



Play Synopses

KS1

Operation Christmas by Ollie Birch

Music by Paul Clark

Magical Land of Sleep by Suhayla El-Bushr

Music by Lillian Henley

KS1 or KS2

Nurseryland Revolution by Daffyd James

Music by Daffyd James /Arranged by Harry Blake

I Want My Hat Back based on the book by Jon Klassen, adapted for stage by Joel Harwood. Music by Arthur Darvill

KS2

Emil and the Detectives by Erich Kastner, adapted by Carl Miller

Music by Paul Englishby

Hercules and Phoebe by Joe Ward Munrow

Music by Andy Frizell

The Quest for Arthur by Silva Semerciyan

Music by Dom Coyote

The Snow Queen by Zoe Cooper

Music by Josienne Clarke

Operation Christmas

By Oliver Birch

Music by Paul Clark

Suitable for: Key Stage 1

Speaking parts: up to 30

Songs featured: 10

Angel Command has an important mission. A very special baby is about to be born and they have been charged with preparing the 'Big Hello'. The cream of the Angel Command has been selected to gather all of the ingredients needed, and take them to Bethlehem for this huge event. The mission's code name is Operation Christmas.

First, Angel Command must find three kind shepherds. Executing an ingenious plan to disguise themselves as hungry sheep and ask for help from passing shepherds, the angels manage to identify the kindest of the bunch.

Next they must find three wise kings, so a quiz is held. The quiz gets off to a rocky start – the kings are not clever at all. In fact they are very silly. Just as the angels are getting worried the kings get a chance to shine with a question about astronomy – their speciality. It turns out they are very wise indeed.

Challenge number three sees Angel Command visiting a rowdy school for animals. Somehow the angels manage to identify three quiet animals from this raucous, wriggly bunch and they are on their way.

The angels, the shepherds, the kings and the animals set off for Bethlehem. The journey is long and hard but finally, they arrive. By this point the angels think the hard bit is over, but Bethlehem is huge! There are thousands of smoking chimneys, any one of which could be on top of the place where the 'Big Hello' is due to take place.

Downhearted and exhausted the angels feel like giving up. But just in the nick of time, some beautiful sparkling stars lead them to the very place where Mary, Joseph and the special baby are.

With everyone gathered and the gifts given to the baby, there is just one last thing needed: snow! The angels, the stars and all their helpers sing and sing until lots of fluffy white snow is falling from the sky. Angel Command ring HQ on their Angel Phones to let them know their work is done - Operation Christmas is complete. Over and out.

Operation Christmas addresses themes of:

- Team work
- Helping others
- Overcoming obstacles

It reminds children that often the hardest challenges are best completed with help from others, and we can all have our small part to play in an important mission. The story evokes the fun and magic of Christmas and spreads the festive message of togetherness and supporting those less fortunate than ourselves.

The Magical Land of Sleep

By Suhayla El-Bushra

Music by Lillian Henley

Suitable for: Key Stage 1

Speaking parts: up to 20

Songs featured: 21

All across the land, children don't want to go to bed. They want a biscuit; they need a cuddle; they have to hear another story. Anything but go to bed. Truth be told, they're a little bit scared.

"Don't be scared", say the carers. "There's nothing frightening about going to bed, and you need to sleep so you can grow". Eventually the children get sleepy and they drift softly away to the Magical Land of Sleep.

The children find themselves together in a topsy turvy world full of strange and magical creatures, spooky shadows and sounds they've never heard before. It's weird and really quite scary, and there are no grown-ups to be seen.

Before long the children realise that they have the power to decide who and what they meet in the Magical Land of Sleep. If they want jelly bean trees, or Marshmallow Mountains they can have them! What fun! Suddenly though, scary creatures start to appear; Angel the three-headed dog, the Mean Queen and Mr. Bookhead. Where did they come from? Somebody must be imagining them. The children work together to face down the scary characters and replace them with the best characters they can dream up.

By morning time they have sung and danced and played their way through the Magical Land of Sleep and they really can't wait to go back. It turns out that going to bed is not that bad at all.

But just as they are lamenting waking up, a little memento from the Magical Land of Sleep tucked under their pillows reminds them that their dreams never leave them really. In the Magical Land of Sleep they realised just how brave they can be, and maybe, just maybe they can be that brave in their daytime world too.... Magical Land of Sleep addresses the themes of:

- Fear
- Bravery
- Imagination and dreams

It teaches children that it's ok to be scared sometimes, but in actual fact they are often braver than they think. With help from others they can face their fears, and maybe those scary things just might turn out to be much more fun than they could ever have imagined.

I Want My Hat Back

Based on the book by Jon Klassen, adapted for stage by Joel Horwood

Music by Arthur Darvill

Suitable for: Key Stage 1

Speaking parts: 17 (Ensemble up to 30)

Songs featured: 7

Bear's hat is gone. He loves his hat. He wants it back. He asks all the animals in the forest, but no one has seen it.

