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Family Plays

Pinocchio

Book and lyrics by
Arnold Wengrow

Music by
Nicky Rea and Jackie Cassada

Based on the story by
Carlo Collodi

Pinocchio

Musical. Adaptation, book and lyrics by Arnold Wengrow. Music by Nicky Rea and Jackie Cassada. Based on the story by Carlo Collodi. Cast: 4m., 1w., 5 either gender with doubling, or up to 20+ (8m., 2w., 10 either gender) plus optional extras. A musical version of the famous Carlo Collodi tale in a highly theatrical mixture of musical comedy, storytelling, commedia, dance, mime and puppetry. A lively troupe of actors create all the colorful characters of the story of a willful little wooden marionette who runs away from the carpenter Gepetto to encounter a host of fantastic adventures. On his journey, Pinocchio joins a traveling marionette show, gets tricked by a singing-and-dancing fox and cat, meets the magical Blue Fairy, and makes a thrilling escape from the Land of Ease, where lazy boys turn into donkeys. When Pinocchio rescues Gepetto from a sea monster, he discovers that he has gotten his dearest wish and turns into a real boy. Fluid staging with minimal set, props and costumes, although more elaborate settings and costumes can be used to increase spectacle. Suitable for touring. Approximate running time: 80 minutes. Code: PF1.

Family Plays

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(PINOCCHIO)

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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Pinocchio was written for the Tanglewood Children's Theatre and first produced by the Department of Drama at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, March 25 - 27, 1983, under the direction of Elaine Hunter Meyers, with the following cast:

Storytelling Actor	Stephen Magoon
Gepetto	E. Gordon Hurst
Antonio Cricket	Jamal Coleman
Pinocchio	Casey Gallagher
Policeman	Hal E. Austin
Little Boy	Tim McGahren
Fire Eater	Lee R. Morris
Arlecchino	Lee Marler
Columbina	Jennifer L. Pataky
Pulchinella	Jerry Wayne Vess
Fox	Douglas S. Miller
Cat	Hal E. Austin
Owl	E. Gordon Hurst
Crow	Stephen Magoon
Blue Fairy	Jennifer L. Pataky
Falcon	Penny L. Kramp
Candlestick	Lee Marler
Coachman	Lee R. Morris
Mouse	Jennifer N. Davis
Voice of the Deep	Frank Edwinn
Townpeople	Gordon S. Bass,
	Jill Garrett, Dawn Long, Shawn J. McDonald,
	Lara M. Merrill, Nancy S. Skinner, Sharon D.
	Williams

The setting and lighting were designed by Paul J. Sweeney; costumes were designed by Sara G. Stewart. Stage Manager was James W. Hunter.

Pinocchio was written to allow for flexible arrangements for casting and for staging. The original production by the Tanglewood Children's Theatre, the youth theatre division of the Department of Drama at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, used a cast of ten elementary and junior high-age students and ten college student actors. Subsequent productions have used different numbers and types of actors. The Magic Circle Theatre for Children at Tufts University used a large cast of all upper elementary and junior high students; the Flat Rock Playhouse in Flat Rock, N.C., used a small company of college-age apprentices; and the Central Piedmont Community College Summer Theatre in Charlotte, N. C., used a company of 14 young professional actors. The play can be performed with as few as ten performers. The author particularly recommends that the roles of Fire-Eater/Coachman, Columbina/Blue Fairy, and Arlecchino/Candlestick be doubled. Among other roles that can be doubled are Gepetto/Crow, Fox/Owl, Cat/Falcon, and Cricket/Mouse.

The staging and costumes can be as simple, or as elaborate, as time, space, and finances dictate. The Tanglewood and Magic Circle productions were performed in full-arena, with only decoratively-painted floors, minimal hand-props, and simple but colorful costumes. The Flat Rock and CPCC Summer Theatre versions were staged proscenium-style. The CPCC production used movable platforms and a single all-purpose painted backdrop.

