

OVERVIEW

***The Magic Of Christmas* is a theme-based, complete Christmas concert of a 90 minute duration. It has been designed to include every student in the school, while dividing the work load equally among the staff through the component system.**

Each staff member should become familiar with the story and the component that they wish their class to perform. Each component is a unit in itself and can be rehearsed as a separate classroom unit, thus greatly reducing the time needed to prepare this production. Each component includes a description of characters, props, costumes, and stage directions. Those staff members who do not have a regular class of students, such as the Librarian or the Teacher Assistants, might wish to be the Director and/or be responsible for rehearsing the main characters or the choir.

The component feature allows teachers to add or delete items to suit their particular school size. To include more classrooms, creative teachers may wish to make up or adapt other acts to fit the theme. Other possibilities that make “magic in the air” at Christmas might be carolling, Christmas shopping, Christmas cards, the smells of Christmas (the traditional Christmas meal), the sounds of Christmas (a performance of bells), or decorations. Almost any concert item can be inserted by writing a few introductory lines for the magician and his son. An appropriate “magical” chant and a related song for the choir could be added. You may wish to have the magician “goof up” on his magic and thereby insert a component that is unrelated or only slightly related to the theme. For example, in Component 9 based on “The Night Before Christmas”, a second skit called “The Great Sleigh Robbery”, in which Santa’s sleigh is hijacked on Christmas Eve, can also be used. (“The Great Sleigh Robbery” by Virginia Ferguson and Peter Durkin) If your school is not large enough to use all the components, keep in mind that Components 1, 10 and 11 are crucial to the theme and must be used. Any other components may be deleted. If your school does not wish to follow the theme, each individual component may be used in a variety Christmas concert by excluding the magician and choir parts.

In memory of our dear colleague, Vivian Bertrand, whose dedication, devotion and love of Christmas concerts made these books a reality.

THE CAST

Choir
3 Audience Participants

Magician
Magician's Son

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Director
Stage Hands
Curtain Puller(s)

Lighting Director
Sound Director
Choir Director

CASTING

The *Magician and his son*, the main characters in the program, should be performed by senior class members, or you may wish to cast a staff member or parent volunteer in these parts. They will each require black pants, a black top hat, a white shirt, a bow tie, a magic wand, a coin (if you are using Component 8), and white gloves.

The *Audience Participants* could be any students from grades 4 to 8. They will not require any special costuming or props.

The *Choir* could be one classroom or could be selected from the entire student body. It is possible for the choir members to also take part in their classroom production, although this does cause some traffic problems, with students coming and going from the choir to the stage. Their songs are included in a section at the back of this unit. Almost all of the musical selections are traditional and so the musical notations have not been included as these are easily accessible.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Throughout the concert, the magician and his son perform in front of the curtain or below stage level. Whenever the magician casts a spell, his chant ends with the words "Let's look and see", at which point they turn to face the stage curtain and spread their arms. As the curtain opens they follow the curtain back, one on each side, and remain behind the curtain during the ensuing act. When the curtain closes, they follow it out again, one on each side, and thus join each other at center stage in front of the curtain for the next part of the main script.



The script of the magician and his son plus the singing of the choir provides enough time for one class to leave the stage and for the next class to get on the stage and get ready. Two aisles and two side stage doors allow for the smooth arrival and departure of the classes, by having them enter by one aisle and leave by the other. Stage hands for the entire performance are a definite asset in setting and clearing the stage, allowing for a smooth transition from one spell to the next.

A complete rehearsal is recommended to time the items so that each class can be ready to enter on time and so that the main characters, lighting and sound directors, stage hands, and curtain pullers can practice their cues. This also provides an opportunity for the students to practice using the microphones.

STAGE SET

Cover the back of the stage with blue-coloured paper and attach coloured, foil-covered stars here and there. One large, gold-coloured star will be needed for the Nativity scene. Attach flexible foil stars to the curtain so that there is a "magical" backdrop for the magicians when the curtain is closed. These reflect and sparkle well in the flood lights. You will need a false window on the back of the stage for the *Mystery Of Christmas* skit (Component 9).

