

# Mini Musicals

**5, 10 and 15 minute musicals ideal for classroom, camps and concerts**

Words and Music by Cenarth Fox

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# Reviews

Hello Mr. Fox,

I received your package of Mini Musicals yesterday (June 8). Thank you so very much. I hope to do more business with you - you have created wonderful musical ideas!

**Jennifer McCoy**

Thanks Cenarth. I bought the mini-musicals from you three years ago and found that very useful. Your works are splendid.

**Nancy Soon**

## What Are Mini Musicals

A mini musical is a short musical, lasts about ten minutes and has dialogue and songs, usually one. Mini musicals are designed for use in class but can easily form part [even the whole] of a concert.

Simple scenery and basic costumes can be used but the emphasis is on little, if any, expense. Allow the words and music to tell the story. *Mini Musicals* can be a part of your curriculum and if fancy costumes and scenery are used, the making of same can be part of the unit of work.

## Getting Started

Each mini musical contains an idea or three to help get things started. Maybe a discussion, an activity or both designed to stimulate imagination and fire enthusiasm. Teachers can of course use their own ideas but there are several provided if required.

## Follow-up Activities

Once the show is over that need not be the end of things. Each mini musical comes with a variety of ideas and activities related to the theme of the play. If the mini musical is part of your class activities, here's the chance to involve other subject areas eg language, science, art and craft, etc.

## Stage Directions

Teachers should feel free to stage the show their way. Some stage directions are provided. If they suit, please use them. The shorthand terms are as follows. UR Upstage Right, UC Upstage Centre, UL Upstage Left, RC Right Centre, C Centre, LC Left Centre, DR Downstage Right, DC Downstage Centre and DL Downstage Left.

The illustration below explains these positions. It might be a good idea to place a large copy of the stage directions on the wall so that the performers can learn it and refer to it if necessary. It's a form of theatre speak and makes it easy for all if you, as the teacher/director asks a student/actor to move DR. The places, directions are the same for everyone. Good luck

UR	UC	UL
RC	C	LC
DR	DC	DL

# In The Bottom of Your Garden

## Characters

Ant, Worm, Spider, Snail, Ladybird, Caterpillar and as many other insects as you desire

## Setting

A floral, outdoor, garden scene. Lots of greenery, plants, creepers, etc

## Getting Started

1. What can find in your garden? Make a list of the insects in your garden.
2. What are the characteristics of the main characters in this play? eg how do they move? What is their shape? Their colour?

## The Mini Musical

Entire company are spread around your garden setting. Music begins and they sing. The tune is played nine times. Vocal, three instrumental versions, vocal, three instrumental versions, vocal. The six speeches are spoken over the instrumental versions.

## In The Bottom of Your Garden

*In the bottom of your garden where the flowers grow  
Live so many little creatures who are fun to know  
And they really are all friendly, come along let's go  
To the bottom of your garden where the flowers grow.  
Little when you're an insect. Danger when you're so small  
Problems with fertilizer. How we wish to end it all.*

*[Dialogue during the song]*

**Ant** Hello. I'm Frederick Frizzlefrump Ant and I live in the bottom of your garden. I come from a very big family. Eighty-three brothers, fifty-six sisters and one thousand, two hundred and nineteen cousins. Life is always busy, especially at Christmas. Have you ever tried wrapping one thousand, three hundred and fifty-eight presents?

**Worm** Hi. Everyone calls me Stretch. That's not my real name, of course. But I'm a worm and can wriggle, slide and stretch. What's that? You don't believe me? Just watch. *[WORM gives brief demonstration of wriggling and stretching]*

**Spider** My name is Spinnie Winnie Spider. I can climb trees, flowers, bushes, fences, walls, just about anything. But best of all I can spin a web. I can make long webs, round webs, busy webs and plain webs. Take a look in your garden. My webs are everywhere.

*[INSECTS sing song again after which the following speeches are delivered over the music]*

**Snail** Look out! Watch where you're going! Clear the way! Goodness, isn't everyone slow today! I keep bumping into them. I do wish they'd speed up a little. Oh, by the way, I'm Super-Sonic Snail. Can't stop. Must rush off. *[SNAIL moves to one side at a snail's pace]*

**Ladybird** "Ladybird, Ladybird, fly away home. Your house is on fire, your children alone." If I hear that rhyme once more I'll scream. My house is not on fire and right now my children are safely sitting in the lounge watching TV. So there. *[Mutters]* "Ladybird, Ladybird, fly away home ..." Humph!

**Caterpillar** My name is ... is ... Dear me, I've forgotten. My name is ... is ... No. I can't remember. You see it takes so long for thoughts to travel along my body to reach my brain, most never quite make ... never quite ... *[Starts afresh]* My name is ... is ... No. I can't ... *[Wanders away]*

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*[Song is repeated a final time then everyone chats in small groups. ANT tries to catch their attention]*  
**Ant** *[Calling]* Excuse me. I wish to say something. *[Hubbub continues]*  
**Caterpillar** *[Moving about]* Move along please. I need more room.  
**Spider** Be careful of my web, Caterpillar.  
**Ant** *[Still calling]* We have a problem. *[Hubbub stops. Everyone pays attention to ANT]*  
**Ladybird** *[Still annoyed]* Look, my house is not on fire. I'm sick of you saying it is.  
**Worm** Ant didn't say that, Ladybird.  
**Ant** This is very important. Our garden is being poisoned!  
**Insects** What!?  
**Snail** People have been trying to poison me for years.  
**Ant** There are so many new sprays and ferti ... ferti ...  
**Worm** *[Trying to help]* Do you mean Squirty Ferti?  
**Caterpillar** I know. It's ferti ... ah, ferti ...  
**Snail** Do you mean a spray or a powder?  
**Caterpillar** I'll get it. It's ferti ... ferti ...  
**Ladybird** My daughter Liza likes frank ferties.  
**Ant** *[Suddenly gets it]* That's it! Fertilizer!  
**Caterpillar** *[Hasn't heard the answer]* I'm nearly there. It's ferti ... ah, ferti ...  
**Worm** It's okay, Caterpillar, we've worked it out.  
**Spider** What did you want to tell us, Ant?  
**Ant** Oh yes. New sprays and fertilizers are poisoning the insects. *[INSECTS upset]*  
**Spider** That's not fair. The bottom of the garden is our home. *[INSECTS agree]*  
**Ladybird** My home os anywhere near a fire-station.  
**Snail** Well poisons and ferti ... ah, ferti ...  
**Caterpillar** *[Finally gets it]* I've got it! I've got it! It's ferti-five!  
**Insects** Ferti-five!?  
**Caterpillar** I've got ferti-five legs on this side and ferti-five legs on that side and ..  
**Ant** Caterpillar, it's fertilizer. And some sprays and fertilizers are not very nice.  
*[MUSIC BEGINS and INSECTS sing the final number]*

## Gee It's Tough

*Gee it's tough when you're an insect  
Hey it's rough when you're so small  
Problems enough with fertilizer  
How we wish to stop them all.  
Little, when you're an insect  
Danger when you're so small  
Problems with fertilizer  
How we wish to stop them all.*

## Things to Do Afterwards

**Science/Nature Study.** The life of insects in everyone's garden makes an interesting study topic. Examine the insect village in your garden and your school garden. Who lives there?

Some creatures attack plants [snails]. Others are essential for plant life [bees]. What about worms? Do they help the soil? Do spiders harm anyone? Why are some people scared of spiders? Where do butterflies come from?

