

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS!

Based on Art Linkletter's book

Dramatized by Robert Johanson

Music by Albert Evans

Lyrics by Robert Johanson and Albert Evans



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our Web site: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, P.O. Box 129, Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

©MMIV

Dramatized by ROBERT JOHANSON

Music by ALBERT EVANS

Lyrics by ROBERT JOHANSON and ALBERT EVANS

Based on the book by ART LINKLETTER

Printed in the United States of America

All Rights Reserved

(KIDS SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS!)

ISBN: 1-58342-262-5

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play, play with music, and/or musical *must* give credit to Art Linkletter as the author of *Kids Say the Darndest Things!* and the dramatizer and composer of the play, play with music, and/or musical in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play, play with music, and/or musical and in all instances in which the title of the play, play with music, and/or musical appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play, play with music, and/or musical and/or a production. The names of Art Linkletter and the dramatizer and composer *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS!

For 5 actors to infinity

CHARACTERS

THE HOST: Male or female—uses his or her own name—really holds the show together and must be very comfortable with emceeing. If a mature youth plays the HOST, he or she must be a very confident performer. A well-known local personality or star can also fit the bill.

THE KIDS: Played by children or adults—the three groups can be doubled by four versatile performers—or played by 12 separate performers—KIDS slightly older than the actual ages intended are best.

GROUP ONE (playing 6-8 years old):

DONALD (male)
MEGAN (female)
SUSIE (female)
JIMMIE (male or female)

GROUP TWO (playing pre-schoolers—4-5 years old):

DAVID (male)
LINDSAY (female)
ALICE (female)
BOBBIE (male or female)

GROUP THREE (playing 9-12 years old):

ADAM (male)
BARBIE (female)
MARYANNE (female)
KELSEY (male or female)

THE TEACHER: Optional. Male or female—can be played by an actual well-known teacher or a student impersonating a teacher.

THE CHORALE: A “Greek chorus” made up of as many performers as you like—or performed by the four to 12 KIDS themselves.

SEE APPENDIX (p. 85) PRODUCTION NOTES (p. 110)

MUSICAL NUMBERS

OPENING: Kids Say the Darndest Things!

PART ONE: 6-8 YEAR OLDS

No Place Like Home
Mind Your Manners
The Mystery of History
When I Grow Up
Kids Say... - Reprise #1

PART TWO: 4-5 YEAR OLDS

I Want a Pet
Down on the Farm
When I Grow Up - Reprise
Once Upon a Time
Kids Say... - Reprise #2

PART THREE: 9-12 YEAR OLDS

School Days
Pop Quiz
Tingles in My Heart
Letters from Camp
Letters to Santa
Letters to God (optional)
Letters to the President
Give Us Wings
Kids Say... - Finale

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS!

PLEASE NOTE: The term KIDS always refers to the “children” who are interviewed by the HOST. The CHORALE (of unlimited size) is the “Greek chorus” which comments from the side and sometimes joins the KIDS. If no CHORALE is used, the CHORALE material is all performed by the KIDS—as few as four—as many as 12.

PLEASE NOTE: The option of doing the show without music is noted (with the three +++) and explained either immediately in the text or in the appendix on page 85.

Also the optional use of the TEACHER is noted with +++.

(The stage is empty except for four chairs or cubes that will be used by the KIDS. If the singing CHORALE is used, then an imaginative riser/platform arrangement on either side can accommodate them. The houselights dim.

MUSIC INTRO: an energetic and infectious beat can be performed live by the COMPANY using percussive instruments—drums, rattles, etc.—to establish a syncopated rhythm. Both CHORALE and KIDS enter in cho-

reographed “play.” As the percussive intro reaches a climax:)

KIDS/CHORALE (*shout*). MUSIC! (*They all turn upstage. Note: SOLOS can be assigned at the discretion of the director.*)

SOLO A (*turning front*). Probably the first of all instruments were the percussive. Even in the oldest civilizations we can find natives beating on their tumtums.

SOLO B (*turning front*). Just about any animal skin can be stretched over a frame to make a pleasant sound once the animal is removed.

SOLO C (*turning front*). Syncopation is not just boom boom. It is boom pa da boom or sometimes boom ca pa doodle da rest boom boom.

