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Family Plays

Flashback!

Revue by
Alice Wilson

Additional materials supplied by
Louis Moloney, Johnny Saldaña
& Rachel Winfree



Flashback!

Revue. By Alice Wilson. Additional materials supplied by Louis Moloney, Johnny Saldaña and Rachel Winfree. Cast: 3m., 3w. Flashback! is an exuberant revue using mime, dance and song to celebrate the world of the contemporary child. It is a series of sparkling vignettes dramatizing memories common to all children—from receiving report cards to the mixed joys of family vacations. In its entertaining treatment of serious as well as humorous themes, this challenging play explores the years of change known as childhood. Ideal for in-school and found spaces. Bare stage. Modern costumes. Approximate running time: 55 minutes. Music in book. Code: FB4.

Family Plays

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Flashback!

Flashback!

An exuberant review by

ALICE WILSON

With additional materials supplied by

LOUIS MOLONEY, JOHNNY SALDAÑA
& RACHEL WINFREE

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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FLASHBACK! was first performed as a touring theatre program for the Austin Independent School District in Austin, Texas, under the auspices of the Zachary Scott Theatre Center in 1979. The original six-person cast was as follows.

Cora Cardona
Sharon Daniel
Jeff Ellinger
Terry Loughrey
Marty Ratliff
Suzanne Wells

directed by
Alice Wilson

by
Alice Wilson

additional material
by
Louis Moloney
Johnny Saldana
and
Rachel Winfree

vocal arrangements
by
Johnny Saldana

FLASHBACK!

FLASHBACK! is an entertaining and perceptive look at some of the universal moments of childhood. It is designed to be performed by five or six actors who should be dressed in a manner typical of contemporary children (such as all styles of blue jeans, T-shirts, sneakers and brightly colored socks). However, it is not necessary or desirable for the cast to strive unduly to appear to be children. The minimal properties and costume pieces employed are set on the appropriate sides of the acting space within sight of the audience. Similarly, the actors, when not involved in a scene, sit on the sidelines.

To facilitate reading and because of the personal nature of the show, the names of the original six-person cast are used to delineate the characters in the script. Subsequent casts will want to substitute their own names. The style of the original production was one of direct honesty balanced by deliberate theatricality. Unless otherwise noted, all chants and songs are performed with highly choreographed, jazz-styled movements. The stage directions given with this script are by no means a total description of the action, but are included as an aid to the visualization of the script.

FLASHBACK!

(The actors enter in single file from stage left in a stylized "train" formation. As the train moves forward, each actor adopts a distinctive role and movement pattern to match both the role and the train's travelling motion. TERRY, the engineer, wears a railroad cap and leads the train with large, high, round steps which represent the train's wheels. Next comes SUZANNE as a mother cradling her child, moving with the forward progression of the train as though she were being jolted up and down. Following SUZANNE is CORA, as a commuter reading a newspaper; she turns constantly with small shuffling steps which rotate her from side to side. Next come MARTY and SHARON as a teenage brother and his younger sister. MARTY bounces up and down to the beat of the train and his imaginary radio. SHARON alternately looks out the window and annoys MARTY, using a turning motion similar to CORA's. The caboose-conductor is played by JEFF, who waves to the audience. The train snakes onto the stage through the following chant:)

ALL: *(MUSIC CUE 1.; train whistle)* Woooooooooooo, Woooooooooooo.

(chanting)

Flashback, backtrack, jump back,
Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo!
Flashback, backtrack, jump back,
Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo!
Flashback, backtrack, jump back,
Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo!

(TERRY separates down right from the others as they jazz-step with coordinated hand movements to the left)

CORA/JEFF/MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: Flashback, backtrack, jump back.

CORA: When?

TERRY: To another time.

CORA/JEFF/MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: Ahhhhhhhhhh.
Flashback, backtrack, jump back.

SHARON: Where?

TERRY: To your past.

CORA/JEFF/MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: Ohhhhhhhhhh.
Flashback, backtrack, jump back.