Some chemicals are designed to destroy plants [weeds]. Some chemicals are designed to kill insects. Some sprays designed to help plants may accidentally harm insects. Discuss this situation. What is an insecticide? A pesticide? What is fertilizer?

**Language.** What is the meaning/origin of "Ladybird, Ladybird, fly away home ..."?

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**Drama.** Write and perform another scene using the characters and setting above. What would happen if some chemicals were sprayed over the creatures?

There is a full-length musical published by FOX PLAYS called *Garden Folk*. This has a dozen principal roles, scope for a huge chorus and is set in a beautiful garden. *Garden Folk* runs for 80 minutes and is hugely popular. More details and a photograph are found on the web page at [www.foxplays.com](http://www.foxplays.com)

### Notes on the Score

*In the Bottom of Your Garden* is sung three times but played nine times. The non-singing repeats are played under the various speeches.

Each speech won't last exactly the length of the melody so rehearse several times to make the speech fit almost exactly into the time of the tune. If one is slightly longer or shorter, no matter. But try and get the third of each set of three speeches to finish just in time to sing again.

*Gee It's Tough* becomes a simple two-part song. Balance the singers so both parts are clearly heard.

## In the Bottom of Your Garden

## Super Student

### Characters

Narrator, Dinsmore Treadlightly, Lily Pond, Suscatchuwin Swindler, Achilles Awful, Delilah Von Scissors. You may use a chorus if you wish but you really need an educated audience, one to boo, hiss and cheer.

### Setting

An empty stage or performing space. It could be a gymnasium or a library. But the emphasis is on the characters and the story and the location is not important.

### Getting Started

Live theatre has many forms. There is music theatre [this alone has many forms], comedy, drama, tragedy, pantomime, mime, dance, etc. One aspect or part of live theatre is melodrama. This too can be defined in different ways. One well-known way is as follows in this mini musical.

Discuss the different types of live theatre. What are the main characteristics of each one? What, if anything, do they have in common? Talk about the form of melodrama you are about to perform. You could point out the “shallowness” of each character. They are two-dimensional and the audience never knows the background to the characters or why they behave the way they do.

Discuss the audience participation aspect of melodrama. Is it important? How should the audience behave? You could spend some time coaching the audience for their important role in the mini musical.

### The Mini Musical

*[The characters could stand in a line upstage in darkness. Light the front area of your stage. As the Narrator announces their name, each character steps forward into the light. Alternatively, the players could step out through the curtains or from the wings as their name is called. The NARRATOR is lit by a spotlight. He/She addresses the audience]*

**Narrator** Hello and welcome. I want to tell you a story. It involves several strange but exciting people I will now introduce. Our hero is both noble and complete. A complete what you must decide for yourselves. I give you ... *[Big voice]* Dinsmore Treadlightly!

*[DINSMORE is thin, feeble. DINSMORE steps forward into the lit area. APPLAUSE sign is displayed. DINSMORE gives the “clasped hands over the head” salute and then ruins his manly image with a well-performed curtsy. DINSMORE retreats bowing as he returns to the upstage darkness]*

**Narrator** And now for our heroine. She is bursting with wit and vitality. Her intelligence and enthusiasm for life are overwhelming. No wonder we simply adore her ... *[Big voice]* Lily Pond!

*[LILY steps forward, smiles and takes a bow. She is kind and gentle but not submissive. Perhaps the sign displayed for LILY could read MORE APPLAUSE. LILY retreats upstage as the NARRATOR continues]*

**Narrator** Alas my friends, our world contains some characters who are not so charming, not so dashing as our spotless stars. I refer reluctantly to the baddies. And who could be so bad, so utterly rotten as that viperous villain ... *[Big voice]* Suscatchuwin Swindler!

*[SUS steps forward, leers at audience, drawing his cape in front of himself. HISS sign is displayed. SUS retreats]*

**Narrator** But rottenness is everywhere and evil knows no bounders. Here to complete that dastardly duo is that loathsome and leering layabout, Suscatchuwin’s sidekick ... *[Big voice]* Achilles Awful!

*[ACHILLES lurches forward and slobbers and leers at audience, often looking upstage at SUS for instructions/approval. A sign HISS AGAIN is displayed. ACHILLES, slobbering still, retreats upstage]*

**Narrator** And is that all? Is there any more for any more? *[Shakes head in despair]* Alas, the baddies continue to build. Here, last and by all means least is that sinister, suspicious siren ... *[Big voice]* Delilah Von Scissors!

*[DELILAH steps forward and oozes insincerity. She could blow kisses to the audience. A sign, CONTINUE TO HISS is displayed. DELILAH retreats upstage]*

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**Narrator** Dear friends, our story is sure to touch your heart. So let us begin at the beginning as our hero, Dinsmore Treadlightly valiantly prepares for the greatest challenge of his life.  
*[NARRATOR could exit or have spot killed. DINSMORE moves downstage into the lit area and mimes a weight-lifting routine. He tires very easily]*

**Dinsmore** *[Miming workout]* Oh gosh, oh golly gosh. Whatever will I do? Being captain of the school football team puts a great strain on a bloke. I might not win.

**Lily** *[Steps into lit area beside DINSMORE]* Oh Dinsmore, what might you not win, my dearest?

**Dinsmore** Why, the Super Student contest of course.

**Lily** Oh that. Yes, I've entered the Super Student competition as well.

**Dinsmore** *[Is not listening to her]* Mumsie thinks I'm certain to win but I'm just so busy with my bodybuilding and butterfly collecting, I may not have time to study.

**Lily** Oh Dinsmore, we could study together. Two brains are better than none. *[DINSMORE misses this unintentional pun]* I mean one.

**Dinsmore** *[Still dreaming]* And what about all that prize-money? With so much cash I could buy more plasticine for my weight-lifting.

**Lily** The general knowledge questions might be a bit tricky. *[She politely takes his arm or hand and leads him offstage]* Let's go and test each other.

**Dinsmore** *[What a wimp]* Oooo, careful, careful. You're hurting.  
*[They exit. LILY is simply escorting the delicate Dinsmore. He puts on an act and she comforts and/or apologises as they exit. DELILAH, SUS and ACHILLES enter from another direction. Use baddie music if you wish and display a HISS and BOO sign. DELILAH moves where she can observe the departed goodies. SUS moves DC, his wicked mind in a whirl. ACHILLES slobbers away beside his master]*

**Achilles** Thuscatchuwin, Thuscatchuwin, did you hear him, did you hear him?

**Sus** Of course I heard him. Do you think I'm deaf?

**Achilles** *[Moving about excited]* Oh Thus, Oh Thus, what can I thay, I thay?

**Sus** *[Annoyed]* Achilles!

**Achilles** *[Stops his movements]* Yearth Thus, yearth?

**Sus** *[Pointing to space beside himself]* Heel!

**Achilles** *[Moves beside his master, continues fawning]* Yearth Thus.

**Sus** Now, I've thought of a plan.

**Achilles** *[Aside to audience]* Heth thought of a plan.

**Sus** A brilliant plan.

**Achilles** *[Aside to audience]* A bwilliant plan.

**Sus** And stop repeating everything I say.

**Achilles** *[Aside to audience]* And stop repeating everything I ... *[Back to SUS]* Gee Thus, ith that the plan?

**Sus** You imbecile! *[Mimes slapping ACHILLES who claps his hands to make the sound of the slap]* Shut up and listen. I can force Lily Ponds to like me, destroy Dinsmore Treadlightly and win the Super Student contest all at the same time.