Whatever production style the director chooses, the script calls for fluid staging, as the scenes flow quickly into each other. The acting requires a bright, presentational, vigorously physical style, and there are many opportunities in larger scenes (the Opening, Gepetto's Chase, the Storm, the Arrival in the Land of Ease, Pinocchio's Escape, the Plunge into the Sea) for ensemble improvisation.

Pinocchio can be played without an intermission, but if an intermission is needed, there is one suggested at the end of Pinocchio's Dream. A musical Entr'acte is provided to open Act II if the intermission is used.

PINOCCHIO

Music #1: Overture

Music #2: Actors' Entrance

(A burst of music, and the ACTORS bound onto a bare stage from all directions engaged in lively, noisy activities: cartwheels, somersaults, acrobatics, juggling imaginary balls, jumping imaginary ropes, playing imaginary instruments. Some of the girls are playing at being ballet dancers. Some of the boys are fighting mock battles, now wrestling, now boxing, now swordfighting. One group becomes trained animals put through their paces by the trainer. Another group becomes marionettes with a puppeteer pulling their strings.

One actor, a THIN ACTOR, hangs back from the others, and when he does enter into the games, he makes trouble for his playmates and himself.

Two ACTORS begin a game of imaginary tug-of-war. A third ACTOR joins one of the combatants, while a fourth joins his opponent. Then another joins the first two, while another comes to the aid of the second two, until the entire COMPANY, including even the THIN ACTOR - he is the last to be invited to join - is divided - or should we say united? - into two teams, pulling, pulling, pulling a huge imaginary rope across the stage. They shout encouragement to their teammates and deprecations at their opponents. There are groans and cries of "Pull" and "Harder" and "We've almost got them," until suddenly the rope breaks and the COMPANY goes sprawling in all directions. Out of the clatter and confusion, the STORYTELLING ACTOR blows a whistle, leaps to the center, and announces, con brio:)

STORYTELLING ACTOR: Once upon a time there was . . .

(The ACTORS scramble for positions, calling as they move)

ACTOR: A prince!

ACTOR: A princess!

ACTOR: A wicked witch!

ACTOR: A frog!

ACTOR: A duckling!

ACTOR: A valiant knight!

ACTOR: A king!

ACTOR: Yes, a king!

ACTOR: A king!

ACTOR: Yes, a story about a king!

STORYTELLING ACTOR: No, you are all wrong! Once upon a time there was... *(he pauses to prolong the suspense)* a stick of wood!

(Some of the ACTORS groan, some call out in derision, some laugh. They all scramble for new positions. Two ACTORS pick up the THIN ACTOR and swiftly deposit him in front of the STORYTELLING ACTOR, where the THIN ACTOR, to his surprise, finds himself transformed into a stick of wood.)

STORYTELLING ACTOR: It was not a fine stick, either. In fact, it was a very odd looking, scrawny, ugly stick of wood. *(The other ACTORS jeer and groan their agreement with this assessment. The THIN ACTOR starts to protest, but the STORYTELLING ACTOR claps his hand over the THIN ACTOR'S mouth, forcing him to become the stick of wood again.)* Certainly not a handsome piece of hardwood, the kind you might make a well-turned table leg out of. And certainly not the kind of wood to carve a delicate picture frame from. Oh, no! Just a common log, a twig! *(Protests from the THIN ACTOR again, which are again squelched by the STORYTELLING ACTOR.)* The kind of wood that's only good for putting in the fireplace to heat the room, or sticking in the stove to boil a pot of beans. Now, I cannot say how it came about, but one day, this scrawny, ugly stick of wood was found in the wood pole of a poor carpenter named Gepetto.

ACTORS: A poor carpenter named Gepetto!

(At this signal, one of the actors leaps up to present himself as GEPETTO, and the other ACTORS scramble and tumble to new positions. Some of them become a woodpile, to which the THIN ACTOR is carried and deposited. Some become Gepetto's workbench. A small actor takes a place as ANTONIO CRICKET, near GEPETTO, who is standing at his workbench sawing an ACTOR who has become a piece of lumber.)

