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*Dramatic Publishing*

# *The Wind in the Willows*



*Book by  
Scot Copeland, W.S. Gilbert and Kenneth Grahame*

*Music by  
Paul Carrol Binkley and Sir Arthur Sullivan*

*Adapted from the book by  
Kenneth Grahame and the songs of Gilbert and Sullivan*

# The Wind in the Willows

**Musical. Book by Scot Copeland, W.S. Gilbert and Kenneth Grahame. Music by Paul Carrol Binkley and Sir Arthur Sullivan. Adapted from the book by Kenneth Grahame and the songs of Gilbert and Sullivan. Cast: 7 to 13 either gender, extras as desired.** Had Gilbert and Sullivan adapted Grahame's classic book for the stage it would have looked—and sounded—a lot like this bubbling confection of a musical. Little Mole tries to tend to his cleaning, but it is spring, the wind is sighing in the willows and the Piper at the Gates of Dawn calls him to dance! Embracing the reawakening world, Mole is introduced to the delights of life along the river by his new friend, Rat. Together, they trot off to Toad Hall to visit Mr. Toad—"Toady, if you please!" But, just as they are about to embark in a canary-yellow gypsy wagon to see the wide world, an unfortunate collision with an automobile has Toady off on yet another dangerous craze, careening down the byways in motorcar after motorcar, disrupting the peace in joyful delight. Young Mole and Rat venture into the Wild Wood to enlist the help of wise old Badger, but despite all of their best efforts to save him from himself, Mr. Toad is condemned to prison, and Toad Hall is taken over by weasels. One clever jailbreak and a daring midnight raid later, and the world is once again set aright. "It's Toad's great day," sings Mole. "No. It's Mole's great day," says Ratty, "and what a fine fellow you've turned out to be!" "[The] libretto and music are a mix of [original] work and the light-opera larks of Arthur S. Sullivan and W.S. Gilbert. [Their] sparkling melodies ... along with original compositions and words for this version, add just the right lyrical flourishes. ... Nashville Children's Theatre has once again shown it's the jewel in Nashville's theatre crown." (*ArtsNash.com*) *Area staging. Accompaniment CD available. Approximate running time: 65 minutes. Code: WG7.*

*Cover: Nashville Children's Theatre, Nashville, Tenn., featuring Rona Carter, Peter Vann, Samuel Whited III and Bobby Wyckoff. Photo: Daniel C. Brewer. Cover design: John Sergel.*

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*Dramatic Publishing*

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ph: (800) 448-7469



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Musical

Book and lyrics by

**SCOT COPELAND, W.S. GILBERT and  
KENNETH GRAHAME**

Music by

**PAUL CARROL BINKLEY and  
SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN**

Adapted from the book by Kenneth Grahame  
and the songs of W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan



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Book by Scot Copeland

Music by Arthur S. Sullivan and Paul Carrol Binkley

Lyrics by W.S. Gilbert, Kenneth Grahame and Scot Copeland

Music arranged by Paul Carrol Binkley

Based upon the novel by Kenneth Grahame

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This stage adaptation of *The Wind in the Willows* premiered at Nashville Children’s Theatre on March 7, 2006, under the direction and music direction of all authors then living.

*Cast*

The Piper, Constable Comment,  
Winston Windsor-Weasel.....Patrick Waller  
Mole ..... Peter Vann  
Rat ..... Bobby Wyckoff  
Badger..... Rona Carter  
Toad .....Sam Whited  
Cheek E. Driver, Wiley Weasel,  
Magistrate, Washerwoman.....Henry Haggard  
Willa Weasel, The Gaoler’s Daughter..... Jenny Littleton

*Production Staff*

Costume design..... Patricia Taber  
Scenery design .....Scott Boyd  
Lighting design ..... Scott Leathers  
Stage Manager ..... Daniel C. Brewer

# **The Wind in the Willows**

## **CHARACTERS**

PIPER

MOLE

RAT

BADGER

TOAD

CHEEK E. DRIVER

WILEY WEASEL

WILLA WEASEL

MAGISTRATE

CONSTABLE COMMENT

GAOLER'S DAUGHTER

WASHERWOMAN (AUNT)