**Achilles** You can? But how Thus, how?  
*[SUS sneers at ACHILLES and then the audience]*

**Sus** *[Full of evil]* I'll cheat! *[Wicked laugh]*  
*[HISS sign displayed. ACHILLES is thrilled and dances about]*

**Achilles** Cheat, cheat, he's gonna cheat. Cheat, cheat, he's gonna cheat!  
*[ACHILLES continues celebrating his master's wicked plan until stopped]*

**Sus** Achilles! *[ACHILLES finally stops. SUS points]* Heel!  
*[ACHILLES slobbers to SUS'S side – it's actually THUS'S thide but that's harder to thay. DELILAH moves towards them]*

**Delilah** Pardon me for over-listening. *[pron lis-ten-ing]*

**Sus** *[Shocked]* Delilah Von Scissors!  
*[ACHILLES is between the others and looks back and forth as the dialogue proceeds]*

**Delilah** Am I correct in assuming you vish to use some vicked vays? Vell?

**Sus** Yes, you're right. We propose a pernicious plan.

**Delilah** And vot is vrong vid a sinister scheme?

**Achilles** I thought ve vas gonna cheat? *[Is ignored]*

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**Delilah** You wish to outsmart Dinsmore Treadlightly. I wish to outsmart Lily Pond. *[Aside to audience]* Oh how I wish to gild zat Lily.

**Sus** So, do you have a plan?

**Delilah** Does za strong man need za haircut? *[Moves to one side]* Valk zis vay.  
*[Delilah moves to one side then beckons SUS. She moves her hips in time with beckoning finger. SUS imitates DELIAH and walks to her. SUS faces ACHILLES and repeats DELIAH'S hip and finger movements. ACHILLES turns and repeats them to no-one. ACHILLES is frustrated so repeats his routine]*

**Sus** *[Annoyed]* Achilles!

**Delilah** No vait, vait. Allow me. *[Orders]* Achilles .... ankle!  
*[DELILAH turns and exits. SUS is confused, ACHILLES doubly so. ACHILLES trots after SUS and they both exit]*

**Achilles** *[Exiting]* Hey Thus. She said ankle. Thus?  
*[LILY and DINSMORE enter. She carries a pile of books with no effort at all. DINSMORE carries a single sheet of paper but even that is difficult for our hero]*

**Dinsmore** Oh gosh. This is hard work. *[He collapses on a chair]*

**Lily** *[Having easily disposed of books]* Where shall we start, Dinsmore? History? Mathematics? Or what about Human Relations?

**Dinsmore** *[Away with the birds]* I nearly broke my footsie today.

**Lily** *[Distressed]* Oh no. What happened?

**Dinsmore** I hit it with a pedal.

**Lily** A bicycle pedal?

**Everyone** No, a rose pedal! *[Perhaps a GROAN sign is displayed]*

**Dinsmore** *[Back into dopey character]* I didn't cry you know.

**Lily** *[Aside to audience]* Gosh, isn't he brave?

**Dinsmore** But I might miss the football match.

**Lily** *[Distressed]* Miss the match! Oh Dinsmore, no! You're the captain and our star player.

**Dinsmore** I know. But tying up my laces is so tiring.

**Delilah** *[Making grand entrance]* Zen let me be of assistance.

**Lily** Delilah Von Scissors! *[To audience]* Shock and horror!

**Dinsmore** Golly, Delilah, that's very kind of you. Are you any good at footy?

**Delilah** *[Offering her arm]* Darlink, my passink iz terrific. *[DINSMORE taking her arm]* I vos vunce a vunderful vinger.

**Dinsmore** *[Impressed]* A vunderful vinger! Vow! *[They exit together, Dinsmore in awe]*

**Lily** Dinsmore, vait. I mean wait! ... Oh gosh, he's gone. *[To audience]* I hope he'll be all right.

**Sus** *[Sneaky entrance]* Of course he will.

**Lily** *[Recoiling]* Suscatchuwin Swindler! *[ACHILLES enters]*

**Sus** *[Bowling]* At your service. *[Aside to audience]* Little does she know I'm really a nasty old so-and-so. *[Wicked laugh as audience hiss]*

**Lily** *[Recoils as ACHILLES slobbers behind her]* And Achilles Awful.

**Achilles** *[Bowling]* At your service. *[Aside to audience]* Little does thshe know I'm .... Ah ... *[Goes to SUS]*

Hey, Thus, what am I?

**Sus** *[Brushes ACHILLES aside]* Lily Pond, I give you one last chance. Marry me or else.

**Lily** Never. I'd rather lose Dinsmore than marry you.

**Sus** *[Furious]* Then lose him you shall. *[Wicked laugh]*

**Lily** *[Distressed, begging]* Oh no, please. Not my strong, rugged Dinsmore.  
*[SUS ignores her pleas and continues his evil torment]*

**Achilles** *[To LILY]* Just a minute. Don't be upthet. You can marry me.

**Lily** *[Looks at the slobbering ACHILLES]* Oh, yuk!

**Achilles** Hey Thus, thshe wants to marry Yuk.

**Sus** Seize her! Tie her to the railway track. Lily Pond, prepare to meet thy doom.  
*[The following action is mimed. ACHILLES grabs LILY and places her on a chair. She is tied up with imaginary rope. She struggles/protests throughout. SUS and ACHILLES then stand behind her and make the sound and movement of a steam locomotive. They start slowly and build gradually. ACHILLES takes his lead from SUS.]*

*PREVIEW ENDS*

**Marvellous Melodrama**

**Sus** *Melodramas most amusing*  
**Achilles** *Audiences all enthusing*  
**Delilah** *I for von am always choosing*  
**Sextet** *Shows where all join in.*  
*We love to boo the baddies, cheer the goodies*  
*Laugh and cry the whole play through*  
*We all delight in good words, shun all bad words*  
*The melodrama's parley voo.*  
*The villains we hiss, the heroes we kiss*  
*The felons we hate, the fearless we fete*  
*The humour's so bright, the drama's so right*  
*The action's so fast, the ending's a blast.*  
*We love the puns and players, boo-ers, hooray-ers*  
*The marvellous melodrama for me*  
*We love the situation, inspiration*  
*The marvellous melodrama for me.*

**Things to Do Afterwards**

**Drama.** This is an ideal show to tour. It is portable, has no scenery and few if any props. And the style or format of melodrama is very popular. Senior citizens know this style and love it. Other classes will quickly enjoy the audience participation. Contact other classes, other schools and community groups and go on tour.

**Language.** Puns abound in melodramas. Eg. Achilles heel! And Delilah Von Scissors. Discuss puns, the hidden meaning of these names and expressions and look for other ones in the script. Alliteration is another popular pastime for people in plays. Eg. I wish to use some vicked vays and we propose a pernicious plan. Have an alliterary [!] adventure.

**Music.** Talk about the days of silent movies. Often a pianist would watch the screen and play the keyboard in a style to match the action. This, in a way, is what can happen with your melodrama. What type or style of music goes with a chase, a baddie, a love scene, a race against time? Why not compose your own melodrama and your own music to accompany the show. Have fun!

# The Human Symphony

This is a body-percussion musical ie. the music made is by slapping, clapping, stamping, etc.

## Characters

Tim, Kate, Terri, Bocker, Trish, Michael and Diane – a group of students/friends.  
A man and a woman in the park plus numerous others. A compere for a concert.

## Setting for Performance

There are two settings. The first could be anywhere – a verandah, school ground, lounge room, etc. The second setting is an outdoors scene in a park. Perhaps have a bench and a sign *Keep Off The Grass* to help set the scene.

