

Christmas Decorations

A musical play for young performers

Words and Music by Cenarth Fox

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Cast

Speaking Parts

Christmas Card - a storyteller
Bauble - trendy, fashion-conscious
Star - show-off, pushy, ambitious
Tinsel - scatter-brained, joker

Candle - solemn, old-fashioned
Lantern - worrier, nervous
Fairy - gentle, scared of heights

Non-speaking Parts

Old lady, *Christmas Card* 2 [2 actors], *Tinsel* 2 [2 actors], *Lantern* 2 [2 actors], *Bauble* 2 [2 actors]

Chorus

Christmas stockings, *stray cats/possums/badgers*, etc, *additional Christmas decorations*

Set

It can be realistic i.e. a lounge-room in the week before Christmas with a tree and presents, decorations etc. Or it could be abstract with simply a space being decorated by the performers. Remember they are bright and colourful so a dark backdrop will highlight the performers. The stage directions are given in the teacher's script. The symbols are **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.

Time

It is night about a week or two before Christmas Day.

Notes for the Teacher/Director

1. The actors who speak the dialogue should have a distinct personality. *Star* is bossy, *Candle* solemn, *Tinsel* tizzy, etc. Help the performers to speak and move according to their personality.
2. The teacher's version of the script has stage directions [where the actors move] plus suggestions and ideas. Feel free to use some, all or none.
3. Each song allows for dancing or movement. You could use everyone in the dances or divide the company into groups or have speciality dancers only or any other combination. When it's time to sing, usually the less movement the better.
4. Costumes should be lots of fun. *Card* needs a sort of sandwich-board on its side. *Tinsel* could have a skivvy and balaclava dripping with tinsel, *Candle* could have a handle on one side and a pretend flame as a hat, *Lantern* needs a sort of cage with a glow inside [a small battery-operated lamp strapped to its chest], *Star* is dressed like a star and *Fairy* like a fairy. The old lady should be humble and frail and the company bright and busy. It's a good idea to make groups of the same item for the chorus. Remember some of the principals are copied in the chorus but these items come apart! Literally!
5. In the dialogue, a word in *italics* means it requires emphasis or stress.
6. Practise using the tape so that the music always starts in the right place at the right time.
7. The characters [apart from the old lady - who could be an old man - and the fairy who, even in today's equality of opportunity, is probably female] have no specific gender and can be either male or female.

Script for the Teacher/Director

[Curtain rises or lights come up on a silent still room. The decorations are in a large box which means they are hidden on stage and/or in the wings. MUSIC BEGINS. Immediately the decorations rush out full of glee. It's nearly Christmas and they're about to be brought out again. They're happy and sing]

Song - CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Company *Christmas decorations
Fun festoonery.
Christmas decorations
'round your Christmas tree.
Baubles, lanterns, streamers
Stockings all bring glee.
Christmas decorations
'round your Christmas tree.
There are bags 'n tags 'n gifts 'n stars
Crackers, bells and bows.
Holly, jolly Santas and the tinsel all in rows, oh!
Christmas decorations, 'round your Christmas tree.*

TINSEL *[Song ends and the decorations sit or lean all around the set. They are tired but excited]*
Well here we go for another Christmas. Last one on the tree's a silly sausage.
[TINSEL leads charge of many decorations who rush UC towards the tree. They squabble and push without being nasty, calling as they go. "I'm first" ... "Out of my way" ... "You're pushing" ... etc. They stop and turn when CANDLE calls from DR]

CANDLE Hold it! *[COMPANY stop and turn around]* Will you stop this nonsense, go back and wait your turn.
LANTERN Candle's correct. There is a proper procedure which must be followed.
[DECORATIONS grumble and move away from tree]

BAUBLE Why can't we place *ourselves* on the tree?
TINSEL I'm too long. I need help. Who'd like to help me? *[Mutters away. Is ignored]*
BAUBLE Why must we do things the same way every year?
CANDLE It's called tradition, something handed down from one generation to another.
STAR We know what it means and I say it's stupid! *[Buzz from DECORATIONS]*
FAIRY Please, let's not argue. It's nearly Christmas.
BAUBLE Traditional ways are *boring* ways. Let's have a change.
LANTERN *[Panics, upset]* What do you mean? What *sort* of change?
STAR Well places on the tree. I'd like to be right on the top. *[Buzz from DECORATIONS]*
BAUBLE And I'd like to be right in the front with a special light showing off my features.
TINSEL And how about the Tinsel swapping with the Mistletoe?
COMPANY *What?!*
TINSEL We'd have Mistlebins and Tinselstoe! *[Big reaction from DECORATIONS]*
LANTERN *Mistlebins!*
CANDLE *Tinselstoe!*
LANTERN You're demeaning the meaning of Christmas.
STAR I still want to be on top of the tree.
CANDLE But that's where Fairy goes. *Always.*
FAIRY I don't mind. In fact I'd like a much lower branch please.
TINSEL A lower branch! But the Fairy always goes *[Points]* way up there.
FAIRY I know and that's the problem. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
LANTERN Problem? What problem.
FAIRY I'm scared.
COMPANY *Scared?*

