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Dramatic Publishing



A NEW STYLE CHILDREN'S
REVUE WITH MUSIC

**MAGIC
THEATRE
II**

BY
SAUNDRA MATHEWS-DEACON



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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SAUNDRA MATHEWS DEACON

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(MAGIC THEATRE II)

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MAGIC THEATRE II is the result of six months of intensive research with children and child psychologists, in an earlier prototype production (Magic Theatre I), and in workshops and rehearsals with the original actors. It was produced by South Coast Repertory, Costa Mesa, California and later toured by Jr. Programs, Inc. of California and by the repertory to local school districts.

Funding was provided by a partial grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.

Production Credits

Book, music and lyrics	Saundra Mathews Deacon
Workshop, production director	Saundra Mathews Deacon
Music arrangements	Pat McMinn
Set designer	Greg Bolton
Choreographer	Michael Leininger
Costume design	Maggi Stamm

Original Cast

Pat McMinn
Sandy Marino Banks
Michael Leininger
Sue Flint
Mary Fleming
Michael Fuller

PRODUCTION NOTES

CASTING. The script is arranged in parts for six actors, designated Actor 1, Actor 2, etc. The music should be played by a guitarist, bringing the total cast to seven. The original cast consisted of three male and three female actors, but the balance may be altered by the director who may simply reassign lines and business. The original cast was made up of young adults, but the current script may be played effectively using children.

COSTUMING. Costuming should be exaggerated play clothes, in primary colors, each costume featuring two colors. For example, one actor might wear red jeans rolled up to the knee with red suspenders, and a purple tee-shirt, purple sneakers and a purple baseball cap. Another actor could wear orange tights and sweatshirt, with blue shorts and boots. Each actor's costume should be developed from his or her basic "child persona" which develops in rehearsals.

LIGHTING. Once the stage fades up to full, bright light in the opening, it remains that way until the end of the show. Lighting indications are also included in the closing.

For directors working with a stage from which it is impossible for actors to jump safely, the author suggests experimenting with staging those "jumping sections" by moving the action directly preceding the jumping to steps stage right and left which may be there for descent into the audience, staging in the audience, or any other adaptation the director can contrive. Perhaps a wooden ramp could be built from the stage edge to the outside of the orchestra pit; at a nice angle it could be slid, rolled or run down to nice effect.

The numbers given to actors (Actor 1, Actor 5, etc.) vary from sketch to sketch and are not consistent throughout the

script. The director should assign parts according to the needs of each sketch. Since the actors change numbers from sketch to sketch, so does the sex of the characters.

MAGIC THEATRE II

OPENING

The stage is bare with the exception of a playground slide UC. The slide is concealed behind a semi-circular flat or fabric piece — a stylized rainbow. Applied or painted over the six stripes of the primary colors are the words "Magic Theatre." The stage lights are dim. The house lights are up full.

ACTORS enter the house from backstage and lobby, and move among the children throughout the auditorium. They contact children, one at a time, around them; introduce themselves and ask the name of the child. From this point on, for several moments, it's "ad lib:" talking to the children, working with the available stimuli, finding natural, simple ways to relate to the children — games, stories, piggy-back rides, tickling, talking — whatever.

The segment is open-ended; when most of the children are either involved with the actors — or watching their friends being involved — the show begins. ACTOR 1 finishes talking to a child, looks around, watches the stage. Slowly, he moves to — and finally gets up on the stage — testing and exploring it. Perhaps he is at first frightened by being "on the spot" in front of everyone, so he gets down. Then he looks at the stage again, is intrigued by its possibilities, gets back on stage. Houselights dim out. Stage up. This distracts the other actors from their play with the children. They

focus on him. This attention causes him to pound on his chest like "King Kong" and let out a yell. The other actors are now interested. Each, in his own time, wanders to the stage and gets up. Actors are standing, sitting, feeling, jumping on the stage now — each trying to discover its meaning. Finally:)

ACTOR 2. Hey, you guys — it's really neat up here!

VARIOUS ACTORS. Yeah, it is.

ACTOR 4. I don't know. I think it's kinda scary.

ACTOR 2. Yeah — but everybody looks at you and everything!

VARIOUS ACTORS. Yeah.

ACTOR 4. I guess.

ACTOR 2 (Looking at rainbow). Hey, what's that?

ACTOR 6. It says "Magic" . . . what?

ACTOR 5. "Magic Theatre."

ACTOR 1. What's that mean?

ACTOR 6. I know! "Theatre" is when we get up here on the stage . . .

ACTOR 2. Yeah! And "Magic" is . . . that! (He runs to the slide.) It's a rainbow! (Climbs stairs to top of slide and slides down.) And I've got the pot of gold! (He discovers an imaginary pot of gold at the bottom of the slide, picks it up and carries it downstage to the others.)

ALL (grabbing for it). Give me some. Can I have it? Come on! (Etc.)