## Costumes

Every day casual clothes. The Compere may wear more formal attire. There are several uniforms when the students become people in the park. There's a police officer, gardener, ambulance crew, etc. The following props may be useful – prams, umbrellas, walking sticks, picnic sets, rugs, etc.

## Getting Started

You need to invent your own musical instruments. There is also a play within a play situation. Which occurs when the students perform a concert. Discuss what is meant by a play within a play. This can apply to a film within a film.

Invent your own characteristics for each character although Bocker seems to be a bit of a clown.

## The Script

*[A sad group of students are sitting around on a verandah or in a lounge room]*

**Tim** It's nobody's fault. It's no good blaming anyone. Besides, everything was insured.

**Kate** Yeah, but how long before we get the insurance money?

**Terri** I heard it could be six months.

**Others** Six months!

**Terri** We were burgled at home last year and it was ages before the new gear arrived.

**Bocker** If its six months, I'll forget what a trumpet looks like.

**Tim** Just imagine a large banana with knobs. *[Some laugh]*

**Trish** Why don't we borrow some instruments? Somebody might help us out just for a while.  
*[Plenty of despair. DIANE gets an idea]*

**Diane** Why don't we approach a company which hires instruments?

**Terri** Same old problem, Di. Hiring costs money.

**Kate** So let's raise some money.

**Tim** But twenty-five musical instruments for six months would cost heaps. We might as well face it.  
We're broke and the band's bust.  
*[More gloom. There seems no hope. Then BOCKER gets an idea]*

**Bocker** Hold it! Hold everything! Genius at work here.

**Michael** I think you mean lunatic at large.

**Bocker** We can raise the cash, hire the instruments and keep the band going till the new instruments arrive.

**Katie** Bocker that idea died five minutes ago.

**Tim** No money, old bean.

**Bocker** *[Still enthusiastic]* We'll raise the dough by putting on a concert.

**Others** What!

**Bocker** Let's work up a few numbers, charge a dollar or two and use the money to hire the instruments.

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*[Slowly the others laugh. They shake their heads at how stupid Bocker is]*  
**Diane** *[Sarcastic]* Great idea, Bocker.  
**Terri** *[Sarcastic]* Best you've ever come up with.  
**Bocker** *[Thinks they're sincere]* Great. So let's get rehearsing.  
*[More laughter. MICHAEL take s BOCKER aside]*  
**Michael** Bocker, listen to me.  
**Bocker** Just a short concert but a good one.  
**Michael** Bocker, shut up and listen. *[BOCKER stops]* How can we give a concert for instruments if we haven't got any instruments?  
**Trish** If we had the instruments in the first place we wouldn't to give a concert to raise the money.  
**Bocker** *[Sad]* I'm confused. *[Others groan]*  
**Tim** *[Gets an idea]* Just a minute. I think Bocker's right.  
**Others** What?  
**Bocker** See, I told you. *[Pause. Confused again]* I am?  
**Tim** We can give a concert without any instruments.  
**Kate** A silent concert, hey. At least we'll all be in tune. *[Laughter]*  
**Tim** We can make music without instruments.  
**Diane** Tim, we're a band not a choir. And our singing's pretty ordinary.  
**Michael** What do we do? Whistle in the key of G? *[More laughter]*  
**Tim** Exactly. We can whistle and clap and stamp. They're all sounds.  
*[Pause. OTHERS realise this is not such a crazy idea]*  
**Bocker** Hey you guys, I can hum.  
**Terri** But what about the music we perform? What works are there for a ... a human symphony?  
**Tim** Great title. *The Human Symphony*.  
**Kate** We could write it ourselves.  
**Bocker** Bags be the symphony.  
*[Everyone talks at once. The lights fade and a time-lapse occurs. We move to the park which is the setting for the performance of The Human Symphony. A single light comes up on the compere]*  
**Compere** And so ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, the students have written their own piece of music and have called it *The Human Symphony*. Their new instruments should be delivered next month but who knows, after this performance, we could have two bands in operation. The first using their trumpets, clarinets, violins and drums, etc and the second .... Well, see what you think.

Here is the .....\* school band and *The Human Symphony*.

*[\* Insert the name of your school or theatre group. Light down on compere and up on the park scene. Various people are out and about walking, picnicking in the park. There are families, joggers, couples, young, old, active and passive people. On cue the people break into their performance. It's a concert in the park.*

*At about line 7 a man with a dog and a woman carrying a cat enter and start speaking at line 8. There is no cat and dog. They are imagined. The man could have a dog lead with a bit of wire in it. This dialogue begins at line 8]*

**Man** Morning.  
**Woman** Oh good morning.  
**Man** Lovely day.  
**Woman** Yes, beautiful. Not like yesterday.  
**Man** Wasn't it dreadful. Funny though, my dog likes the rain.  
**Woman** *[Protecting her cat]* He's not so keen on cats, is he?  
**Man** *[Pulling on lead]* Oops, sorry about that. *[To dog]* Guthrie, get back. Sit. Sit!  
**Woman** I've only just found my cat. She ran off and .... *[Imaginary cat breaks free and runs off]* My cat!  
**Man** *[Is suddenly pulled by dog]* Guthrie! Stop!  
*[Woman runs after her cat followed by dog dragging man. Both humans call to their animals. The chase could go round the park and even into the audience. All the time the other people keep performing The Human Symphony. By line 15 the animals have been re-captured/controlled and the man and woman re-meet as before. At line 15]*

## Mini Musicals Volume One - Page 13

**Woman** Oh Mister Furtwangler.  
**Man** Please, call me Orphin.  
**Woman** Well Orphin, let's hope the animals get along as well as we do.  
**Man** I'm sure they will. Same time tomorrow?  
**Woman** I'd like that. Goodbye.  
**Man** Bye.

*[The man and woman exit in different directions as all the piece comes to a close. The ending has everyone in the park pretending to be either a friendly dog or a friendly cat – wagging tails, tongues hanging out, purrs, friendly barks, etc. CURTAIN]*

## Notes on the Score

X = finger snap

⑤ = foot stamp

③ = thigh slap

Each line of music has a number. There are fifteen lines altogether. Perform a numbered line at a time but note that some numbers have more than one line eg. number 7.

The first piece of dialogue begins at number 8. This dialogue continues into number 9. The second section of dialogue begins at number 15.

Keep the 3/4 parts moving. Not too fast but with a feel of one in the bar. Use a moderate tempo for the 4/4 lines.

Number 14 should build in volume and tempo to a big finale with everyone shouting Bang on the first beat of the last bar. There is then an important pause. Then you begin number 15 with the second set of dialogue. Finish with everyone happy as either a dog or cat. Or both!

## Things to Do Afterwards

**Music.** Home-made musical instruments are lots of fun. There are many books and parts of books devoted to making and playing your own instruments. You could build your own symphony orchestra or bottle band.

Body percussion requires no additional material. How many sounds can you record from [a] home-made instruments and [b] body percussion?

**Fund-Raising.** Schools are often engaged in raising funds for various projects. Why not a performance of The Human Symphony? It could be at a school concert, on tour in tandem with *The Marvellous Melodrama* or even as a highlight at your next school or local fete.

**Pets.** In this mini-musical a cat and a dog don't seem to get on well together. Is this always the case? Can cats and dogs live happily together? What is meant by the expression, "they fought like cats and dogs"? Conduct a survey in your class or school. Which is the most popular pet? Do boys have a favourite pet? Why? Ask the same questions of the girls? What type of animal is your favourite pet?