GEPETTO: Gepetto had never married and lived all alone in his little shop.

ANTONIO CRICKET: Except for a cricket named Antonio...

GEPETTO: Who didn't eat much and kept Gepetto company.

ANTONIO CRICKET: Now Antonio Cricket was a talking cricket, although Gepetto didn't know it. For everything in Gepetto's shop had always been to his satisfaction, so there was no need to say anything. But Gepetto was not happy.

GEPETTO: *(Stops sawing, sets aside the ACTOR he has been working on, and wipes his brow.)* Antonio, I have been a carpenter for thirty years. I have built tables and chairs and cabinets and chests. All of my work has been useful, and some of it has been handsome. But business has been very bad for quite some time now. Everyone in this village seems to have all the furniture he needs or is too poor to buy anything new. And no one appreciates fine workmanship anymore. *(Crossing to the woodpile.)* Besides, it's very difficult to find good wood these days. Just look at my woodpile. Most of it is so crooked or full of knots or worm-eaten that it's no use whatsoever, except to burn in the fireplace. Why, look at this piece. *(He begins disengaging the THIN ACTOR from the other actors who form the woodpile.)* Now, I don't remember the woodcutter leaving this when he brought the last load. Surely I would never have paid good money for a piece like this. So scrawny and odd looking. I don't think I could even make a table leg out of this. Well, I'll chop it up into kindling and get some use out of it. *(He has dragged the THIN ACTOR over to the workbench and hoisted him onto it. He raises his axe - imaginary - and is about to strike...)*

THIN ACTOR: Please, sir, do not strike too hard.

GEPETTO: *(Halts with axe in mid-air)* Who said that? *(He lowers the axe slowly and peers around the room.)* Antonio, did you hear anything. *(ANTONIO shakes his head.)* Maybe I'm imagining things. Well, I'll give it another try. *(He raises the axe again.)*

THIN ACTOR: Please, sir, do not strike too hard!

GEPETTO: *(Halted in mid-swing again, he slowly lowers the axe.)* I'm sure I heard a voice that time. Maybe it's one of those noisy boys who play in the street outside my window, trying to trick me. *(He goes over to the window.)* No, no one there. And besides, those boys should all be in school by now. But I'm sure... *(approaching the workbench again)* Antonio! You're not a talking cricket by any chance, are you? *(Before ANTONIO has a chance to reply)* No, no, that couldn't be. If you were, I'm sure you would have said something by now. And why should you care how hard I strike this funny looking piece of wood anyway. It certainly is an odd one, isn't it, Antonio, with this big bump at one end, and these funny stubs at the other. It looks almost, almost... Antonio! I've just had an idea. I think I'll carve a marionette out of this peculiar piece of wood. *(He sets the THIN ACTOR upright, picks up his tools, and sets to work.)* I haven't thought about the marionettes in years, and I used to love them so when I was a boy. My father used to take me to see them on carnival days. Have you ever seen them, Antonio? I suppose they must still have the marionettes at carnival time. It's been such a long time since I've been. Oh, they were so funny. How all the children would laugh and scream when that rogue Arlecchino would trick the stingy old Pantelone out of his money bags. And then that dumb Pulchinella would give them back to him, without knowing what he was doing. Arlecchino would get so furious and give poor stupid Punch such a beating. I always thought, When I grow up and become a father, I'll take my son to see the marionettes too. Well, I grew up, but I never got married. And I never had a son. But, still... *(He has been busily carving the THIN ACTOR into a marionette.)* There! How easily this wood carves. The arms and legs all done. Now the eyes... the nose... and finally, a mouth. Ah! Don't we have a handsome little wooden boy here, Antonio. What name shall I give him?

THIN ACTOR: Pinocchio!

GEPETTO: *(Stares in amazement)* What did you say?

PINOCCHIO: I said, Pinocchio. My name is Pinocchio. Now hurry up and teach me to walk, you funny old man. I want to run and play!

