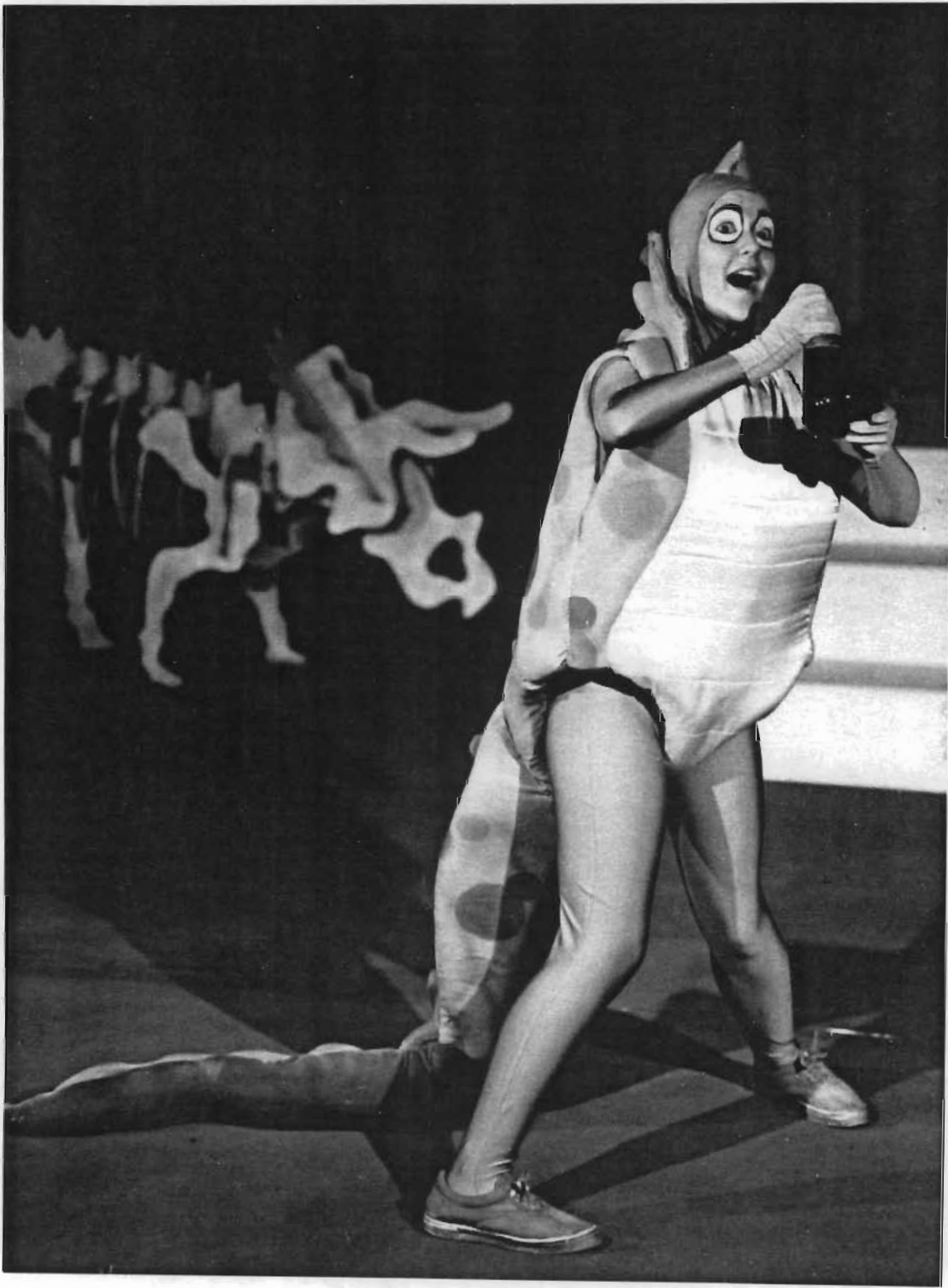


FIG vii : DINAH THE DINOSAUR      Dinosaur costume and make-up.