LIGHTING

Coloured flood lights (blue is effective) on the magicians creates a magical mood. If the choir is off to the side, you will need some flood lights to illuminate them when they sing. Only the stage lights and the flood lights should be on throughout the performance, unless you are using Component 8 - The Silver Collection, at which time the house lights would go on. The lighting director will need to turn on and turn off the flood lights for the choir and the magicians when they are performing, as well as the stage lights for Component 2 - The Christmas Tree and Component 9 - The Plight Before Christmas.

SOUND

We have found that most students cannot project their voices well enough to be heard. Much of the continuity and humour of the concert is lost to the audience by not hearing the crucial lines. We therefore recommend the use of microphones, even if they have to be passed from one student to another. Four microphones work well, one for the magician and his son, two on stage, and one for the audience participants. However, the magicians could pick up and drop off the stage microphones as they follow the curtain when it opens and closes. Special "wireless" condenser microphones, that clip on clothing, are now available for rent at larger music stores. These microphones are ideal for students as there are no cords or wires to trip over.

Sound effects greatly enhance the "magical" theme of this concert. Reverberation of the word "see", when the magician ends each chant, is very effective. Digital-delay reverb boxes to achieve this echo effect can also be rented at a low cost from music stores. A synthesizer keyboard can be used to create "magical", "tinkling", "star-dusty" musical notes as the curtain opens on each magic spell. The sound director would organize the microphones and execute these special sound effects.

COMPONENT 2 - THE CHRISTMAS TREE

- Plant #1:** "Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without the Christmas tree and the twinkling lights and decorations!"
- Magician:** "Oh for sure! Christmas needs a Christmas tree."
- Son:** (To the audience)
"Let's see if we can use our powers of concentration to make some Christmas magic. Close your eyes everyone and try to remember the prettiest Christmas tree you have ever seen!"
- Choir:** Sings verse 1 and 2 of "Oh Christmas Tree".
- Magician:** (Chants)
"Maybe the lights dancing with glee
Are the twinkling eyes of the Christmas tree
And maybe it sees as plain as can be
How happy it makes us
(Magician turns and spreads arms open in front of the curtains)
LET'S LOOK AND SEE!"
- (CURTAIN OPENS.)

PROPS:

An artificial Christmas tree with lights strung on it; decorations to represent each rhyming couplet; large cards with pictures of each decoration on the front and the beginning letter (from the word "Christmas") on the back.

COSTUMES:

Candies could be dressed in red and white and holding large cut-out candy canes, or they could be dressed to represent different Christmas treats.

Christmas Trees can be dressed in green garbage bags with holes cut for head and arms, and with ornaments and tinsel stapled on, plus a star on their forehead.

Gifts can be dressed in cardboard boxes with holes cut for head and arms. The boxes are painted or papered to represent presents.

Gingerbread can be dressed in brown clothing with attached white cotton trim and buttons.

WHAT IS THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS?

Gifts: *(Dancing around)* "We're the most important part of Christmas! We're the bikes, the dolls, the rubber balls. It wouldn't be Christmas without us. We're the magic of Christmas!"

Candies: "What nonsense! You are wrong! You can't have Christmas without us. Candy canes, peppermints, fudge. We're the magic in the air at Christmas. Our sweet smell and taste are what make Christmas best!"

Trees: "You're out to lunch, again! Everyone knows that we're Christmas with our beautiful green, our piney scent, and our magical twinkling lights. If you don't have a Christmas tree, you don't have Christmas."

Candies: "Not true! We're the most important!"

Trees: "Simply not true! We're the most important!"

All Together: "No, it's us! You can't have Christmas without us!"

(Gingerbread enters)

Gingerbread: "Hey, hey. What's going on here? You're making an awful racket!"

Candies: "Ginger, you tell them we're the magical part of Christmas!"

Trees: "You have to have a Christmas tree..."

Gifts: "You can't have Christmas without gifts!"

Gingerbread: "I can see we'll have to settle this or we won't have any peace for Christmas."

Candies: "What do you mean, Ginger?"