Song - FAIRY ON THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Fairy *I'm/She's the fairy on top of the Christmas tree
Up above the flashing lights
I'm/She's the fairy on top of the Christmas tree
And I'm/she's really scared of heights.*

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*I/She look/s so sweet in my/her gorgeous gown
But my/her tummy goes bleeeh
If I/she take/s a look down.
I'm/She's the fairy on top of the Christmas tree
And I'm/she's really scared of heights!*

[The DECORATIONS repeat the song during which various solid boxes - painted as presents - are placed in front of FAIRY. She steps gingerly onto each, pauses, looks down, trembles then topples forward being 'saved' by others. Each present is only a few inches/centimetres above the stage so there is no danger and FAIRY'S fear is highlighted. Once the song is over, FAIRY is glad to have told her secret]

LANTERN Congratulations, Fairy. That must have taken a lot of courage.
BAUBLE So Fairy wants a change. I say that means the end of tradition.
CANDLE Hey, hey, hey!
STAR I want top possie *[position]*, it's vacant so let's make the change.
CANDLE We must not tamper with tradition.
STAR But if Fairy's a chicken, we *need* to change!
TINSEL Fairy's not a chicken. They look like this.
[Gives brief impression of a strutting, scratching, pouting rooster. Others applaud]
BAUBLE Well I say we mix it up, duck 'n dive, have a fling. *[Pause. Everyone stops and stares at BAUBLE]* What's the matter, don't you lot speak the latest?
CANDLE The latest *what?*
STAR All right, let's vote. Who wants a new position on the Christmas tree?
[Quite a few Decorations raise their hand especially BAUBLE and STAR]
CARD Just a minute.
STAR Keep out of it, Card. This is democracy in action.
CARD We can't make changes just because we *feel* like it.
BAUBLE Oh yes we can.
CARD Perhaps you're being selfish, hasty and destructive.
STAR *Destructive!?*
LANTERN Oh please, no more bickering. It's nearly Christmas.
FAIRY And I'm prepared to go all the way to the ... *[Looks up, swallows]* top.
CARD Instead of wanting something for ourselves, why not help someone else? Someone less fortunate.
CANDLE Hear, hear.
STAR Oh I see. So now there's something wrong with trying to prosper.
BAUBLE *[To CARD]* You're jealous of anyone who wants to get ahead.
TINSEL A chicken's got a head. And a tail ... like this.
[Resumes chicken impression again but is quickly stopped]
CARD Wrong, wrong, wrong.
STAR You've no ambition, Card. You're a loser.
CARD May I tell you a story?
TINSEL Oh beautie. I love stories. *[Lights start to dim]*
BAUBLE This had better be good.
STAR And when it's over, I'm still heading for the top of that tree.
[Lighting is quite dim now and CARD could be lit by a single light perhaps from above creating an eerie atmosphere]
CARD Once there was an old lady who lived alone and loved all the animals. Every night she took her shopping jeep to the deserted factories and laneways giving food to the homeless animals. In winter when it was cold and wet, every night, the old lady never missed looking after her friends. Then one day she fell and hurt her hip. She couldn't walk. The animals waited but she never came. And soon it was Christmas.

In the house next door, my cousin Christmas Card, heard about the old lady sitting alone with her sore leg. The neighbours ignored her. They said she was crazy.
FAIRY But she wasn't. She was kind and loving and
COMPANY Shhhhhh.
CARD That Christmas Eve, my cousin Christmas Card told the other decorations about the old lady, how she was poorly and all alone. She had no friends, no presents, nothing. And so the decorations took a vote. They decided to do something very unusual.
STAR *[Now intrigued]* What did they do?