WINSTON WINDSOR-WEASEL

WILLOWS

JURY



## PRODUCTION NOTES

Scenery for this version can be as simple or as elaborate as the producer requires. The original production established a willowed environment and individual scenes through added pieces and area lighting shifts. The area outside Mole's house became the riverbank simply with a light shift and the addition of Rat's boat. Another light shift and the removal of the boat allowed us to transition to Toad's lawn without delay, leaving plenty of stage space for a scaled-down gypsy wagon and a car to collide. Clearing those items and flying in one large tree trunk with a door in it made for the Wild Wood and the entry to Badger's house. Moving a small bed, chair and window frame in front of that tree made a quite satisfying interior for Badger's house. The courtroom was established with a magistrate's bench and a stool, and when Toad was condemned, a jail bar gobo instantly transformed Toad's courtroom stool into his jail cell stool. The most elaborate setting in the original production was Toad Hall, but even that was established with a free-standing door, some window frames, a few architectural facade elements and a couple of Toad-glorifying lawn ornaments, with no walls whatsoever, allowing us to witness the posturing of Toad, Rat and Badger in front of the house while also witnessing the battle between Mole and the Weasels inside. Whether simple or elaborate, the piece is intended to flow quickly and seamlessly throughout.

When we first envisioned this piece onstage, we planned, designed and executed the most amazing half masks for the characters which, combined with headpieces and corresponding face-painting techniques, made for thoroughly convincing transformations of the actors into the stand-erect, well-dressed animals of the classic illustrations. Visually, the masks and makeup were stunning and as lifelike in their articulation and expression as one could possibly hope for,

and they completed the illustrative style perfectly. They were thoroughly satisfying in every way except for one—the audience did not laugh. As a test, we removed the masks for a performance without saying a word to anyone, and the audience delightedly laughed throughout that performance and for every performance thereafter, as the masks never went back into the show. Live and learn.

The play is structured to allow it to be done with a cast of seven. The cast can be expanded to 13 by avoiding any doubling and could be expanded further with additional Weasels.

Finally, a word about the Piper at the Gates of Dawn. He is of wild nature and pagan divinity (even though Grahame's idea of the natural world may be more cultivated landscape than primordial forest). In the first portion of the play, the Piper presides over the transformation of that world from scene to scene. Once Toad tears through that pastoral world with the roar of the infernal combustion engine, the Piper disappears until order is restored near the end of the play.

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# The Wind in the Willows

## PROLOGUE: THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN

### (#1: “Prologue”)

AT RISE: *Night, just before dawn, and silhouetted against the night sky is the PIPER, “He of cloven hoof, curved horn, Friend and Helper;”—he raises his pipes to his bearded mouth and begins to play a soft tune, dancing in the gleam of growing daylight. The sound of his pipes mixes with the sound of the wind, and the willow branches rustle their answer. The wind becomes a voice singing in accompaniment to the tune of the PIPER. A trapdoor onstage opens, and the face of MOLE emerges.*

MOLE. Yes, yes, I’m coming. What is it?

*(The PIPER and the music stop. MOLE looks directly at the PIPER, but does not see. In fact, although we see the PIPER, nobody onstage sees him.)*

MOLE (*cont’d*). Hmmph. Could have sworn ... Well, never you mind, Mole. Cleaning to do.

*(He returns into his hole. PIPER laughs, then begins to play again. Again, the face of MOLE emerges.)*

MOLE (*cont’d*). Bother! Can’t you give a poor mole a bit of peace? I’ve spring cleaning to do! Brooms, dusters, aching back, whitewash and ... (*Hears music.*)

**(#2: “Sighing Softly to the River”)**

MOLE (*cont’d*). Halloa. What’s this? Up we go! Up we go!

WILLOWS.

SIGHING SOFTLY TO THE RIVER  
COMES THE LOVING BREEZE  
SETTING NATURE ALL A-QUIVER  
RUSTLING THROUGH THE TREES

*(MOLE comes fully out of his hole, looks about, basks in the warmth of the sun.)*

MOLE. Oh, this is fine! Glorious sunshine! Beautiful meadow! Sweetly singing music! Music? I cannot seem to catch the words, but ... a sweet song, nonetheless. *(Begins to move slightly to the music, eying about him to make sure nobody sees. Tries a step or two, laughing.)* Ah, what a foolish picture you’d make, Mole, if anyone were to see you. Dancing, when there’s whitewashing to be done.

*(MOLE starts towards his hole. The PIPER increases the insistence of his playing. Hesitating, MOLE looks at the brush in his hand, then tosses it into his hole.)*

MOLE (*cont’d*). Oh, hang the spring cleaning! Hang what anyone thinks!