ACTOR 2. Uh, uh. You have to go over the rainbow first. (Various reactions. They form a line at the stairs to the slide and begin climbing up.)

ACTOR 5. I'm scared!

ACTOR 3. Come on — go! (He gives ACTOR 5 a push and she slides down. The others follow, some bravely, some

more apprehensive. They form a group around ACTOR 2 who holds the pot of gold. He carefully distributes a "coin" from the "pot" to each.

ACTOR 2. Hey! Let's share it! (The others grab handfuls of "gold" and toss it into the audience. [Note: If the pantomime is handled carefully, the children will pretend along with the actors, reaching out their hands, catching the "gold" etc.]) It's really neat up here! You can do fun stuff, like finding gold . . .

ACTOR 4. . . . and like . . . walking a tight rope! (She begins walking slowly and precariously along the edge of the stage. The others stand behind her, coaching. She eventually falls off.)

ACTOR 5. Or we can do stuff like marching in a big army. (The others fall in step behind her for a turn or two around the stage.)

ACTOR 6. Or . . . up here on the stage . . . you can tell everybody your name! (Each actor jumps from the "army" line downstage, freezes in place and announces his name.)

ACTOR 3. Or . . . we can get everybody to tell their names. (Crosses down.) When we count to three, yell your name as loud as you can!

ALL. One, two, three! (Actors respond by applauding and yelling.)

ACTOR 5. Or — if we want to — we can change our names! (Stepping down, assuming a stylized pose.) I'm . . . Cinderella!

ACTOR 3 (stylized pose, crossing to shake Actor 5's hand). I'm the Lone Ranger. Glad to meet 'ya.

ACTOR 1. Or, if we want, we can be . . . a falling tree! (He begins to fall and is caught and set upright by the others.)

ACTOR 2. Or, we can be a giant. (The group forms a simple pyramid, ACTOR 2 on top.)

ACTOR 6. Or, if we want, we can just be very still. (They sit on the edge of the stage and silently look at the audience. This is a long moment, in contrast to all of the preceding activity and sound.)

ACTOR 1 (quietly). It's neat up here because we can do anything we think of — or feel like! That's the "Magic Theatre" because — (He picks up his guitar and sings softly.)

IT'S ALL OKAY

ACTOR 1.

A feeling is a feeling.

A thought is a thought.

Pretending is pretending,

And telling truth is not.

Whatever you are thinking or feeling is true,

It's you who makes it happen; it's all up to you.

CHORUS.

But it's okay, it's okay,

Whatever you think or you feel today,

It'll take you along your road today,

It's all okay.

ACTOR 5.

If you stand on your hands and you make a face,

Is that okay?

ALL.

Yeah, that's okay.

ACTOR 2.

If you fall down flat and you lose the race,

Is that okay?

ALL.

Yeah, that's okay.

ACTOR 4.

If you get real mad and you scream and yell,
Is that okay?

ALL.

Yeah, that's okay.

ACTOR 3.

If you make a drum from the garbage pail,
Is that okay?

ALL.

It's all okay.

CHORUS.

Well, it's okay, it's okay,
Whatever you think or you feel today,
It'll take you along your road today,
It's all okay.

ACTOR 3.

If your feelings get hurt, and you cry and cry,
Is that okay?

ALL.

Yeah, that's okay.

ACTOR 6.

If you draw a face on a pumpkin pie,
Is that okay?

ALL.

Yeah, that's okay.

ACTOR 5.

If you're feeling sad and you want to hide,
Is that okay?

ALL.

Yeah, that's okay.

ACTOR 2.

If you put your pet lizard by your sister's side . . .
(Loud scream.)

ALL.

It's all okay.

(Changing tempo.)

It's all okay, it's all okay,

It's all okay, it's all okay, it's all . . .

CHORUS.

Well, it's okay, it's okay,

Whatever you think or you feel today,

It'll take you along your road today,

It's all okay, it's all okay.

It's all okay, it's all okay. Okay!

The success of this next sketch depends on excellent stylized characterizations from the actor playing the Boy - Kitten - Tiger, and very clear distinctions between the three.

KITTENS AND TIGERS

NARRATOR. Once upon a time, there was a boy who was nice, no matter what.

BOY. See how nice I am? (Cutesy, stylized gesture and sound to be used throughout the sketch. Next four exchanges should be staged to overlap with entrances from all four corners of the stage.)

NARRATOR. If a boy would push him on the playground, he'd always say . . .

BOY. Oh, well . . . (Gesture again.)

NARRATOR. If a girl teased him . . .

GIRL. Nyah, nyah, nya, nyah, nyah, you're a big dummy . . .

NARRATOR. The boy would only say . . .

BOY. Oh, well . . . (Gesture again.)

NARRATOR. Or, even if children tripped him . . . (Two actors mime action.) . . . he'd only say . . .