## Video Victims

### Characters

J, B, T, M, S, R, F, Voice and friends of the actors.

The characters are given names and the actors choose the full title. J could be John or Jenny, B could be Belinda or Bubbalouis. You decide. They decide. Oh and each actor has to explain why they chose their particular name.

### Setting

A lounge room, TV room, a recreation room at a camp. You choose.

### Getting Started

Boredom? What is it? Who has ever been bored. Have students relate the most boring time of their life. School holidays. Who thinks they're too long? How much TV do you watch a day? How much in a week, in a year? Is TV bad for you? Discuss.

### The Mini Musical

Actors sit around in a semi-circle. They are bored. Curtain and/or lights up. They sing.

#### Boring

*Boring, boring, nothing to do, nowhere to go  
Gee it makes you mad because it's  
Boring, boring, these are the times you start to go round the bend  
Every one's a blinkin' bore  
Everything's a stinkin' chore  
You can bet we know for sure life's boring.*

*(The actors remain listless and look bored. There's nothing to do and it shows)*

**J** I'm bored.  
**B** Me too.  
**T** I'm so bored it's boring  
**M** Come on you guys, snap out of it.  
**S** Get lost, M. Can't you see we wanna be bored in peace? *(M doesn't give up)*  
**M** Listen, did you hear the joke about the elephant that worked for the phone company?  
*(The others have heard this terrible joke a million times before. Get lost M)*  
**R** Yes, now go away. *(M won't go away and persists with the joke)*  
**M** They put the elephant in charge of the trunk calls. *(Others groan)* Trunk calls. Get it?  
**J** You'll get if you tell any more crummy jokes.  
**H** Now take it easy, J. We need a laugh.  
**F** You call that pathetic pun a joke?  
**M** Don't panic, folks, I've got lots more gags.  
**B** No! We don't want 'em. They're a health hazard. *(M is a tad upset)*  
**T** Gee I wish we had some cash. We could go to the amusement arcade.  
**S** *(Starts to get excited)* Yeah and we could play *Space Invaders*.  
**H** *(The excitement spreads)* And don't forget the pinball machines. *(Others get excited)*  
**F** *(Brings them down to Earth)* Forget it. No money means no amusements.

## Mini Musicals Volume Two - Page 4

- T** That's right. All good things cost money. Just think though. If we had a million bucks we could buy our own amusement arcade. *(Others excited at this idea)*
- S** I could play Space Invaders, Dare-Devil Racing and International Soccer all day!  
*(More excitement. M not impressed)*
- M** Boring. *(Others don't hear M. They're dreaming, thinking aloud)*
- B** I could have two hundred free turns on the virtual reality gismo.
- M** Boring.
- R** We could play games and computers and never stop.
- J** That would be abnormally and unbelievably outstanding.
- F** Ditto and fantastic as well.
- M** *(A little louder)* Boring. *(Everyone turns to face M. Slight pause)*
- H** What did you say?
- M** Boring. I said it'd be boring.
- B** Boring?
- M** That's right. A million bucks might buy those gadgets but it won't beat boredom.
- S** You're nuts.
- J** I suppose your wonderful jokes are all we need?
- M** I could think of a lot worse. *(Others scoff)* No, listen. My folks gave me one of those fancy video-games last week and I've already got bored with it.
- S** Video games! You got a new video game?
- J** Why didn't you say? *(Others agree. M calls for quiet)*
- M** Hold it. Take it easy. *(They won't. They're angry)*
- R** We're all sitting here bored out of our brains and you've got a new video game!
- M** Look, relax. It's no big deal.
- F** We've put up with your jokes and now you're still holding out on us.
- M** All right, I'll come clean. I kept quiet because I'm ... I'm scared. *(Others laugh/scoff)*
- B** Scared! Scared of a video game!
- M** It's true. Those games are sort of spooky. *(Others laugh)* No, I'm serious. *(More laughter)*
- J** *(Sends up M)* Stay clear of video games. They invade your brain. *(More derisive laughter)*
- S** *(Joins the fun)* Amusement arcade presents "Pinball Terror!" *(More laughter)*
- M** Look, will you cut it out. I'm not joking.
- F** Likewise, birdbrain. Bring out the video games or else. *(Others agree)*
- M** You don't want to do this. *(Others stare at M)* Okay, but don't say you weren't warned.  
*(M goes to TV and prepares game. This could be mimed. The TV [an empty box] is dragged DC with its back tot he audience. The others crowd around with glee. A lamp comes on inside the TV. Dim other lights. Everyone is excited)*
- T** I can see tomorrow's headlines. "Kids eaten by video game". *(Big laugh)*
- M** Look, it's not too late to stop. Let's stop. *(M howled down)*
- J** Out of the way. We want action. *(Others agree and M retires)*  
*(Sound track begins. This could be tape machine inside the TV. M is worried and watches from the side. Everyone stares at the screen. A soothing, eerie voice is heard. It could be someone reading live offstage)*
- Voice** Hi there TV fans. Welcome to the wonderful world of video.
- B** Look, why don't I turn it off? *(Others shush M who goes quiet)*
- Voice** I promise hours of thrills and excitement. Are you ready?
- F** We're ready, we're ready. *(Others agree)*
- Voice** Good. *(Spooky)* Now, do as I say.  
*(Everyone is hooked. Some mysterious music could be played. Mass hypnotism takes place. Suddenly M rushes forward and turns off the set. Light inside set is killed and normal lighting comes up slowly. Kill music if used. The viewers are motionless. They're hypnotised. M looks at each one in despair)*
- M** Wake up. Hey! Come on, snap out of it. *(Nobody moves a muscle)* Come on, please. *(Pause. Panic)* Oh no! *(M rushes off calling)* Help! Somebody help! Please help!  
*(Pause. Once M has gone, suddenly everyone comes alive and falls about laughing. It's all been a joke)*
- R** S/He fell for it. *(Great joke)*
- H** Hook, line and sinker.

## Mini Musicals Volume Two - Page 5

S Well done, everyone. We got rid of M and we got his video games.  
(Others happy. MUSIC BEGINS)

### Thrilling

*Thrilling, thrilling, something to do, somewhere to go  
Gee it makes you glad because it's  
Thrilling, thrilling, these are the times you sing and you dance for joy.  
Everyone's a dinkum mate  
Everything you do is great  
You can bet we'll tell you straight life's thrilling.*

### Curtain

## Alternative Ending

□ At this point in the script, M moves around snapping fingers. M does not exit. M tries to get the others to wake up. No joy. Suddenly but slowly and individually, the hypnotised rise up as in a trance. Some could have hands out in front. They exit from the stage down into the audience still in a hypnotised state. M could run after them or off stage now calling for help.

To make this funny [hopefully] ending even more funny, some students in the audience could stand up as if hypnotised and join their acting peers all making an exit down the aisles and out into the foyer. To make this work well, no-one must explain the ending.

## Follow-Up Activities

1. Television plays a large part in the life of many people. As an exercise in maths, draw a graph showing the amount of time you watch TV in a week, in a year, in a lifetime! Wow!
2. What do we mean by mind-control? What is hypnotism? How does it work? What is subliminal advertising?
3. Education or entertainment. Should TV teach us things or simply "break the boredom"? Discuss.
4. M told a "corny joke". Why was it corny? Invent some corny jokes. Have a corny jokes competition. Who tells the best corny joke? If a joke isn't corny, what sort of joke is it?
5. The actors had to choose their own name. Do you like your name? If you had to choose a new name for yourself, what would it be?
6. The actors were playing indoor games. Do you prefer playing indoors or outdoors? Why?