GEPETTO: Funny old man! Why, you impudent scamp! I've barely finished making you, and already you're disrespectful to your father.

PINOCCHIO: *(Genuinely puzzled)* My father? Are you my father? I didn't know a marionette could have a father.

GEPETTO: Well, now that you mention it, neither did I. But I guess they must, for it is the old fathers in the marionette shows who are always being tricked by their servants and made unhappy by their children. So I must be your father.

PINOCCHIO: Well, hurry, Father, and teach me to walk, for I want to run and play!

GEPETTO: *(He begins to manipulate PINOCCHIO'S body, which moves stiffly at first, then gradually becomes more and more limber and lifelike.)* Alright, Pinocchio, just be patient. There's more to life than just running and playing. *(GEPETTO walks him slowly around the room, holding his hand, until...)*

PINOCCHIO: *(Pinocchio suddenly pulls away.)* Not for me there isn't! *(He begins to do handsprings and somersaults and cartwheels.)*

Music #3: Gepetto's Chase

GEPETTO: Pinocchio, be careful. What are you doing? Pinocchio, watch out! (*PINOCCHIO is careening around the room, knocking over the workbench, crashing into the woodpile. He moves faster and faster, laughing as GEPETTO tries without success to catch him.*) Pinocchio, where are you going? Don't run out of the house!

(Pinocchio charges beyond the confines of the room, and the ACTORS of the woodpile and workbench now become PASSERS-BY on a busy street. PINOCCHIO dashes in and out among them with GEPETTO in pursuit. There are cries from GEPETTO, exclamations from the PASSERS-BY, and laughter from PINOCCHIO. Finally, a POLICEMAN appears and intercepts PINOCCHIO, who struggles and cries, as the PASSERS-BY chatter with curiosity.)

GEPETTO: Officer, officer, stop him, don't let him get away!

PINOCCHIO: Let me go, let me go!

GEPETTO: (*Catching up with the POLICEMAN and PINOCCHIO, panting for breath*) Officer, Officer, don't let him go. He's a very bad boy, running away from his father like that.

PINOCCHIO: I'm not a boy, I'm a marionette. And marionettes don't have fathers.

PASSER-BY: Did you hear that? Old Gepetto thinks a marionette is his son!

PASSER-BY: Well, I never. A marionette for a son.

PASSER-BY: (*Laughing*) Gepetto thinks this marionette is his son.

PASSER-BY: Did you ever hear such a thing.

PASSER-BY: A marionette! He thinks it's his son!

POLICEMAN: Well, Gepetto, is this a marionette or your son?

GEPETTO: Well, Officer, well... he's both!

(The PASSERS-BY laugh heartily.)

GEPETTO: Here, let me have him. He's mine. I made him this morning, and he's a very bad boy. He deserves a good box on the ears. *(He grabs PINOCCHIO, who has been struggling in the POLICEMAN'S grasp, and begins to shake him.)* You bad boy, running away from your father like that. Just wait until I get you home.

PINOCCHIO: *(Begins to whimper, then throws himself on the ground and clings to the POLICEMAN'S legs.)* I won't go home with you, I won't, I won't, I won't go.

(The PASSERS-BY murmur their disapproval of GEPETTO.)

PASSER-BY: Very cruel indeed. No telling what he might do if he takes him home.

PASSER-BY: They certainly shouldn't allow him to take him home.

POLICEMAN: Well, Gepetto, I think you'd better come along with me. *(To PINOCCHIO)* You, run along now to wherever you came from, before you cause any more trouble. Come on, Gepetto.

GEPETTO: *(As the POLICEMAN leads him away)* And I took such pains to make a good marionette. And this is how he repays me. What a foolish old father I am after all.

(The crowd disperses, revealing ANTONIO CRICKET, who has been watching the proceedings.)

PINOCCHIO: *(He has been lying on the ground; now he somersaults to his feet.)* I'm free! Hooray!