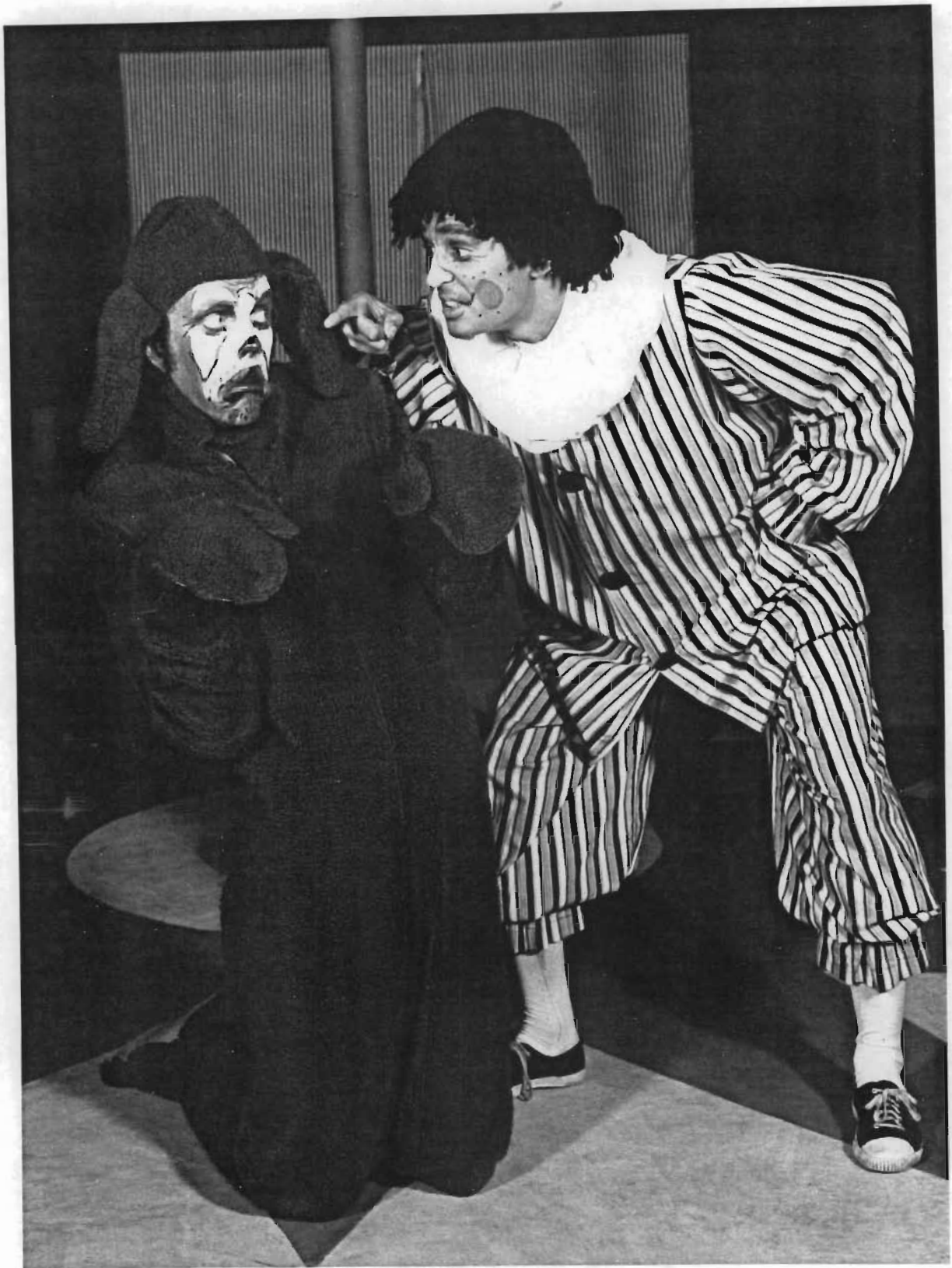


FIG viii : THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF TAMBOOTIE THE PUPPET  
Make-up and costumes for Stinkwood and Ou Pierre.

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