MARTY: How?

TERRY: Just remember.

CORA/JEFF/MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: Owwwwwww.

(JEFF is left standing stage left as the others dance and chant over to join TERRY)

Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo!
Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo!
Choo-choo-choo-choo, Choo-choo-choo-choo, Choo-choo-choo-choo-
choo-choo!

JEFF: I can't remember.
I'm straining my brain!

CORA/JEFF/MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: Get your ticket at the station . . .

SUZANNE: . . . for the memory train!

MARTY: On the memory train, you can really cut loose,

TERRY: Toot your whistle,

CORA: Blow your horn,

SHARON: And shake your caboose!

TERRY: All aboard

(The entire group dances into a line which is merely the suggestion of a train)

JEFF: *(together with)*
Well, I think I'll just join
that memory train! Why don't
you all just come along, too?

CORA/MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE/TERRY:

Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo!
Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo!
Choo-choo-choo-choo, Choo-choo-
choo-choo, Choo-choo-choo-choo-
choo-choo!

ALL: The wheels of the train go clickety-clack —
Sparks of the past flying off the track.
On the memory train you can blow your stack.
Put your train on the track and FLASHBACK!

(The group dances back to form a line behind SHARON, upstage center)

Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo,
Choooooooooooo.

(Once the line is formed, SUZANNE and TERRY break away to sit on opposite sidelines)

SUZANNE/TERRY: *(Taunting the others to the tune of the elementary school chant, "Kindergarten Babies")* Nyah-nyah-nyah-nyah-nyah-nyah!
Nyah-nyah-nyah-nyah-nyah-nyah!

SHARON: In kindergarten, most of the day
was fun and flewww byyy . . .

(Arms outstretched, SHARON flies downstage left, followed in turn by the others)

JEFF: Wheeeee . . .

CORA: Wheeeee . . .

MARTY: Wheeeee . . .

SHARON: But I hated naptime.

ALL: And that's no lie.

MARTY: The class settled down to this wearisome chore.

(The group mimes pulling out their nap mats and settling down)

CORA: *(Pointing disapprovingly at SHARON)* Some rowed their nap mats across the floor!

SHARON: *(To the tune of "Row Your Boat")* Row, row, row your boat
Roughly down the stream
Throw your brother overboard,
Just to hear him scream!

JEFF: Some snuck in comic books
And quietly turned pages.

SHARON: *(Miming a trapped animal)* Others paced like wild animals
Trapped in cages!

MARTY: Sometimes the room was
One giant wiggle.

(The group wiggles in a dominoe-like effect)

CORA: Sometimes two heads would
Pop up and giggle.

(MARTY and SHARON pop up and giggle)

JEFF: And that's when Cora would cluck:

CORA: Tsk, tsk,

I'm gonna tell!

MARTY: And the funeral hush quickly fell!

(The group falls to the floor and hums a funeral song)

SHARON: *(Heads pops up)* Just when everyone's hope was played out,

CORA: Just like clockwork, Jeff would shout:

JEFF: I'm not going to take a nap — and you can't make me!

SHARON: And he'd start out on a running spree!

(JEFF begins to run frantically about the stage, dodging around and jumping over the other actors)

JEFF: Jumping, rolling,
Dodging to get away from the teacher.

CORA/MARTY/SHARON: Jeff became a
Frantic, fantastic, creature!

SHARON: We hoped he'd win,

CORA/MARTY/SHARON: Yeah, Jeff was our hero!

SHARON: Though all his efforts . . .

CORA/MARTY/SHARON: . . . always came to zero.

JEFF: I'd wiggle, I'd jiggle,
I'd squirm slippery as an eel.

MARTY: But no matter how we helped,

CORA: Teacher caught him by the heel.

(JEFF leaps in the air and falls as though caught by the heel)

MARTY: *(Moves down center, standing in front of JEFF who is still on the floor)* Then did our hero bellow?

SHARON: *(Joining MARTY)* Protest?

MARTY: Scream?

CORA: *(Joins MARTY and SHARON down center)* Or even peep?