ANTONIO CRICKET: (*Shaking his head in disapproval*) My, my, my, my, my.

PINOCCHIO: Your, your, your, your what! Who are you, and why are you shaking your head at me like that?

ANTONIO CRICKET: I am Antonio Cricket, and I have lived in Gepetto's shop for many years. I've seen many a block of wood and many a shaving, but you are the biggest blockhead I have ever seen.

PINOCCHIO: Who are you calling blockhead! Go away, Cricket, and leave me alone.

ANTONIO CRICKET: Oh, I'll leave you alone alright, but not until I've told you a great truth: life's full of troubles, full of pains, for a boy with sawdust instead of brains.

PINOCCHIO: Chirp on, Cricket, all you like. I'm not a boy. I'm a marionette. No one is going to force me to go to school and study like real boys. I just want to play and have fun.

ANTONIO CRICKET: There's more to life than just playing and having fun, my wooden friend.

PINOCCHIO: Not for me there isn't.

Music #4: The Cricket Song

ANTONIO CRICKET: Take care, Pinocchio, and remember my advice. (*MUSIC has begun; ANTONIO CRICKET sings:*)

A wooden boy has a very hard head;
He thinks he knows more than a grown up;
Ignores advice, goes his own way instead;
When he's wrong, he never will own up.

PINOCCHIO: Chirp, chirp, Cricket, all you will;
I'll never take heed of your warning.
Hush, hush, I wish you would be still;
Can't you see you only leave me yawning.

ANTONIO CRICKET: A wooden boy can be very thick;
His stubborn stance leaves no retreating.
Only hard knocks will ever do the trick;
To get good sense in takes quite a beating.

PINOCCHIO: Squawk, squawk, Cricket, all you please,
I'll never be the boy you want me.
Words, words, they pass me like the breeze.
Nothing you can say will ever daunt me.

ANTONIO CRICKET: I see you're dead set on being bad.
Any apple cart you're sure to upset it.
Your father's life will be very sad.
Mark my words, you'll live to regret it.

PINOCCHIO: Pick, pick, Cricket, all you like,
All your cliches are quite the tritest.
Punch, punch, never will you strike;
Nothing you can do will sway me in slightest.

(They reprise the last few verses in counterpoint, as the song concludes.)

PINOCCHIO: Farewell, Signor Cricket. You can stay here and chirp away. I'm off to have fun. *(And with a leap and hand-spring, he exits.)*

ANTONIO CRICKET: So Pinocchio spent the day climbing trees and running through the hills, but as night came...

Music #5: The Storm

(ACTORS, with noisemakers and streamers, come swirling in, making the noise and movement of a storm.)

ACTORS: A terrible storm blew up!

ACTORS: Thunder crashed!

ACTORS: Lightning blazed through the sky!

ACTORS: The wind swirled through the trees!

ACTORS: And the rain poured in torrents!

(PINOCCHIO runs in in panic; he darts in and out of the moving bodies of the storm, which appear to be pursuing him and thwarting his escape.)

PINOCCHIO: Pinocchio was terrified of the thunder and lightning and ran as fast as his wooden legs would take him, back to the village, which now was dark and silent and deserted.

(The ACTORS of the storm have subsided and have formed groups of houses, all with their backs to PINOCCHIO.)

PINOCCHIO: All the shops were closed. All the doors of the houses were closed. All the windows were closed. All the children had gone home to their families to have their supper and do their lessons and then to crawl into their nice warm beds, with their mothers and fathers to tuck them in and kiss them goodnight.

(PINOCCHIO goes sadly from house to house.)

PINOCCHIO: I'm cold and wet, and I'm very hungry. Maybe someone will give me something to eat and let me warm myself by the fire. *(He knocks on an ACTOR'S back, who turns and looks at him with disdain.)* Please, sir, I'm very hungry. Would you be good enough to give me something to eat?

ACTOR: Go home to your mother and father. It's too late for little boys to be out. *(And he turns his back.)*