SOLO D (*turning front*). Minor keys are those allowable for children composers under twenty-one. (Or: My favorite song is I’m going to Alabama with my Band-aid on my knee.)

MUSIC #2-4: “KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS!”

- HOST and ALL

(+++without music—explained in appendix)

ALL (*coming forward*).

KIDS SAY...THE DARNDEST THINGS

KIDS SAY...THE DARNDEST THINGS

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS...

SOLO B (*announcing*). Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls and others—welcome to “Kids Say the Darndest Things!”

ALL (*forming tight group at center*).

**TONIGHT (TODAY) WE HOPE YOU'LL FIND
OUR PEPPY LITTLE SHOW'S FUN
KIDS SAY WHATEVER COMES TO MIND
ASK ANYONE WHO KNOWS ONE
KIDS SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS!**

SOLO C. And now...to take us through the wacky world...

SOLO A. ...of kids' craziest comments...

SOLO B. ...we'd like to introduce your guide...

SOLO D. ...he/she is best known to you _____

(*give a brief intro if appropriate*) —please welcome our host...

4 SOLOISTS or ALL. _____ (*name of HOST*).

(*KIDS/CHORALE part to reveal the HOST walking down holding a handheld microphone [optional]. He/she smiles at the audience, acknowledges their applause and begins.*)

HOST. Do children really live in a secret world of their own, a world that grownups once knew but can never find again? Sure they do! Every parent knows this, every teacher, every grownup who has anything to do with kids. It's a world where nothing is predictable and nothing is commonplace because everything is fresh and unexpected and new. Tonight (this afternoon/morning) we're going to visit that secret world once again. So come along, we invite you to listen and laugh as these kids—say the darndest things!

ALL.

**KIDS SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS
AND WHEN WE DO WHAT JOY IT BRINGS
LIKE “FIDO MADE THOSE BATHTUB RINGS”
“TODAY I GREW A PAIR OF WINGS”
“MY SISTERS ARE TWO DINGALINGS!”
YES, KIDS SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS!**

SOLO A. My sister just had a baby, but they didn’t tell me if it’s a boy or a girl, so I don’t know if I’m an aunt or an uncle.

SOLO B. When I see a sad TV show I try to keep my composure, but I often get completely decomposed.

SOLO C. “Polite”—that means to say thank you when you don’t really mean it.

SOLO D. I didn’t really break the window. I was just cleaning my slingshot and it went off!

ALL.

**KIDS SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS
AND WHEN WE DO WHAT JOY IT BRINGS
LIKE “WHEN IT RAINS MY TURTLE SINGS.”
“I DON’T SHAMPOO BECAUSE IT STINGS.”
“I THINK MY BRAIN HAS SPRUNG ITS
SPRINGS!”
UH-HUH! KIDS SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS!**

SOLO A. Yes, Thanksgiving is truly a time of happiness for every child, adult and adulteress.

SOLO B. Last Thanksgiving, I didn’t like the turkey, but I liked the bread the bird ate.

SOLO C. We all need well-rounded meals. Square meals cause indigestion.

SOLO D. Another name for talcum powder is magnesium silicate. But what kind of nut would put that on a baby?

ALL.

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS!

**JUST FIFTY YEARS AGO,
THERE CAME ALONG ART LINKLETTER.
HE HAD A LITTLE TV SHOW
THAT SOON BECAME A TRENDSETTER!**

HOST. The TV show was called “House Party” and it ran for twenty-five years. (*Speaks or sings.*)

**TONIGHT (TODAY) WE CELEBRATE THE BEST
FROM ALL THOSE MANY YEARS.
SO COME ALONG AND BE OUR GUEST
WITH LAUGHTER, YUCKS AND TEARS.**

SOLO A. Men can reach maturity, but so far only women have reached maternity.

SOLO B. We used to depend on silkworms exclusively until we noticed rayonworms and nylonworms.

SOLO C. In the older days a lady’s figure was called an hourglass. As she grew older, it gradually sank to the bottom.

SOLO D. According to some people’s beliefs, there is something that is halfway between heaven and hell. It’s called puberty.

ALL.