WAIT!

He has seen it somewhere....

Have fun with your class bringing animals of the forest to life in this joyful adaptation, based on the children's book by Jon Klassen.

This text addresses themes of:

- Lying
- Stealing
- Trustworthiness
- Fairness
- Kindness

It provides the perfect opportunity to explore moral questions around the importance of respecting others, and trustworthiness. It reminds children of meaningful values such as honesty, sharing with others and being kind.

Nurseryland Revolution

By Dafydd James

Music by Daffyd James

Arranged by Harry Blake

Suitable for: Upper Key Stage 1 or Lower KS2

Speaking parts: up to 30

Songs featured: 10

All is not too well in Nurseryland. There's disconnect and unrest. A revolution is brewing.

Polly, of putting on the kettle fame, has quit her job in search of something more fulfilling. As she ponders her next move she happens upon Humpty Dumpty sitting on a wall, who promptly falls and is smashed into pieces. Polly offers to fix him but Humpty's scattered limbs reject her help as she is 'just a girl' and he insists on phoning the Grand Old Duke of York instead.

Unfortunately for Humpty, the call is unproductive and he is left stranded in and broken by his wall.

Meanwhile an angry Polly is determined to prove Humpty wrong. Polly enlists the help of Bo Peep, Miss Muffet, Jill (from Jack and Jill) and Claire, the Miller's Daughter, who are excited to form the band of brave and clever girls that fix Humpty. They are fed up that their stories have painted them as meek and ditzy characters and they can't wait to prove the world wrong. They enter the forest to enlist more support in their quest for proper recognition and to change Humpty's mind.

On their way they encounter Georgie Porgy and Jack, who also feel that they have been unfairly stereotyped and defined by what boys 'should' be and do, and are keen to come along on the mission. But the girls are determined to fight their own battles, so the boys and girls go their separate ways.

At the heart of the forest the girls meet the princesses and princes of Nurseryland. Princess Pea, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White and Rapunzel are livid about the expectations people have of princesses and they have absolutely had enough of it. But it also turns out that the princes of Nurseryland are not happy with their lot either. They have hopes and dreams like anyone else and they are not all just trying to be heroes. Polly finds herself torn. Maybe there is space for boys on her girl powered mission, and maybe all of Nurseryland can defy the stories created about them...

As she ponders her options the infamous Happyeveraftersaur roars in, and insists that our band of boys and girls can't change their stories for the better. After much persuading and cajoling the Happyeveraftersaur agrees to join the revolution, free them from the trappings of their stereotyped gender roles and fly them all back to find the still broken Humpty.

Polly, Bo Peep, Miss Muffet, Jack, Jill, Claire, Georgie Porgy, the princesses and the princes all join together to put Humpty back together again, distributing the jobs by skill, and not by gender.

The revolution is a success and all the girls and boys of Nurseryland are free to be exactly the kind of person they want to be forever more. Nurseryland Revolution addresses the themes of:

- Gender identity and stereotypes
- Teamwork
- Self-confidence
- Helping others
- Bravery

It opens conversation about gender stereotyping and expectation in a fun and accessible way. It encourages children to be who they want to be despite what society dictates, and to judge themselves and others based on skill and personality, rather than gender.

Emil and the Detectives

By Erich Kästner

Adapted for young actors by Carl Miller

Music by Paul Englishby

Suitable for: Key Stage 2

Speaking Parts: Up to 40

Songs Featured: 6

It's 1929. Emil lives with his mother in Neustadt, a small town in Germany, but he is about to take the longest trip he has ever taken alone - to Berlin to visit his Grandma and his cousin Pony, carrying with him an envelope full of money that Emil's mother has saved up for Grandma. On the train to Berlin, Emil meets the mysterious 'Mr Snow', and that's when the real adventure starts. Awakening from a deep sleep, Emil realises his money has been taken from him and there can be only one culprit ...

Emil enlists a band of helpful children (the detectives) in Berlin who accompany him on his fast and furious mission... They chase Mr Snow through the busy streets of Berlin, overcoming many challenges in order to try to bring the perpetrator to justice. Just when it looks like Mr Snow is going to get away with the crime, Emil remembers an important piece of evidence that will pin the crime right on Mr Snow.

Emil and the Detectives addresses themes of:

- Trust
- Friendship
- Team work
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Growing up and independence

It reminds children to believe in themselves and their ability to stand up for what is right. It champions honesty and integrity. It teaches us to recognise who our friends are and celebrate working together to bring about a happy ending.

