

Christmas Presents

A musical play for young performers
Words and Music by Cenarth Fox
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Cast

Speaking Parts

SOCKS - a joker SOAP - a leader CHOCOLATES - an optimist
HANKY - boring DOLL - dynamic STROBE FLEX - dopey

Chorus

As many other Christmas presents as you like e.g. toys, clothing, toiletries, sweets and gadgets.

Set

A department store at night in December. *Merry Christmas* sign/s are seen. This is the busiest time of the year for the store. The presents have come alive at night. The back and sides of your stage can have shelves - ramps on which some of the presents have been placed. Keep plenty of space in the centre for the principals and any others. The stage directions which appear mainly in the script for the teacher are suggestions only. The letters mean various places and the two drawings below further explain the directions. 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.

Notes for the Teacher/Director

1. The six characters who have a speaking part could have a distinctive personality. *Soap* is a leader, *Socks* a clown, *Strobe Flex* all muscle and no brain, etc. Help each actor to develop their personality.
2. Remember that the stage directions are suggestions only. You may wish to use different entrances and exits. Feel free to use your own style and your own interpretation.
3. Each song should have movement or even dancing. Try to avoid the choreography spoiling the singing. Movements are best kept to the simple unless you have talented performers. But the words of the songs are important and may be lost if the performers have difficult dance steps to perform.
4. You can use some wonderful costumes. Think of the colour and glamour of the wrapping on Christmas presents. *Soap* in an attractive package, *Chocolates* in a beautiful box and *Socks* and *Hanky* all stripes and patterns. But allow freedom of movement. A much cheaper method of costumes is to use tee-shirts with the name of the character on the front. Even one letter. H for *Hanky*, C for *Chocolates*, Sox for *Socks*, etc. If the chorus members are too brightly dressed, you may lose some of the principals. Either keep the chorus upstage or in less flamboyant outfits.
5. When a word is printed in italics, it means that word is stressed. “The first Christmas” and “The *first* Christmas” are not the same.
6. The backing tape has all the songs on both sides. Side A is a teaching version where the vocal lines dominate. Once the performers know the songs, consider using Side B which is meant for advanced rehearsals and all performances. Make a note of the counter numbers on your machine where each song starts. Make rehearsals flow.
7. Have fun.

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Script for the Teacher/Director

[The curtain rises on a bright and busy scene. The music of the first song begins immediately. Presents are everywhere. Those on the shelves are arranging themselves. The principals are being placed in line by SOAP. They form a line about C and are just settled when its time to face front and sing]

Song - CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

COMPANY *Christmas means presents and that's what we are
All sorts of goodies in bag, box and jar
Ribbons and wrapping, start clapping the star
Christmas means presents and that's what we are.
Toys bring joys and kids love all of us
Sweets to eat, so neat you make a fuss
Clothes for those to pose with lots of flair
Gifts to lift your spirits if you dare.*

[The company all sing with happiness. They dance with joy and finish the song excited about Christmas. The presents chatter amongst themselves and SOAP calls them to order]

SOAP Okay, let's have some quiet. *[Talking stops]* I think we need to introduce ourselves. My name is Soap and I slide around in bathrooms and laundries.

CHOCOLATES I'm Chocolates. I taste delicious and sweet teeth of all ages absolutely adore me.

HANKY I'm Hanky and I live in pockets and purses.

SOCKS I'm Socks and my best friends are the shoes.

DOLL My name's Doll and I'm the most popular toy in the history of Christmas presents. *[Hubbub from others. They react with surprise and a little anger]*
[Calling over the noise] Just a minute. We've haven't heard from our friend over here. *[Indicates STROBE FLEX]*

STROBE FLEX *[Not sure]* Ah, I've got five big muscles here and *[Counts on his fingers]*

SOCKS Forget your muscles. What's your name?

STROBE FLEX And six big muscles over here. *[Others laugh]*
Listen present. Is your name Strobe Flex and are you the latest product being promoted on television?

STROBE FLEX That's me. My name is Strobe Flex and I'm the latest product

DOLL Yes, all right. But don't get excited. Next Christmas you'll be forgotten.
[Another gasp and protest from Company]

CHOCOLATES That's not true. We'll all be back here next Christmas.
Only the popular presents come back. There's been a doll for sale here every Christmas since this store began.

STROBE FLEX Yeah but I've got more muscles. *[Demonstrates]* Look.

CHOCOLATES Well Chocolates are pretty popular. We come in many different shapes and flavours.

SOCKS And so do socks. We can be wool, cotton, nylon, long, short, striped, slack or black.

SOAP And look what they do to simple bars of soap. In some cases the packaging costs more than the contents.

STROBE FLEX I've still got lots of muscles.