**WITH BLARNEYINGS AND BLATHERINGS,
WITH BICKERINGS AND BANTERINGS,
WITH DICKERINGS AND DATHERINGS,**

12 KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS!

**TO PULL YOUR LEG AND YOUR
HEARTSTRINGS!
YES, KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST...**

SOLO A. The worst thing about my trip was the long hangovers between planes.

ALL.

YES! KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS!

(CHORALE takes places at the sides. After applause:)

HOST. Just before we started, one of the youngsters asked me: “Are we going to have real people in the audience or just mothers and fathers?” Well, it looks like some real people have decided to show up. Thank you all for coming. And now—let’s introduce our first kids!

PART ONE:

(MUSIC #5: WALK-OUT #1—DONALD, MEGAN, SUSIE and JIMMIE, 6-8 years old, walk out briskly and smilingly take their seats on the four chairs or cubes. They are very eager to get started. The HOST starts right in— sharing the microphone—interviewing them.)

HOST. Joining us are Donald, Megan, Susie and Jimmie. *(JIMMIE can be a boy or a girl.)* These kids are here tonight (today) from _____ Elementary School. *(Use name of local school.)* Let’s start with you, Donald. How old are you?

DONALD. I am seven years four months two weeks and two days old.

HOST. Very good. What kind of boy are you?

DONALD. A serious boy.

HOST. Well, then let's talk about something serious. What do you think of world affairs and the United Nations?

DONALD. Is that serious?

HOST. What do you want to talk about Megan?

MEGAN. Oh, anything. Let's talk about my operations.

HOST. Your operations? Let's see...you're six. How many operations have you had?

MEGAN. Quite a few.

HOST. For instance...

MEGAN (*very knowing*). Well, there was adenoids, tonsils, my teeth filled, my eyes tested and I got circumcised!

HOST. Well, you have lived dangerously...

MEGAN. Uh-huh.

HOST. Do you have any trouble now with your ears and nose?

MEGAN. Yes. They are always in the way when I take off my pajamas.

HOST. Jimmie, what's the worst age to be?

JIMMIE. Somewhere between seven and nine.

HOST. Why is that?

JIMMIE. Well, you're stuck in school and you just begin to realize it.

HOST. And how old are you?

JIMMIE. Eight.

HOST. Let's talk about family.

MUSIC #6: “NO PLACE LIKE HOME” - CHORALE

(+++if no music is used—this should be sung a cappella)

CHORALE.

**BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE,
THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.
THOUGH OUR FOUNDATIONS CRUMBLE,
THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME**

**THERE’S NO ONE LIKE FAMILY
TO BRIGHTEN UP OUR SKY,
TO HURT OR EMBARRASS US
AND MAKE US WANNA DIE!**

**BE IT EVER SO HAPPY,
THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.
IT MAY SOUND KINDA SAPPY
BUT THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.**

(CHORALE continue to hum under:)

HOST. The family circle encompasses the most important areas of the child’s world and represents the kind of thinking, acting and reacting they will do for the rest of their lives. This is the subject they know the best and have the strongest opinions about. *(MUSIC OUT.)*
What’s your family like, Susie?

SUSIE. It’s just a normal family. My big brother thinks he’s king of the world, my big sister blames everything that goes wrong on me, and my little brother’s a stinker.

HOST. Tell me about your sister.

SUSIE. She’s the kind of girl who’d punch me in the mouth if I said anything bad about her.

HOST. But what's she really like?

SUSIE. I guess she's all right on the inside...but, I sure get sick and tired of buttering up that hard crust on the outside!

MEGAN. I want to sell my sister for half price. That's fifty cents!

HOST. What would you do with the money?

MEGAN. Buy a baby brother that'd be some fun for a change.

HOST. Where would you buy him?

MEGAN. From my mother, of course. She's the one who produces them all.

HOST. Do you look like your mother, young lady?

MEGAN. No, sir—no way.

HOST. What do you mean "no way"?

MEGAN. I don't have false eyelashes, false teeth or false hair. And I've never had a nose job.

HOST. Does your mother work for a living?

MEGAN. No. She's a private secretary.

HOST. Well that sounds as if she works for a living. Isn't that some kind of job?

MEGAN. All I know is that she works for a slavedriver down in the Fisher Building. (*Substitute local office building everyone knows.*)

(*Loud squeal from "mom" in audience.*)

HOST. Oops! Well, young lady, I hope your morn didn't invite her boss.