CORA/MARTY/SHARON: No!
Jeff was the only kid

(They move aside to reveal JEFF who yawns)

Who ever fell asleep!

(All freeze; CORA and SHARON cross downstage left as JEFF and MARTY move to the sidelines; during the following, SUZANNE prepares her sock puppets for the next vignette)

SHARON: Oh, Cora, what a beautiful outfit! Is it new?

CORA: *(gloating)* All new.

SHARON: *(admiringly)* Ahhhhh . . .

CORA: *(Sniffing fussily)* Sharon, didn't you wear that shirt to school yesterday?

SHARON: *(uncertain)* I'm not sure.

CORA: *(Walking off, holding her nose)* I am.

SHARON: *(mortified)* Oooooohhhhh!

(SHARON exits to the opposite side of the stage from CORA as SUZANNE and TERRY move to center stage. TERRY is standing and SUZANNE is kneeling on the floor directly behind TERRY. SUZANNE wears two enormous socks on her arms which function as puppets, representing the socks mentioned in the following monologue)

TERRY: This morning I didn't have two clean socks — just one. So I went to the dirty clothes basket and pulled out a match.

(SUZANNE holds the socks out next to TERRY's feet)

It smelled a bit,

(SUZANNE says "Blaht, blaht" while moving the sock puppet)

but it looked okay. So I started for school.

(TERRY mimes walking as SUZANNE makes the socks "walk" with him)

But before I reached the end of the first block, I knew there was something wrong with that sock. Sure enough, it had slipped down around my heel.

(SUZANNE slips the sock puppet down)

There was an ankle draft I could feel.

(SUZANNE make fanning gestures with her hands and wind effects)

I reached down and gave that sock an almighty tug.

(TERRY mimes this as SUZANNE lifts the sock to TERRY's knee)

Still it crawled towards my shoe, just like a slug.

(SUZANNE makes slurping sounds as the sock descends)

That was only the beginning of my troubles with that sock — it refused to stay up!

(TERRY attempts to pull up the sock three times, but each time it glides back down. Finally, he gives up and the sock miraculously ascends. TERRY looks at the sock first with suspicion, then pride; then the sock slips back down his leg)

All through class I would pull, twist, and yank;

(He does this; the sock creates twisted positions in the air)

But just like the Titanic — it sank!

(SUZANNE goes "Blub, blub, blub" as the sock dives to the floor)

But that's not all. As that sock snuck down, its smell rose up and encircled the room.

(SUZANNE spirals the sock even higher until it is level with TERRY's head)

Until Cora said:

CORA: *(Jumps up from the sidelines and points at TERRY)* P. U. I bet that sock belongs to you!

(SUZANNE makes the sock point at and pat TERRY, indicating that it does indeed belong to him)

TERRY: *(Pushing away the sock)* No!

(TERRY struggles with the sock which keeps bobbing back up and pointing him out. He gives the sock one final push and the sock goes back down to the floor close to his ankle)

Now stay down there! Before I could make it home, that sock was stubbing my toe.

(The sock stubs his toe)

My shoe had rubbed a blister and I walked like this.

(The sock grabs his ankle and he limps)

And if there's one thing I know: Some socks are frilly,

(The "good" sock waves to the audience)

and some socks are plain.

But a smelly, stretchy sock

Can drive you insane!

(On the last three lines, the "bad" sock has been sneaking up TERRY's side, and on the word "insane," it covers his head and drags him off the stage backwards; all freeze)

SHARON: *(Jumps up from the sidelines stage left)* I had to go to the dentist today.

SUZANNE: *(Strolls over from the sidelines stage right)* I got my report card — not a single "A."

(SHARON and SUZANNE cross upstage center to JEFF and MARTY)

MARTY: We had to get a vaccination.

JEFF: And you can just guess the location.

(SHARON and SUZANNE put their feet on JEFF and MARTY's backsides)

JEFF/MARTY: Ow!

(MUSIC CUE 2.)