*(Now, he dances in awkward earnest, through the willow branches.)*

WILLOWS.

SIGHING SOFTLY TO THE RIVER  
COMES THE LOVING BREEZE  
SETTING NATURE ALL A-QUIVER  
RUSTLING THROUGH THE TREES

MOLE.

THROUGH THE TREES

*(MOLE's dance, though completely without skill, has become exhilarating and uninhibited, and the PIPER reflects it in his own dance, so that even though MOLE is unaware he has a dance partner, he certainly does.)*

WILLOWS.

AND THE WIND IN BREEZY MEASURE  
LAUGHS FOR VERY LOVE  
WHILE THE WILLOWS, IN THEIR PLEASURE  
WAVE THEIR ARMS ABOVE.

MOLE.

YES, THE WILLOWS, FOR THEIR LOVE  
WAVE THEIR LEAFY ARMS ABOVE

*(The PIPER dances off, leaving MOLE to dance alone. Scenery and lighting shift to the river bank. RAT pulls on in his skiff.)*

WILLOWS.

WILLOW TREES THY LOVE IS OVER  
FOR THE WIND IS BUT A ROVER  
SAD THE LOT OF WILLOW TREES  
COURTED BY THE FICKLE BREEZE  
WILLOWS WEEPING WITH REGRET  
SURELY YOU SHALL SOON FORGET.

*(MOLE dances through the last strains of music, then he notices that he is no longer alone. RAT views him, and MOLE, embarrassed, freezes.)*

## SCENE 1: ON THE RIVER

RAT. Hullo, Mole.

MOLE. Hullo, Rat. (*Begins swatting at something, duplicating his capering movements from before.*) Bees. Pesky things. (*Awkward pause.*) Lovely boat.

RAT. Thank you.

MOLE. You know, I've never been in a boat in all my life!

RAT. What? Never been in a—Look here, would you like to come aboard?

MOLE. Come aboard? Aboard a boat? How wonderful!

(*RAT casts off, sculling over to MOLE's bank.*)

MOLE (*cont'd*). Of course, there's the whitewashing to be done.

I was at it a bit ago, but then I heard the music, and, well ...

I suddenly found myself ... (*Giggles nervously.*) Dancing.

RAT. Ah, yes, the wind. It does that.

MOLE. The wind?

RAT (*arriving at bank*). In the willows. Sings a lovely song, can't be ignored.

MOLE. Yes! But the words, I couldn't catch the words! (*Sings a cappella.*)

DAH-DEE-DAH-DEE-DAH-DEE-DAH

MOLE & RAT.

SURELY YOU SHALL SOON FORGET

MOLE. That's it, exactly! I wish I could remember it.

RAT. Lean on that.

(*With RAT's help, MOLE climbs aboard.*)

RAT (*cont'd*). Step lively! (*Hands him a basket.*) Hold this, won't you?

MOLE. What's in it?

RAT. Cold chicken sandwiches. Cold ham, cold beef, pickled herring, salad, French rolls, watercress, ginger beer, lemonade—

MOLE. Oh stop, stop! It is too much!

*(RAT casts off.)*

MOLE *(cont'd)*. So, this is a river!

RAT. The river.

MOLE. And you really live by the river? What a jolly life!

RAT. It's my world, and I don't want any other. Getting crowded nowadays, though.

MOLE. What lies over there?

RAT. That? Oh, that's the Wild Wood. *(Pause.)* We don't go there much.

MOLE. Aren't they—aren't they very nice people in there?

RAT. Well—let me see. The squirrels are all right, and the rabbits—some of them. And then there's Badger. Dear, old Badger! Nobody bothers him. They'd better not.

MOLE. Why, who would bother him?

RAT. Well, there are ... the weasels. They're all right, in a way, but every now and then ... Well, you can't really trust them, and that's a fact.

*(There is a voice from off.)*

BADGER *(from off)*. Rat! Ratty!

RAT. Hullo there, Badger! *(To MOLE.)* Mind you, it's old Badger. Decent fellow, but not very social. Speak if spoken to, otherwise ...

BADGER *(entering)*. Ratty! Do you know what he's done now?

MOLE. Who?

RAT. Shh!

BADGER. Who? That infernal Mr. Toad, that's who! He's sunk his paddle-boat! Pulled the plug, sunk it to the bottom of the river! He's bought himself a gypsy wagon, says he's going to see the world! A gypsy wagon! Canary yellow, with red wheels!