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DOLL *[Suddenly worried]* Oh my goodness.
OTHERS What!?
DOLL I've just had a terrible thought.
STROBE FLEX I can fix it. Just look at my muscles.
DOLL What if the shoppers can't decide. What if they don't know which present to buy?
[Hubbub. This is serious]
SOAP Well everyone uses soap.
STROBE FLEX I don't.
SOCKS And everyone wears socks.
SOAP Not on the beach they don't.
CHOCOLATES Yes but everyone *loves* chocolates.
DOLL They make you fat.
HANKY Everyone's got a nose. *[HANKY is ignored]*
SOAP If the shoppers can't decide they might go to another shop.
[OTHERS upset. This is a problem. "What'll we do?" etc]
SOCKS And if the store doesn't make lots of money, we'll have a terrible Christmas.
CHOCOLATES We might go past our use-by date. *[More concern and distress]*
HANKY Everyone's got a nose.
[Suddenly everyone stops chattering and slowly turns to stare at HANKY]
DOLL What did you say?
HANKY Everyone's got a nose.
STROBE FLEX But not everyone's got muscles. Look. *[Is ignored]*
SOAP What are you saying?
HANKY If the shoppers don't know what to buy, I'm a fantastic fall-back.
CHOCOLATES You mean if there are handkerchiefs for sale, the store will never go broke.
HANKY You know what goes well together. Ice-cream and lemonade. Fun and games.
SOCKS Socks and underpants.
HANKY Well the best team of all is Christmas and hankies. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
[The presents are happy. This news has cheered them up. They sing with glee]

Song - ALWAYS BUY A HANKY

HANKY *Buy books for cooks and picture hooks*
DOLL *Buy shirts and skirts, they're welcome*
SOAP *Buy perfumed soap, it comes on rope*
STROBE *To match your powder talcum.*
SOCKS *Buy socks and chocs and kitchen-clocks*
CHOCOLATES *You'll always get a thank-ee*
HANKY *But if you don't know what to buy always try a hanky.*
COMPANY *If you don't know what to do, always buy a hanky.*
HANKY/COMPANY *A hanky, a hanky*
In ones or twos or threes
A hanky, a hanky
Will never fail to please.
A hanky, a hanky
They're light and white, not dear.
So give them what they give to you
A hanky every year.

[Song is repeated with a dance section. This is another bright and happy number. Lots of colour and movement, lots of enthusiasm and celebration. Song ends and the presents go back to their original places. A few pat HANKY and congratulate it on having such a great idea. SOAP again calls for attention]

SOAP Thank you presents. *[Noise settles and they pay attention]* I know this is a busy time and we're all in a good mood but some of you won't have heard the news.

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DOLL What news?
SOCKS I know. This Christmas will be a record year for presents. *[PRESENTS excited]*
STROBE FLEX I've set a new record for muscles. Look. *[He flexes muscles but again is ignored]*
SOAP I'm afraid it's not necessarily *good* news.
[Suddenly the mood changes. Everyone stops and looks at SOAP]
HANKY But I've just explained. Any shopper who can't decide will buy a hanky.
CHOCOLATES Socks and chocs, soap, toys and hankies. What a choice.
DOLL What a Christmas. I'm simply mad about December.
SOAP But not January.
OTHERS January!
STROBE FLEX Who's January? Has January got big muscles?
SOCKS Hey, Christmas is supposed to be a time of happiness. Let's celebrate being sold.
That's what I'm trying to say. It's much better being sold in December than in January.
DOLL What are you talking about? Christmas presents *are* sold in December.
SOAP But what if we're *not* sold?
OTHERS *[Distressed]* Not sold?
HANKY But we have to be sold. That's what hankies are for.
SOAP It's time you presents learnt the truth. *[Pause]* Not every present is sold.
OTHERS *[Stunned]* What?
DOLL You mean I might be left on the shelf?
SOAP There are too many presents for everyone to be sold.
SOCKS That's okay. I'll go on sale again next Christmas.
CHOCOLATES Yeah. Bung me in the fridge and I'll be right as rain.
SOAP You're not listening. Before next Christmas we have the January sales.
DOLL Well so what? If I'm not sold in December, I'm sure to be sold in January.
SOAP But the January sales are not very nice. For starters our prices are reduced.
OTHERS Reduced!
STROBE FLEX You can't reduce my muscles.
SOAP And customers actually fight to buy you.
SOCKS That's good. I like being popular.
SOAP But they grab you, toss you around, customers pull you apart and if you don't sell in January you're thrown away or worst of all, re-packaged!
[Shocked] Repackaged!
DOLL But that's appalling.
SOCKS You mean I'll be turned into underpants?
HANKY There's only one thing to do. Stop the January sales. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*

Song - DECEMBER

COMPANY *Stop the clock, stop the clock
January, what a shock
Trap the time, trap the time
New Year selling is a crime.
Can't you see we're in a lot of strife
Unless we're sold for Christmas, goodbye life.
We only want December
The happiest time of the year
Life is so nice in December
Customers full of good cheer
They choose you, they wrap you, they love you, no doubt
But come Boxing Day if you're still here, watch out.
We only want December
The happiest time of the year.*