## Write or Wrong

### Characters

Biro, Felt Pen, Fountain Pen [FTN PEN], Crayon, Chalk, Pencil and a chorus of writing implements.

### Setting

A shelf, a pencil-box, a desk, a stationery shop - wherever.

### Getting Started

Rather than have special costumes, hats with names on the front [a la 1940s reporters] or large name tags pinned to chests of shirts could easily identify the players.

Homonyms and puns. Once these are understood, the play makes sense. Who can list the most homonyms? Who can give the best example of a pun?

### The Mini Musical

*(The implements bounce in and sing)*

#### Do It With Us

*We come in handy when writing a book  
When writing a letter to someone who's crook  
When sketching a drawing at which people look  
We come in handy, in handy we do.  
We come in handy when teaching a class  
When making a sign which states "Please keep off the grass"  
When taking exams where you fail or you pass  
We come in handy, in handy we do.  
You write with us, you draw with us  
You paint 'n print 'n squint and all with one of us  
If you're a budding novelist and think you've missed the bus  
Get onto us, oh grab hold of us.  
You sketch with us, sign your cheques with us  
You work 'n write, invite and it's with one of us  
Graffiti's nothing new but you can still kick up a fuss  
And do it with us. Write on, write away.*

*(The implements are bubbling with excitement. Biro calls for quiet)*

<b>BIRO</b>	Attention everyone. Settle down.
<b>FELT PEN</b>	Hey, how come you're in charge?
<b>FTN PEN</b>	Oh come on, no more squabbling, please.
<b>CRAYON</b>	Let's get this meeting over as soon as possible. <i>(Others agree)</i>
<b>PENCIL</b>	<i>(Making a speech)</i> Well thank you my fellow writing implements.
<b>CRAYON</b>	Hey! Some of us colour in you know.
<b>PENCIL</b>	I've been asked to deliver a speech on the role we play in society. <i>(Others groan)</i>
<b>CRAYON</b>	Well make it a short speech. Very short. <i>(Others agree)</i>
<b>PENCIL</b>	Let me say right from the start, there is absolutely no confusion.

## Mini Musicals Volume Two - Page 8

**CHALK** You said that last time.  
**PENCIL** Look, I'll not mince words. It's as simple as the letter A.  
**FTN PEN** *(Didn't hear)* 'ey?  
**PENCIL** Not 'ey. A.  
**BIRO** Just a minute. You said there'd be no confusion.  
**PENCIL** Right, first the rights of all implements.  
**FELT PEN** Not writes. You mean prints. We prints before we writes. *(Some groan)*  
**PENCIL** Not writes. Rights.  
**BIRO** *(At PENCIL)* You definitely promised there'd be no confusion.  
**PENCIL** It's impossible for a writing implement to be wrong. The hand which holds us is always to blame. Even if what they write is wrong, we're not wrong, we're always right.

**BIRO** *(Sarcastic)* Oh that's perfectly clear. Who said anything about confusion?  
**FELT PEN** Is that true with either hand - left and right?  
**CHALK** Left and write! If they're left they can't write.  
**FELT PEN** *(Annoyed)* Not left and write. Left and right.  
*(They argue. "You're confusing" "No you're confusing" etc*  
**PENCIL** *(Over the bickering)* I can explain. *(They settle)* It's true some writers leave but those who are left, write. *(BIRO starts to go crazy)*

**BIRO** Not confusing! If it wasn't so clear, I'd go crazy!  
**FTN PEN** Yes but is there a future for fountain pens?  
**PENCIL** Not really. In fact some reckon the writing's already on the wall.  
**FELT PEN** *(Looking around)* What writing? I can't even see the wall.  
**PENCIL** I think I'm right in saying the end is nigh.  
**CRAYON** Write in saying! How can you write in speech?  
**PENCIL** I said "Right in saying" not "Write in saying".  
**BIRO** Oh I simply love this clear thinking.  
**PENCIL** I think some of you are drawing conclusions.  
**CHALK** No-one is drawing. Show me someone who is drawing.  
**FTN PEN** That's right. We haven't even got any paper.  
**PENCIL** Oh please, I was using a figure of speech.  
**FELT PEN** This is ridiculous. There's a figure of eight and twenty-three and one thousand billion trillion. Now you say there's a figure of speech!  
**BIRO** Well don't look at me. I can't figure it out. *(More groans)*  
**PENCIL** I think this is getting out of hand.  
**CHALK** *(Mild panic)* Out of hand! If I'm out of hand, I'm finished.  
**PENCIL** Not out of hand. Out of hand.  
**BIRO** *(Going bananas)* Oh no! Stop this confusion or I'll scream.  
**FTN PEN** *(At PENCIL)* Listen friend, you've made a real fist of this.  
**PENCIL** *(Snaps back)* Don't you point the finger at me!  
**BIRO** *(Has flipped)* Oh I'm so glad this isn't confusing. *(More signs of craziness)*  
**PENCIL** Listen. Everyone who writes has rights.. Right? *(Others exasperated)*  
**FTN PEN** Look, can we please put a stop to this?  
**CRAYON** Yes, a complete stop.  
**FELT PEN** Is that the same as a full stop? *(Groans all round. BIRO at bursting point)*  
**CHALK** Come on, you're splitting hairs. Complete. Full. They're only words.  
**OTHERS** *(Shocked)* Only words! *(CHALK upset at their reaction)*  
**CHALK** That's right - words. Who cares? What's the difference?  
**FTN PEN** Who cares?  
**BIRO** *(Now slightly mad)* What's the difference?  
**CHALK** *(Backing off)* All right, all right. I'm sorry.  
**PENCIL** Where I come from, Chalkie, the difference between "complete" and "full" is fifty per cent. My insides go into those letters.

## Mini Musicals Volume Two - Page 9

**FELT PEN** And fifty per cent more letters is a lot more ink.  
**PENCIL** And lead.  
**CHALK** Okay, okay. So words are important.  
**CRAYON** Important! Words are my life.  
**BIRO** *(Gradual return to normality)* And mine. *(Others agree)*  
**PENCIL** Only problem with words is the type of people who get to use them.  
**CHALK** You mean, people? *(Others nod and agree)*  
**CRAYON** Words are fine, words are beautiful.  
**BIRO** And writing implements are okay.  
**CRAYON** Yes but we do need replacing, refilling and a bit of sharpening at times.  
**FELT PEN** There are wonderful words and fabulous writing implements. If only we could remove those crummy writers. *(Others agree except CHALK)*  
**CHALK** *(Shocked)* Remove the writers! *(Others like the idea)* You can't remove the writers.  
**PENCIL** I'd get my own back. I'd rub 'em out.  
**CHALK** You can't rub out writers.  
**BIRO** Why not? Give us one good reason why we shouldn't dispense with scribblers.  
**CHALK** Simple. We wouldn't exist. *(This stuns them)* Without writers and artists, we're useless.