MOLE. How lovely!

*(BADGER sees MOLE for the first time.)*

BADGER. Hrrmmmp! I see you have Company. Beg your pardon. Good day. *(Exits.)*

MOLE. But, wait! Oh, dear.

RAT. Never you mind. He's like that. So, Toad has a new gypsy wagon, eh?

MOLE. Who is this Toad?

RAT. Ah, Toad! A good fellow, but rather unstable. Gets caught up in one thing or another, spends a lot of money on it—he's rather rich, you know—then tires of it and moves on to something new. Once it was nothing but sailing. Then he was going to spend the rest of his life in a houseboat. Until he saw a paddle-boat.

MOLE. And now, it's a canary yellow gypsy wagon!

RAT. At least he's off the river.

MOLE. I've never seen a gypsy wagon. It sounds rather ... exciting.

RAT. Well, see here, how about we pull downstream and trot off to Toad Hall?

MOLE. Really?

RAT. Certainly. Toad will be delighted to make your acquaintance, I'm sure.

MOLE. Do you suppose ... I mean, do you think he might show us the new gypsy wagon?

RAT *(laughing)*. Try and stop him, I daresay!

MOLE. What a day I'm having! Let us start at once!

*(The PIPER has entered, and the accompaniment starts with his pipe music. During the song, as the boat is pulled to shore and the scenery is shifted, the PIPER dances, an unseen figure presiding over the transition.)*

**(#3: “All Along the Backwater”)**

RAT.

ALL ALONG THE BACKWATER, THROUGH THE  
RUSHES TALL,  
DUCKS ARE A-DABBLIN', UP TAILS ALL!  
DUCKS' TAILS, DRAKES' TAILS, YELLOW FEET  
A-QUIVER,  
YELLOW BILLS ALL OUT OF SIGHT BUSY IN THE  
RIVER!  
SLUSHY GREEN UNDERGROWTH WHERE THE MIN-  
NOWS SWIM—  
HERE WE KEEP OUR LARDER, COOL AND FULL AND  
DIM.  
EVERYONE FOR WHAT HE LIKES! WE LIKE TO BE  
HEADS DOWN, TAILS UP, ALL A-DABBLIN' FREE!

RAT &amp; MOLE.

EVERYONE FOR WHAT HE LIKES! WE LIKE TO BE

RAT.

HEADS DOWN ...

MOLE.

HEADS DOWN ...

RAT.

TAILS UP ...

MOLE.

TAILS UP ...

RAT &amp; MOLE.

ALL A-DABBLIN' FREE!

**SCENE 2: TOAD OF TOAD HALL**

*(The boat has been pushed offstage as the PIPER exits. We are on the lawn of Toad Hall. TOAD is in a wicker chair, so*

*absorbed in studying a map that he does not see the arrival of RAT and MOLE.)*

RAT. And here we are. And here he is. Toad. Toady, good fellow.

TOAD. Yes, yes, just a moment! *(Turns map sideways, then upside down. Giving up, he wads it up and tosses it.)* Blast! Infernal maps! Who needs 'em? The open road, no plan, no destination, headed off for whatever the road brings. I'd just as soon have the map-makers hanged, every mother's son of 'em, and be done with it!

RAT. Ahem.

TOAD. Ratty! Ratty, good man! Hooray! *(Pumping his hand.)* I was just going to send for you! *(Shaking MOLE's hand.)* Delighted to make your acquaintance. *(Taking basket from RAT's hands.)* Ah, what's this? Provisions! You must both join me for luncheon. Come, come! *(Sitting on lawn, as if for picnic.)* What will you take? Nobody goes hungry at Toad Hall!

RAT. I'll have a cold chicken sandwich, myself.

TOAD. Splendid choice! Specialty of the house! And you, Mr. ... eh ...

RAT. My friend, Mr. Mole.

MOLE. Honored to meet you, Mr. Toad. I've heard so much about you.

TOAD. Ah, the penalty of fame! One gets talked about. One is a topic of conversation. One can't help it. *(Begins to eat sandwich, without actually giving one to anybody else.)* Welcome to Toad Hall.

MOLE. Thank you, Mr. Toad.

TOAD. Toady, if you please. Any friend of Ratty's is Moley to me.

RAT. Badger tells me you've sunk the paddle-boat.