Hercules and Phoebe

By Joe Ward Munrow

Music by Andy Frizell

Suitable for: Key Stage 2

Speaking parts: Up to 55

Songs featured: 9

Adults think that they know the story of Hercules. They think that Hercules was big and strong and as wonderful as wonderful could be. Well, there are a lot of things that adults don't know including the truth about Hercules.

So if he wasn't big and he wasn't strong, 'Why is he such a legend?' I hear you ask. Well it was because he had help. It was because he had a sister.

Follow Hercules and his sister Phoebe as they battle their way through 12 'labours' – impossible and dangerous tasks set by the nasty, mean and cowardly King Eurystheus. With clever and sensible Phoebe leading the operation, they should complete the 12 labours and return home victorious in no time. As long as Hercules can keep a check on his huge ego that is...

Hercules and Phoebe addresses themes of:

- Gender equality and stereotyping
- Humility
- Bravery
- Teamwork
- Love and friendship

It encourages children to believe in themselves, while recognising all the people that help them to be the best they can be. It reminds them that being clever and kind is just as important as being big and strong, and that their gender doesn't dictate what they are capable of.

A Quest for Arthur

by **Silva Semerciyan**

Music by **Dom Coyote**

Suitable for: Key Stage 2

Speaking parts: Up to 55

Songs featured: 6

Eleven year old Raffy always seems to be in trouble, usually getting the blame for something he didn't do. More than anything, he wishes he knew who he was and why his parents gave him up. And he wishes the other kids weren't mean to him about being in foster care.

One day at school, they are learning about the legend of King Arthur and weird Mr Melvyn suggests to Raffy that King Arthur may hold the key to the mystery of who his parents were.

Raffy has no idea what Mr Melvyn is on about, but a school trip to the local castle reveals that maybe Mr Melvyn is not quite what he seems...

Follow Raffy on his voyage of self-discovery around the ancient land of Camelot, where he and his trusted (and not so trusted) companions battle knights, witches and dragons to find out what it is that's so special about him.

The Quest for Arthur addresses themes of:

- Self-belief
- Friendship
- Bravery
- Empathy
- Identity
- Team work
- Kindness
- Believing in others

It encourages children to be proud of who they are. It teaches kindness and empathy, and reminds us that families come in many wonderful shapes and sizes. Raffy's journey tells us that we can be brave and ask the questions we need the answers to, and help can come from the most unexpected places.

The Snow Queen

By Zoe Cooper

Based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen

Music by Josienne Clarke

Suitable for: Key Stage 2

Speaking parts: 22, with additional smaller speaking parts and sung roles.

Songs featured: 6

Kai and Gerda live right next door to each other. Every morning they walk to school together, every day they laugh at the same jokes together in class and every afternoon they sing together about how they are going to be friends forever.

One winter night Kai is visited by a terrible Snow Queen. Kai gets a snowflake lodged in his eye, and suddenly he is under the Snow Queen's spell. He no longer sees the world for what he did before; all he can see is horrible, and it makes him bitter and mean. He makes fun of his teacher; he teases the girls in the playground and is nasty to his Grandma.

Gerda has had enough: why is Kai being so mean to everyone, including her?

That night Kai goes to the top of the biggest hill in town and he sleds right down it. He whooshes faster and faster down through the town. Out through the city gates.

The next day Gerda's friend's from school tell her that they have seen Kai sledding right out of the north city gates, his sled was being pulled on by a great white sleigh. There was a terrible woman with a big white crown sat in it. Little do they know it is the Snow Queen, taking Kai to her castle. Gerda says that they must save him. But her classmates remind her how mean Kai was, and they refuse to help.

Gerda knows this is not the real Kai, so she starts running, out through the city gates. She runs until she cannot run anymore. She is exhausted and cold, and doesn't know how she will save Kai alone. She kneels in the snow and cries.

Meanwhile Kai arrives at the Snow Queen's castle. She shows him her snow globe. In it they see everything, the whole horrible world. They watch little Gerda, all alone in the snow. Kai sees something though, some other shadowy figures coming closer and closer to Gerda...

Gerda wakes up to the sound of whispering. It is all her classmates, and they have come to help, they were persuaded by what Gerda said. They have to help Kai.

The gang set off on their journey, facing talking crows, a band of robbers, a snow storm and all sorts of other obstacles in order to get to Kai.

But Gerda is not sure whether she will ever be good enough to lead her classmates to Kai. What if she fails?

Eventually, they reach the snow castle and Gerda tells the Snow Queen that Kai is not mean and bitter, and he can be more than this. The kindness of Gerda and his classmates makes Kai cry. His tears melt the snowflake in his eye and he is free of the Snow Queen's spell. Gerda, Kai and the rest of the class return home, victorious!

The Snow Queen addresses themes of:

- Prejudice, especially prejudice against immigrants
- Friendship
- Gender expectations
- Mistakes, and how to forgive or be forgiven