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[During this song the PRESENTS are pleading with the audience. The PRESENTS are scared of the January sales and want December to last forever. The song finishes and the PRESENTS are worried. Quietly they return to their original positions and chat softly amongst themselves. You could dim the lights a little to add to the sombre mood]

SOAP I'm sorry to bring you that bad piece of news.
CHOCOLATES Well we need to think positively. If we're sold before Christmas, we'll miss those horrible sales.
DOLL Why don't we go on strike?
OTHERS Go on strike!
DOLL It's silly sitting around waiting for something to happen. Let's make it happen - now.
HANKY I don't think we should break the rules.
STROBE FLEX I've got muscles. I can break the rules.
SOCKS Well come on, let's play a game or something. Presents are supposed to be sparkling and new and *fun!*
SOAP Yes, and where would Christmas be without presents? We are the reason for having Christmas.
DOLL I'm not so sure about that. I mean there's a book over there about the first Christmas.
SOAP The *first* Christmas? The *very* first Christmas? *[Goes to look at book]*
[Others are interested. What's this all about?]
CHOCOLATES I bet there were chocolates at the very first Christmas.
HANKY Yes and I'm sure there just *had* to be handkerchiefs.
SOAP *[Reading book]* It says here that the first Christmas took place in a stable.
OTHERS *[Surprised]* A stable?
SOCKS You mean store or shop. You can't have presents in a stable.
SOAP There are directions here to act out the first Christmas.
CHOCOLATES *[Excited]* Ooh. Let's stage the play. Come on, what do you say?
OTHERS *[Excited]* Yes .. great idea ... let's do it. *[etc]*
SOAP Okay, well first we need two humans called Mary and Joseph.
DOLL *[Leading STROBE FLEX C]* Come on, handsome, we can be the humans.
STROBE FLEX Oh this is great. Ah, am I Mary or Joseph?
SOAP And we need a manger with a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes.
SOCKS There's a baby doll over there. *[Goes to fetch doll]*
CHOCOLATES This box can be the manger.
[Fetches cardboard box and places it C in front of Mary and Joseph]
SOCKS *[Brings baby doll to box]* We haven't got any clothes for the baby.
HANKY *[Steps forward unfolding large hanky]* Here's a large hanky.
SOCKS Thankee, Hanky. *[Baby doll is wrapped in hanky]* What about some baby socks?
SOAP And we need some happy shepherds. *[To group upstage]* What about you lot? Can you be shepherds?
GROUP Baaaa.
SOAP We want *happy* shepherds.
GROUP *[Louder, happier]* Baaaaa!
[Group of the COMPANY move closer to Mary and Joseph. The group could bring shepherds' crooks with them and place sheets/towels etc on their heads]
DOLL I think the book said something about three wise men.
SOAP Yes, three wise men. Ah, that's Socks, Hanky and Chocolates.
[This trio move closer with a bit of polite shoving to get the best position]
CHOCOLATES I'm not very wide. Only people who eats lots of chocolates are wide.
DOLL It's not *wide* men. It's *wise* men.
CHOCOLATES Oh, sorry.
SOAP And they bring special presents. Gold, frankincense and myrrh.
CHOCOLATES I've got some old gold chocolates.

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- SOCKS** I've got fifty cents. Is that as much as frankincense?
HANKY I think myrrh's like perfume. Will a sweet-smelling hanky do?
SOAP That'll be fine. Now what about the others. *[Calling]* The rest of you can be animals in the stable. Okay.
OTHERS *[From upstage]* Moo ... Neigh *etc*
STROBE FLEX Okay, keep it down. The baby's gone to sleep.
SOAP So this is the story of the very first Christmas. The baby is called Jesus and the shepherds and the wise men come to worship him.
HANKY He must be a very special baby.
DOLL Every baby is special but this one is a wonderful gift for the whole world.
CHOCOLATES So where do the presents come into it? Everyone knows Christmas means presents, especially chocolates?
SOAP But here it says Christmas is about being thankful. Presents are fine but being thankful is far more important.
DOLL I think I understand. The greatest gift is not a doll or some socks or chocolates. It's love!
[MUSIC BEGINS]

Song - THE GREATEST GIFT

- COMPANY** *The greatest gift at Christmas is every little act of love
It's not for sale at Christmas, it comes from heaven above
And you can bring to Christmas, the peace as in a dove
Your greatest gift at Christmas is every little act of love.*

[The COMPANY repeats the song. During the instrumental break, you could enact the Nativity Play. The wise men and shepherds could bring their gifts to the baby Jesus. You could even have some presents go into the audience and give small gifts to some people. A happy ending]

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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