*(Pause. Stunned silence. They look at one another. That's true. They mutter "Chalk's right" etc then panic. They want forgiveness. They rush about bumping into one another. They call to writers alive and dead. They beg to be used. "Here I am Mr Shakespeare" ... "Take me, Jane Austen" ... I'm yours, Walt Disney" ... etc. One by one they exit all calling at once.. Blackout. Curtain)*

### Follow-Up Activities

1. The history of the written language is well documented. When did it all begin? Why did people start to write? What about the first writing implements? When did ball-point pens first appear? Try using some basic writing implements - a quill, charcoal, clay, berry juice, etc. What's it like to write with such materials?
2. Learn to write in another style e.g. calligraphy. Calligraphy pens and booklets are freely available and after some practise [quite a bit if you want to be really good] you can produce a beautiful style of writing.
3. Some languages uses symbols and numerals unlike the ones you probably use to read and write. Find some examples of these symbols. Try and copy them. Perhaps there is someone in your school or community who could demonstrate some unusual writing.
4. When the implements ran off at the end of the mini musical calling to famous writers, who were these people? What did they do to make themselves famous? Who is your favourite writer? Illustrator? Why do you like their work?
5. Artists paint or draw with different implements and materials. They might use brushes, pencils, oils, water-colours, charcoal, etc. What is your favourite material? Why? What sort or style of paintings or drawings do you like? Why?
6. Some people argue that ball-point pens contribute to sloppy writing. Fountain pens and anything with a nib will cause you to write with a much neater hand. Do you agree? Try writing the same sentence with three different implements [a] a ball-point pen [b] a fountain pen and [c] a pen with a nib you dip in an ink-well or bottle of ink. How did you go?

Blimey. What's an ink-well?

## Mini Musicals Volume Three by Cenarth Fox - Page 3

# Life In A Fridge

**Characters:** Egg, Butter, Margarine, Milk and Cheese. A chorus of items in a fridge may be used.

**Setting:** Inside a fridge. A bare stage or space is all that's required. A solid platform with chairs would help. This could represent levels in the fridge. Some could sit on the platform, others on the chairs on the platform. Keep space C and DC for movement. If used, lighting from the sides [the wings in a theatre] would be authentic.

**Costumes and Make-up:** The simplest costumes are everyday wear i.e. no special costumes. You could use tee-shirts and jeans. You could have each character's name on their chest. They could wear a large cardboard box or sandwich-board with their product clearly labelled. Basic make-up only is required although Milk and Egg could be white-faced and the others yellow.

**Getting Started:** Have everyone compile a list of the ingredients in their fridge. Compare lists.

**The Show:** Curtain opens and music begins. The items are spread about the fridge. They sing and dance to celebrate their life in the fridge.

### *Life In A Fridge*

*Fridge, we live in a fridge*

*We're out on a ridge*

*We live in a fridge.*

*Cool, we're definitely cool*

*We follow the rule*

*We're definitely cool.*

*Fresh, we have to stay fresh*

*If not it's the mesh*

*We have to stay fresh.*

*Cold, we must all keep cold*

*Or else we'll be old*

*We must all keep cold.*

*Fridge, we live in a fridge*

*We're out on a ridge*

*We live in a fridge!*

[The dialogue begins on the following page]

## Follow-up Activities

1. What was the method of keeping food and drinks cold/cool before the modern-day fridge? What is a Coolgardie safe? How does it work? Can you make a Coolgardie safe and operate it in your classroom?
2. How does a modern fridge work?
3. What part, if any, do fridges play in causing damage to the Earth's atmosphere?
4. If there's a power failure, what happens to the food in your fridge and freezer? What should you do with this food?
5. Pretend the teenagers' party took place. Describe what happened to the inhabitants of the fridge.

## Mini Musicals Volume Three by Cenarth Fox - Page 4

### Life In A Fridge

BUTTER *[Excited]* Hey that was great. Wasn't that just the best?  
MILK *[Snobbish]* Must we perform this, this ... trendy song? What's wrong with a nice traditional tune?  
EGG *[Worried]* You know I still haven't got the words right. Or the dance. What am I going to do?  
CHEESE *[Suddenly panics]* Look out! Someone's going to open the door!  
*[Immediately all ingredients scamper back to their opening positions and freeze. Pause for several seconds]*  
CHEESE *[Slowly moves DC]* Oops. Sorry. Looks like a false alarm.  
*[Others come alive and move downstage. They are annoyed with CHEESE]*  
M'RINE *[Angry]* Will you stop all these stupid games. We all know when the fridge door is going to open. When the lights come on, we all return to our places.  
EGG But what if the light's broken? We won't get any warning. I could be caught in with the bacon.  
BUTTER Careful. The bacon can give you a rash. *[A few groans]*  
MILK Look, could we please stop this nonsense and get back to the matter in hand?  
BUTTER Well said. Tonight's our weekly concert.  
CHEESE What's a weekly concert?  
EGG Oh you know. A concert that's not very strong. Fairly weak. Even I know that.  
BUTTER But it's a competitive performing arts concert. The fridge versus the freezer.  
M'RINE And we can't let them beat us again. *[OTHERS agree. Not so MILK]*  
MILK Who cares? Winning isn't everything.  
EGG You try telling that to Ice Cream.  
BUTTER The whole idea of the concert is to have some fun. It'll be after midnight so let's all relax.  
CHEESE We can't relax tonight.  
MILK Oh pipe down, you. I'm sick to death of your stupid interruptions. *[Others agree]*  
M'RINE Yes. And no more false alarms.  
BUTTER So forget the competition. Let's perform our song and just have fun.  
EGG What time does the concert start?  
MILK The usual time. When the household goes to bed.  
M'RINE After midnight.  
CHEESE No tonight though. Not after midnight tonight.  
EGG Oh stop it you pest. Listen Cheese, you're starting to grate on me.  
MILK And me. So please get it through your creamy cranium, we are having a concert tonight.  
CHEESE Wanna bet?  
*[Others protest and speak ad lib together. "Bet!" "What do you mean?" "I'm sick of you." etc]*  
M'RINE *[Calling]* Okay, hold it. *[Others settle]* Now call me Grumpy if you like but I have to tell you that I am really cheesed off about this. What the heck is going on?  
CHEESE I keep trying to tell you. Forget tonight's concert.  
EGG Why? What's happening?  
CHEESE The word in the crisper is tonight's party night.  
OTHERS What?  
CHEESE And it gets worse. It's a party for teenagers.  
OTHERS *[Dismayed]* Teenagers!  
BUTTER This is terrible. Disastrous.  
MILK We won't survive the night. We've had it.  
CHEESE Apparently the adults are going away for the weekend and the kids have invited some friends round for a little celebration. *[More groans from others]*  
M'RINE Little celebration? This fridge will be like world war three.  
EGG I've got no hope. I'll be scrambled for sure.  
MILK There's only one thing to do.  
OTHERS What?  
MILK Have the concert right now, before the teenagers' party. *[Music begins]*  
BUTTER You're right. Come on. Places everyone. *[Others move to perform]*  
CHEESE Me and my big mouth.

*[Song is repeated perhaps this time with simple props. They've had the rehearsal. This is the real thing. The principals could take their bows during the song. As the song finishes, curtain]*

## The Beautie Charade

**Characters:** Interviewer, Muscles, Macho, Toughie and Brawn. The chorus could be the audience who surround the front and sides of the stage.

**Setting:** A stage, platform or catwalk - any open space. It could be outdoors on a beach or inside a shopping mall, anywhere. A large sign saying Beauty Pageant or Magic Muscles etc could adorn the back of the stage. If your setting is outdoors the Interviewer may have to say "sundeck" or "patio" rather than "ballroom".

**Costumes and Make-up:** The Interviewer is smartly dressed perhaps in a suit or expensive casual gear. The contestants could wear tee-shirts with either shorts or bathers. Sun-cream on the nose if it's outdoors and perhaps sunglasses and contemporary caps. If required, only basic make-up. Each contestant has a number [1 to 4] on a tag around his neck or on his thigh on his shorts.