MEGAN. She did!

JIMMIE. My mom's a Sunday school teacher.

HOST. What does she do for fun?

JIMMIE. She plays poker and drinks beer.

DONALD. My mother likes to work crossword puzzles.
She's real good.

HOST. How many does she do a week?

DONALD. None. She's just real good at starting them. The family always has to finish.

HOST. Jimmie, how did your folks meet and fall in love?

JIMMIE. How am I supposed to know? I was just a little baby when they got married.

DONALD. My folks met in a nightclub.

HOST. What was your father doing?

DONALD. He was a bartender.

HOST. And your mother?

DONALD. She was attending a PTA meeting.

HOST. What happened?

DONALD. Dad kept asking Mom to marry him, but she waited ten years.

HOST. What took her so long to say yes?

DONALD. She didn't want to act eager.

MEGAN. My daddy was a lifeguard at a big swimming pool where my mom lost her swimming suit. I don't know what happened then, but they got married.

SUSIE. My dad worked at a vegetable market and my mother used to come in and pinch the vegetables. Every time she'd pinch a vegetable, my dad would pinch her—until they couldn't stand it any longer and got married.

HOST. What are the hardest table manners for you to remember?

MEGAN. To remember to swallow after I take a drink of milk before I start talking.

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE SET: The show can be performed on a bare stage. You are welcome to brighten up the scene with cyclorama or colorful panels or curtains or even a snappy logo—but this is not necessary. All that is absolutely required are four chairs or cubes for the KIDS being interviewed. If adults or teens play the KIDS then the chairs/cubes should be larger so that their feet can dangle. The HOST walks among the KIDS with a handheld microphone (optional) and their seating arrangement can be rearranged throughout the show. If an added group is used for the CHORALE you may wish to have interesting platforms or risers at the sides of the stage for them to use as the “Greek” chorus with chairs or cubes to bring forward to join the action from time to time.

THE COSTUMES: Very simple. If adults or teens play the KIDS—then some effort should go into creating large versions of current fashion trends for the little ones. They should look as much like KIDS as possible who have made an attempt to dress for the special occasion of appearing onstage. If only four actors play all KIDS then some simple costume changes will be needed— long to short pants, sweater on, vest off, change hair from straight down to pony tail, etc. Keep it simple.

The HOST wears a suit or can be casual—that is your preference—although the idea of an “event” is very important.

The TEACHER, if used, can dress similarly to the HOST.

The CHORALE (if separate) can be costumed as simply as white or tan pants and skirts with all the same brightly colored T-shirts (or rainbow colored). Unifying them is a good idea, although certainly not required.

THE LIGHTING: Bright and brighter! Nice clean bright light is essential to comedy. The light plot should be simple and bold. It could also be done with the natural light in a school cafeteria or church recreation hall. Changes for the musical numbers can be effective, but are not crucial.

THE SOUND: If the performance space is large, then general miking should be used for all performers. The device of a handheld microphone that the HOST uses like a talk-show host can be lots of fun for business, but should not be relied upon for sound. The handheld microphone can be used cleverly in the staging—especially with shy KIDS who are afraid of it and aggressive KIDS who grab the microphone and won't let it go! Microphones may be needed at the sides for the CHORALE. For smaller spaces just have everyone SPEAK UP! There are a few sound effects—thunder, rain, etc.

THE MUSIC: The play can be performed with or without the music. However, the songs provide a great energy, are very easy to sing and punctuate the performance nicely. Every effort should be made to incorporate the songs. They can be played on one electric keyboard, bright and fun. A tape/CD is available for those who would like an easy-to-cue pre-recorded accompaniment track.

Most of the musical numbers are designed to use all the performers in the show—all three groups of KIDS—and the CHORALE. The lines and solos within songs can be divided among all the performers, not just the four KIDS in the actual section. Use as much staging as you are able—get the KIDS out of their chairs, bring on offstage KIDS, and certainly do not confine the CHORALE to the riser/platforms. If only five performers are used, then you can be extra creative when going into musical numbers using lighting and choreography to create a different reality—it is no longer strictly the “interview.”

Above all, create a sense of fun and spontaneity and have a good time!