SHARON/SUZANNE: Why me?

JEFF/MARTY: Why me?

SHARON/SUZANNE: Why me?

JEFF/MARTY: Why me?

ALL: I got no luck!

SHARON/SUZANNE: Why me?

JEFF/MARTY: I got no luck!

SHARON/SUZANNE: Why me?

JEFF/MARTY: I got no luck!

ALL: Why does this always happen to me?

(SHARON crosses downstage right as the other three counter upstage left)

SHARON: My brother and I open four packs of Cracker-Jacks.

Inside each one is a mini-telescope.

Who do you think gets the one with the cracks?

JEFF/MARTY/SUZANNE: (*Pointing to SHARON; MUSIC CUE 3.*) Sharon!

SHARON: I tell you, people, I've got no hope!

JEFF/MARTY/SUZANNE: She's got no hope!

SHARON: I've got no hope!

JEFF/MARTY/SUZANNE: She's got no hope!

ALL: The girl simply, simply, has no hope!

(*JEFF, SHARON, and SUZANNE move back upstage leaving MARTY downstage left*)

MARTY: If my birthday fell during the school year,
The third grade class would give me a birthday cheer.

JEFF/SHARON/SUZANNE: (*Rushing downstage*) Happy birthday, hooray!

MARTY: I'd get a big party with all of my friends.

JEFF/SHARON/SUZANNE: (*They mime passing the food to MARTY*) Cake
and ice cream!

MARTY: But my birthday is in the summer.

JEFF/SHARON/SUZANNE: (*Withdrawing the food from him*) Oooohh . . .

MARTY: And I could just scream!
Oh, it's a bummer.

JEFF/SHARON/SUZANNE: Yes, it's a bummer!

MARTY: When your birthday falls in the summer . . .

JEFF/SHARON/SUZANNE: It's a bummer!

MARTY: When my birthday finally arrives,
My friends have scattered to places other.

(*The others wave good-bye to MARTY*)

And I'm left with my father, mother, and
Younger brother.

(*SUZANNE kneels at MARTY's side, sucking her thumb as the younger brother; she looks up at him and extends her hand for him to hold; he does so and encounters the wet thumb*)

Ugh!

(*MUSIC CUE 3.*)

I've got no luck!

JEFF/SHARON/SUZANNE: He's got no luck!

MARTY: I've got no luck!

JEFF/SHARON/SUZANNE: *(They move downstage and encircle MARTY)*
He's got no luck!

ALL: *(MARTY, JEFF, and SHARON retreat upstage, leaving SUZANNE downstage right)* The boy absolutely has no luck!

SUZANNE: My friends and I play with four red balloons.
Very soon one goes . . .

JEFF/MARTY/SHARON: *(Miming holding strings of balloons swaying together)* Pop!

JEFF: *(swaying)* We don't stop.

MARTY: *(swaying)* With us it's fine.

SHARON: *(swaying)* We just say . . .

JEFF/MARTY/SHARON: . . . too bad!

(Groups stops swaying)

SUZANNE: *(As JEFF mimes handing her the limp balloon)* It's mine?

JEFF/MARTY/SHARON: *(Nodding their heads in sanctimonious agreement)*
Unh-hunh.

SUZANNE: *(MUSIC CUE 3.)* I've got no luck!

JEFF/MARTY/SHARON: She's got no luck!

SUZANNE: I've got no luck!

JEFF/MARTY/SHARON: *(Surrounding SUZANNE)* She's got no luck!

ALL: *(As MARTY, SHARON, and SUZANNE recede upstage)* The girl simply,
simply, has no luck!

JEFF: *(Moving downstage left)* To all my problems, this is the key:
My last name begins with a . . .

MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: Zeeeeeeeeeee.

JEFF: When we're lined up alphabetically . . .

MARTY: *(Running downstage to JEFF)* Marty Alexander.

SHARON: *(Running downstage and lining up after MARTY)* Sharon Barker.

SUZANNE: *(Running downstage and lining up after SHARON)* Suzie Carter.