Trees: "Humph! I guess he means that he's the most important."

Gingerbread: "Not me! Not me!"

Gifts: "I knew it! It's us, isn't it, Ginger?"

Candies: "No, it's us!"

Gingerbread: "Well, in a way, you're right."

Candies: "What do you mean - in a way?"

Gingerbread: "It's all of us together! We are all important! All of us has a part in the magic of Christmas."

Trees: "Then we're all important. Each of us?"

DIAGRAM #1

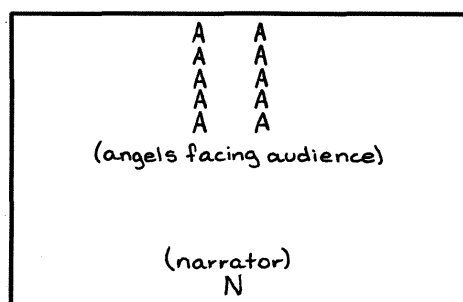


DIAGRAM #2

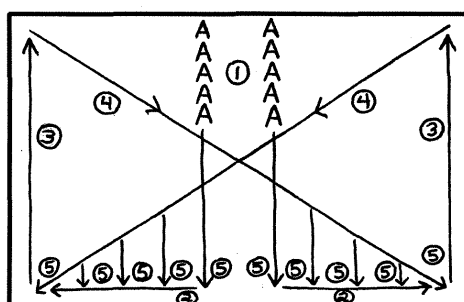


Diagram #1 and #2 show the position of the angels and the narrator as the curtain opens, and then the first part of the angels' drill. These two diagrams take you to the end of the Chorus, which is sung through once, and then repeated. In diagram #2, the angels move forward when the music starts, as soon as the narrator has finished and has left the stage. They proceed to the front of the stage, turn, go out to the front corners of the stage, back to the back corners, and then up to center stage where the two lines fall into place across the front of the stage, making a solid line across the front. When the Chorus has played through once, the angels should be in this position. At the start of the repeat of the Chorus, the angels at the front left corner and at the front right corner, turn and lead their lines back through the same pattern again. Once again, they criss-cross to the front of the stage and form a line across the front, facing the audience. They should be in this position just before the Chorus is ending for the second time. Once the angels are in position, Mary and Joseph enter (preferably from a door at the center back of the stage) and bring the cradle with them. They quickly get into position, near the center back of the stage.

DIAGRAM #3

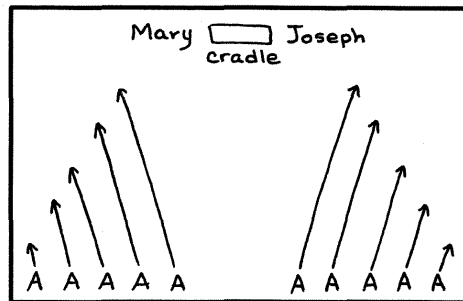
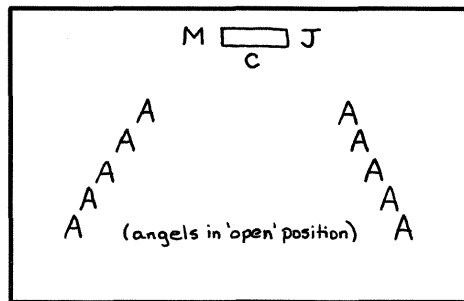


DIAGRAM #4



"A SENSE OF MAGIC" - COMPONENT 1

To the tune of - "The More We Get Together"

- Oh, Christmas time is magical, magical, magical
Christmas time is magic
You see it everywhere
The cards and the presents
The parties so pleasant
Oh, Christmas time is magic
You see it everywhere.
- Oh, Christmas time is magical, magical, magical
Christmas time is magic
You hear it everywhere
The carols and singing
The bells sweetly ringing
Oh, Christmas time is magic
You hear it everywhere.
- Oh, Christmas time is magical, magical, magical
Christmas time is magic
You feel it in the air
The loving and caring
The helping and sharing
Oh, Christmas time is magic
You feel it in the air.