TOAD. Oh, pooh! Boating! Sheer waste of time! No, I've discovered the real thing, the only genuine occupation for

a lifetime. Here, let me show you. (*Jumps up, exits into the wings. Speaks from off.*) Boats, I daresay! Makes me sorry for you fellows, who ought to know better. I only regret the wasted years that lie behind me, squandered in trivialities. (*Re-enters, pulling the caravan.*) There you are!

MOLE. Oh, my! Oh, my!

RAT. Oh, my heavens!

TOAD. And mind, this is the very finest cart of it's sort that was ever built, without any exception. Go inside and look at the arrangements.

(*MOLE dashes inside, RAT thrusts his hands into his pockets. TOAD calls in to MOLE.*)

TOAD (*cont'd*). Everything is thoroughly stocked, including the larder. Biscuits, potted lobster, jam, cards, dominoes! You'll find that nothing whatever has been forgotten, when we make our start this afternoon.

(*MOLE pops his head out of the window in surprise.*)

RAT (*slowly*). I beg your pardon, but did I overhear you say something about "we" and "start" and "this afternoon?"

TOAD. Now, you know you've got to come. (*Looking at MOLE.*) The both of you.

(*MOLE squeals in delight and rushes out to him.*)

TOAD (*cont'd*). You surely don't mean to stick to your dull fusty old river when the whole world is before you?

RAT. I am going to stick to my old river, as I've always done. And what's more, Mole's going to stick with me, aren't you, Mole?

MOLE (*with great disappointment, but greater loyalty*). Of course I am, of course I am. All the same, it sounds as if it might have been ... well, rather fun, you know.

*(RAT looks at MOLE, then at TOAD, back to MOLE, back at TOAD.)*

RAT. Well, bother! I suppose somebody ought to come along to keep you out of trouble.

TOAD. Hurrah! *(Leaps into the driver's seat.)*

MOLE. We're going to go?

TOAD. We leave directly after tea!

MOLE. We're going to go?

TOAD. Here today, up and off to somewhere else tomorrow!  
And we'll not stop till we reach the sea!

MOLE. We're going to go!

#### **(#4: "Climbing Over Rocky Mountains")**

TOAD. I'm going to make an animal of you, my boy! Hyah!  
*(Pretending to drive the horses as he sings.)*

CLIMBING OVER ROCKY MOUNTAINS  
SKIPPING RIVULETS AND FOUNTAINS  
PASSING WHERE THE WEEPING WILLOWS QUIVER.  
PASSING WHERE THE WILLOWS QUIVER  
BY THE EVER-ROLLING RIVER  
SWOLLEN WITH THE SUMMER RAIN,  
THE SUMMER RAIN.

MOLE & TOAD.

'KNOWLEDGING THE CHEERING MASSES  
SCALING ROUGH AND RUGGED PASSES  
TILL THE BRIGHT SEA-SHORE WE GAIN

RAT. Reach the sea, indeed! You know you'll be tired of it all within a day!

TOAD.

FAR AWAY FROM TOIL AND CARE  
ROLLING DOWN THE THOROUGHFARE

HERE, WE'LL LIVE AND REIGN ALONE  
IN A WORLD THAT'S ALL OUR OWN  
HERE, IN THIS OUR TRAV'LING DEN  
FAR ABOVE MOST MORTAL MEN  
WE'LL BE KINGS—AND MAKE DECREES.

RAT.

THEY MAY HONOR THEM WHO PLEASE

ALL.

WE'LL BE KINGS AND MAKE DECREES  
THEY MAY HONOR THEM WHO PLEASE

*(RAT and MOLE pick up the front of the cart and, with TOAD pretending to drive, they trot about.)*

ALL *(cont'd)*.

LET US HAPP'LY TREAD THE MEASURE  
MAKE THE MOST OF FLEETING LEISURE;  
HAIL IT AS A TRUE ALLY  
THOUGH IT PERISH BY AND BY  
HAIL IT AS A TRUE ALLY  
THOUGH IT PERISH BY AND BY

*(An automobile engine is heard, and, with a horrible horn-blast the motorcar itself careens onstage, CHEEK E. DRIVER in the driver's seat, braking to a halt. RAT and MOLE jump out of the way, so that the cart falls and TOAD falls off it. MOLE rushes to TOAD, RAT to DRIVER.)*

RAT. Villain! Scoundrel! Road-hog!

MOLE. Toady, are you all right?

*(TOAD sits in a daze.)*

DRIVER. See here, what the devil were you doing with that cart in the middle of the road?