JEFF: There's never anyone after me.

MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: *(Passing JEFF rudely to the end of the line)*
Jeff Zimmerman!

JEFF: *(The others mime the following)* We make alphabet lines to go to lunches.
When I get there, the macaroni and cheese simply crunches.
I'm always last into the cafeteria.
No wonder I feel so . . .

MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: Inferiah!

JEFF: *(MUSIC CUE 3.)* I've got no luck!

MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: He's got no luck!

JEFF: I've got no luck!

MARTY/SHARON/SUZANNE: *(Moving towards JEFF)* He's got no luck!

(Surrounding JEFF)

ALL: The boy absolutely has no luck!

(To each other, MUSIC CUE 4.)

Why, why, why me?

(Each looks at the person closest to them)

You too?

(As if they can't believe it)

Naaahhh. - ·

(All freeze; MARTY and SUZANNE cross upstage center; JEFF and SHARON go to opposite sidelines; MARTY starts to cross back downstage center but SUZANNE trips him and walks off whistling)

MARTY: *(Getting up and brushing himself off)* There are good kids,
Tall kids, short kids,
And bad kids;
But the worst, worst, worst kids
Are the brat, brat, brat kids!

(MARTY exits stage right to the sidelines; CORA enters from upstage left and crosses downstage right)

CORA: Once there was a kid on our block whose name was Poochie Baby.

(SHARON comes skipping out towards CORA; she wears a white bathing cap covering her own hair; over this bathing cap is a yellow bandeau to which profuse yellow curls are attached)

SHARON: La la la la la . . .

(SHARON sticks out her tongue at CORA and gives her a "Bronx Cheer"; she then moves upstage of CORA)

CORA: Her father spoiled her rotten.

TERRY: *(Enters upstage chasing after Poochie)* Poochie Baby, wait for Daddy!

(In his hurry to reach Poochie, TERRY bumps into CORA)

Cora, get out of the way!

(TERRY crosses to SHARON)

How's my little Goldilocks today? Daddy has a surprise for his pretty golden girl — more candy!

(SHARON greedily grabs the imaginary candy)

That's my little Curly-Top!

(SHARON runs downstage left)

Oh, wait, Poochie! Wait for Daddyyyyy . . .

(SHARON kicks TERRY's shin as he runs up to her)

Ow! Poochie must be more careful with Daddy's leg.

(SHARON pulls TERRY around and he is obviously thrown off balance)

Eeeeeeeeee!

(SHARON points up to the left)

Oh, I see. My Curly-Top just wanted to get Daddy's attention.

CORA: Poochie couldn't talk yet . . .

SHARON: Gooooo . . .

TERRY: Isn't she cute?!

CORA: But she had her father wrapped around her little finger.

SHARON: *(Whirling her finger in the air)* Wheeeee . . .

TERRY: *(Puzzled as to what Poochie wants)* Wheeeee?

SHARON: *(Leaps on TERRY's back and quickly whips him to a gallop)*
Wheeeee, wheeeee!

(They gallop to the right, alternating their "Wheeeee's, but TERRY's energy fades quickly and he collapses onto the floor; SHARON climbs off in disgust)

CORA: *(Crossing downstage left)* One day I had to go over to Poochie's house to play.

(She mimes picking up a satchel, walking down the street, and knocking on Poochie's door)

TERRY: Oh, look, Poochie! Here comes that plain little Cora from down the street. Now you be nice to her because she doesn't have pretty golden curls like you.

CORA: *(Entering the house and overhearing TERRY's last line)* He always says that.

(SHARON crosses to CORA, points at her hair, and giggles)

TERRY: Now Poochie, be nice. Cora can't help what her hair looks like.

(TERRY exits to left sideline while CORA sets down her imaginary satchel)

CORA: Well, Poochie and I settled down to play. But when I looked up, she'd taken my favorite book and was cutting the pictures out.

(SHARON mimes cutting pictures out, using her fingers as scissors)

Why you crazy kid!