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CARD First the Christmas Card stood in the middle of the floor. [*CHRISTMAS CARD 2 played by two actors moves DC and is lit*]. They struggled and strained and then suddenly [*CARD rips in two*] they tore themselves in half. [*Gasps from DECORATIONS*] Then some tinsel stepped forward. [*TINSEL 2 played by two actors steps into DC light*] and they also strained and tugged until snap! [*TINSEL 2 breaks in half to gasps from DECORATIONS*] And soon lots of decorations did the same thing. [*Chorus DECORATIONS, each played by two actors, step forward and divide themselves*]. Lanterns, Candles, even a Bauble and a Star. [*Lots of gasps as the DECORATIONS divide*] Even the Fairy who was afraid of being on the mantelpiece volunteered to help.

CANDLE What happened?

CARD In the dead of night, the new decorations crept next door and placed themselves all around the old lady's room. [*The DECORATIONS move in the dim lighting and dress the stage which is now the old lady's room*] The next morning was Christmas Day. The old lady was very sad. She had to spend Christmas alone and she missed her stray animals. She hobbled down the hall, opened the door and nearly died.

[*Full lights up immediately. DECORATIONS frozen. OLD LADY enters room UC and is stunned*]

COMPANY [*Come alive as one*] Merry Christmas! [*MUSIC BEGINS*]

CARD The old lady was speechless and stared at the smiling decorations.

Song - DECORATE YOUR HEART

Company

*We'll decorate your lounge-room
We'll decorate each wall
We'll decorate your front-door
We'll decorate your hall
We'll decorate your stocking
Just like a work of art
We'll decorate your Christmas
We'll decorate your heart.*

[*The song is lively and full of happiness. The old lady gradually recovers from her initial shock and joins in the song clapping in time as the DECORATIONS dance and sing. Song ends. BLACKOUT. DECORATIONS return to original positions. Slowly bring up lights. The OLD LADY has departed or is hidden upstage. We're back in the original room*]

CARD And you know something, that was the happiest Christmas ever.

STAR [*Sceptical*] Oh for the old lady, sure. But what about those damaged decorations? They would have been miserable.

CARD Oh no, they'd never been so happy.

BAUBLE *Happy!?*

CARD Those decorations discovered something fantastic. The nicest feelings always come when you do something nice for someone else.

STAR But we'll be happy if we change positions on the tree.

CARD Ah but that's a different kind of happiness. That's thinking of yourself.

CANDLE And being selfish is never satisfying.

TINSEL Maybe that's what Christmas is all about.

STAR Christmas is about getting presents and being on top of the tree. Hands up all those who agree.

[*STAR raises its hand. Not one other hand is raised. Pause. Silence*]

CARD Come on, Star. Think about someone else.

LANTERN Think about *giving* not getting.

TINSEL Think about *others* and not yourself.

STAR [*Pause*] But are you *sure* this'll work? Will this *really* make me happy?

CARD Some things are certain, Star. And one of them is the true spirit of Christmas.

BAUBLE [*Calling from UC*] Hey there's a whole lot of stray animals outside. They look pretty hungry. [*Buzz from DECORATIONS. Wow What's happening? etc*]

STAR Well don't just stand there. Invite them in.

TINSEL They can share our goodies. [*DECORATIONS excited*]

CARD [*Calling*] Merry Christmas everyone.

COMPANY Merry Christmas! [*MUSIC BEGINS*]

[*The stray cats, possums, badgers, rabbits, etc enter and join the final number. The old lady re-joins the festivities and loves every minute of it*]

Song - THINK OF OTHERS

Company

*How can we avoid a sad and tearful Christmas
Filled with bitter loneliness?
How instead can we enjoy a cheerful Christmas
Filled with peace and happiness?
Simple is the answer we've been told
As easy as your A, B, C.
Here's the good advice to make you feel so nice
And decorate your Christmas tree.
Think of others, help someone in need.
Think of others, say goodbye to greed.
Think of others, 'cos there is no doubt
That's what Christmas is really all about.*

[Full COMPANY sing and dance finishing with a wave to the audience as the curtain falls at the end of the song. If you wish, repeat the final song using it to take some bows for your Curtain Calls. During the Dance Break, the DECORATIONS could move into the audience distributing small gifts - perhaps Christmas cards made especially for the occasion. Why even Father Christmas could make an appearance. Make sure the actors return to the stage in time to repeat the song with the coda.]

THE END

There are five Christmas musicals suitable for young performers. All five are available in the one book and with a backing CD make a wonderful resource for any junior school, youth theatre company of Sunday School. Visit www.foxplays.com and click on CHRISTMAS MUSIC

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