**Getting Started:** Contests can be roughly divided into two areas. [a] those where an opinion decides the winner e.g. a dancing or diving contest and [b] where the facts speak for themselves e.g. a horse-race or game of chess. Discuss this point. Is it true? Draw up a list of contests or competitions and divide them according to opinion or fact. How many contests can you name? Which list is longer?

**The Show:** Curtain opens with INTERVIEWER facing front as if looking into a TV camera. A pretend microphone is used. It's a radio mic and hence has only a very short cable. You could use a real microphone and have it operating as such if you like. In a classroom setting that hardly seems necessary.

INT'VIEWER *[Adjusting tie, brushing hair, etc]* Testing, testing. One, two, three, three, four, five. How's that?  
*[Pause]* Okay, stand by. Here we go. *[Smiling]* And welcome everyone to the beautiful ballroom of the Swanky Hotel here in downtown ..... *[Use the name of your town or suburb].* Tonight *[or Today]* is the final of our beautie charade so right now let's put our hands together and give a gi-normous welcome to our flexing finalists. *[INTERVIEWER applauds, audience applauds. Contestants enter, waving and form a line along platform/stage]*

INT'VIEWER You see before you some of the finest and most promising young men our marvellous country has to offer. This is the final stage of our Beautie Charade. I am about to interview each contestant before the judges make their final decision. So let's get started and here is contestant number one, *[Big voice]* Mister Muscles!  
*[MUSCLES moves DC to INTERVIEWER. MUSCLES waves to applauding fans and flexes his muscles]*

MUSCLES Thank you, thank you! Yes, it's me!

INT'VIEWER So Muscles, tell us a little about yourself.

MUSCLES Well I can do 60 push-ups, 120 sit-ups and 240 chin-ups.  
*[Buzz from audience, maybe even applause. Everyone is impressed]*

INT'VIEWER That is absolutely fantastic. But tell us about yourself. What sort of hobbies have you got?

MUSCLES *[Confused]* Hobbies? What do you mean by hobbies?

INT'VIEWER Oh you know, what sort of things do you like to do in your spare time?

MUSCLES Ah that's easy. I like to do 60 push-ups, 120 sit-ups and 240 chin-ups.

INT'VIEWER Well isn't that just fascinating. So moving right along, let's talk about the economy. If you were in charge of the nation's finances, what changes would you make?

MUSCLES I'd make it compulsory for everyone to do push-ups, sit-ups and chin-ups.

INT'VIEWER Of course. So let's hear it for contestant number one, *[Big voice]* Mister Muscles!  
*[Applause/whistling as MUSCLES waves/flexes muscles, returns to line. MACHO struts DC to INT'VIEWER]*

INT'VIEWER And now contestant number two, *[Big voice]* Mister Macho.  
*[Applause, cheering as MACHO waves, flexes muscles etc]*

MACHO Hi fans. Yes it's me. And aren't you just so lucky!

INT'VIEWER Indeed, indeed. Okay Macho, please tell us why you have entered this competition?

MACHO Well my agent told me to and also I want to give the world a chance to see my tremendous torso! *[MACHO struts his stuff and the fans go wild]*

INT'VIEWER Wow! You certainly have some adoring fans. So what exactly do you do for a living?

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MACHO Watch.  
INT'VIEWER Sorry, did you say "watch"?  
MACHO You got in it in one, kiddo. I watch.  
INT'VIEWER Oh I get it. You make watches.  
MACHO *[Flexes muscles]* What?  
INT'VIEWER Ah, you repair watches?  
MACHO Repair watches?  
INT'VIEWER Very expensive ones, of course.  
MACHO Listen dummy, I watch. I pose in front of a giant mirror and watch. Myself.  
*[MACHO poses and audience goes wild. INTERVIEWER shakes head. MACHO waves and moves UC. TOUGHIE moves DC]*  
INT'VIEWER And here is contestant number three, *[Big voice]* Mister Toughie!  
*[Applause, etc. TOUGHIE does a few toughie routines, shadow boxing, etc]*  
TOUGHIE Cop that. And that. And that! *[Thrilled response from audience]*  
INT'VIEWER *[A touch nervous at being thumped]* Absolutely fantastic, Toughie. You're certainly a toughie. Let's start by asking you how you came to enter this competition.  
TOUGHIE Ah, we is just good friends.  
INT'VIEWER Who is? I mean who are?  
TOUGHIE We is just good friends.  
INT'VIEWER Oh I see. Of course. Now, if you had the power to eradicate poverty, how would you go about it?  
TOUGHIE We is just good friends.  
INT'VIEWER Okay. I think that's perfectly clear. So what are your hobbies then?  
TOUGHIE We is just good friends.  
INT'VIEWER I see. And finally could you tell us exactly what your agent told you to say?  
TOUGHIE We is just good friends.  
INT'VIEWER Fantastic. So let's hear it *for [Big voice]* Mister Toughie!  
*[Applause, TOUGHIE waves and returns UC. BRAWN moves DC and flexes muscles]*  
BRAWN It's me! It's me! Get a load of this! *[More muscle flexing]*  
INT'VIEWER Unbelievable! What a reaction! Now tell us, Brawn, what do you like to do more than anything else?  
BRAWN Ah ... well ... um ... Ah, could I have the question again, please?  
INT'VIEWER Oh brilliant. What a wit! Gosh that's funny. Now we hear a lot of talk these days about these sort of competitions being based upon society's preconceived ideas of fashion and beauty. What do you think about that?  
BRAWN Oh ... ah ... well ... yeah. Hey, far out!  
INT'VIEWER So you agree that physical appearance should not be rewarded with money, prizes and kudos?  
BRAWN Ah ... I'd like the money.  
INT'VIEWER Would you say you were a typical beauty quest entrant?  
BRAWN Ah, what do you mean by topical?  
INT'VIEWER No, not topical. Typical. Are you typical?  
BRAWN No way. I'm a Pisces.  
INT'VIEWER Sorry?  
BRAWN You wanna see me muscles?  
*[BRAWN flexes muscles and fans go wild. BRAWN waves to fans and retreats UC]*  
INT'VIEWER So there we have it. Our four fabulous finalists. Absolutely impossible to tell them apart. Let's hear it for our beefcake bozos!

*[Applause. Music begins. Contestants move downstage and sing. The whole company could join in on the reprise of the song. There is a soft-shoe dance in the number and this could be most entertaining]*

*Beauty Contests*

*Beauty contests, are they really what they seem?  
Beauty contests, are they really everybody's dream?  
If appearance ain't important as we are often told  
How come every winner scores a centrefold?  
Oh! Beauty contests, are they really what they seem?*

**Follow-up Activities**

1. Plays and all types of works for theatre have been used to push a point. Some works could be said to be purely entertainment but many raise issues. Does this mini musical raise a point or points? If so, what are they and do you agree with them? Why?
2. Watch a fashion parade or beauty contest on TV. Describe the event. Do the models or contestants have a particular look or appearance? If so, what is it?
3. If there were such a thing as an Ugly Contest, what would the judges be looking for?
4. What is meant by the expression, "Beauty is only skin deep"?
5. Collect a few fashion magazines. Do they models have a particular body shape and general appearance? Describe a typical model in a fashion magazine?
6. Who decides what is beautiful or fashionable? Why do the shops say "Such and such is in fashion this season"?
7. What is the current fashion for people your age? How many in your class have clothes, hairstyles which are currently in fashion?
8. Is there pressure to be "in fashion"? If so, what form does this pressure take? Discuss.

**PREVIEW ENDS**

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