

## **OVERVIEW**

**Christmas Castaways is a theme-based, complete Christmas concert. It has been designed to include every student in grades K through 8, 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 the 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 acts from other countries. These can be inserted by writing a few introductory lines for the main characters and inserting a song for the choir, which provides time for each act to get on and off stage. If your school does not wish to follow the theme, each individual component may be used in a variety concert by excluding the main characters and having a Master of Ceremonies.**

## **THE STORY**

**Just prior to the Christmas holiday, a cruise ship went down at sea and a life boat of survivors has landed on a deserted tropical island. As it turns out, they are all from different countries. Christmas is drawing near and the individuals are, each in their own way, fearing that they will miss the festivities of the season with their respective families, culture, and customs. While they await rescue, they discuss the traditions of Christmas in their own country. These traditions are performed, in a sometimes serious and sometimes humorous light, on stage by the various classes. Of course, the common thread of the Nativity is found in all cultures that celebrate Christmas, and so the concert culminates with the Nativity scene and the rescue of the “castaways” - the best Christmas gift of all.**

## CHOIR

The choir selections are inserted at the end of each component. Some selections are suggested but any appropriate songs may be used. The choir could be one classroom or could be selected from the entire student body. The choir selections immediately follow each component thereby providing time for each class to get on and off stage.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Throughout the concert, the main characters are seated on tiered gym mats in front of the curtain or below stage, facing the audience. The script of the main characters and the singing of the choir provides enough time for one class to leave the stage and for the next class to get on stage and get ready. Two aisles and two side stage doors allow for a smooth arrival and departure of classes by having them enter by one aisle and leave by the other. Stage hands are a definite asset in setting and clearing the stage, and allowing for a smooth transition from one scene to the next. The stage hands will find it much easier to do their job efficiently if you prepare a list of props for each class' performance.

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, the lighting and sound directors, stage hands, and curtain puller(s) can practice their cues. This also provides an opportunity for students to practice using the microphones.

The choir is best placed below stage level or to the right of the stage, so that while they are singing, the stage can be set up for the next performance. If the main characters and the choir are below stage level, flood lights will be required for each of them when they perform. The lighting director will need to turn these lights on and off at the appropriate times. For approximately \$75 - \$100, a set of four lights can be rented from a theatrical company. Each light can be controlled from a switch box. Position one light on the choir, one on the main characters below stage, and two on the main stage. The house lights will be dimmed throughout the performance unless you are using component #8, the Silver Collection.

Stage decoration is not necessary for the concert, but if you wish to, it should be as neutral as possible considering the variety of settings for the scenes. We used a starry night sky for a background and found that it enhanced the lighting and visibility of the performers, and reduced the amount of shadows.

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 - 2 on stage and 1 or 2 for the main characters. Any music required for the class performances is best handled by the sound director and run through the P.A. system. Rehearsing for the concert is much more efficient if the whole school practices at a designated time. This allows assisting teachers, aides, and parents to pull the main characters and the choir from class for their practice.

## COMPONENTS

## SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL

#1	Sweden - Christmas in Sweden.....	K - 1
#2	Ukraine - Christmas Eve in the Ukraine.....	4 - 6
#3	Denmark - Christmas in Denmark.....	2 - 3
#4	Germany - Dance of the Toys.....	1 - 3
#5	Hawaii - Blue Hawaii.....	4 - 8
#6	Mexico - Christmas in Mexico.....	4 - 6
#7	England - Your Home is Your Castle.....	6 - 8
#8	Silver Collection.....	5 - 8
#9	Ireland - Ireland is in "Jeopardy".....	3 - 5
#10	Scotland - Santy Where's Your Troosers.....	2 - 4
#11	The Nativity.....	K - 1

## PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Director	Lighting Director
Stage Hands	Sound Director
Curtain Puller(s)	Choir Director

## THE MAIN CAST

The main characters in the program are: Gretchen (a German lady), Lena (a Ukrainian lady), Ole (a Swedish man), Torbin (a Danish man), Juanita (a Mexican lady), Colleen (an Irish lady), Angus (a Scottish man), Loni (a Hawaiian man), and Elizabeth (an English lady). These parts are best played by older students who are able to memorize the lines and project their voices well. Accents for the various nationalities may be used if you wish. The characters are dressed in appropriate "vacation" attire - colourful shirts or dresses, sunglasses, sandals, beach hats, etc. Props for the main characters include two or three palm trees (We made these from large cardboard fabric tubes slipped over our highjump standards with green paper palm leaves attached to the top.), gym mats covered with brown blankets to represent a desert island, surrounded by blue blankets to represent the ocean. Sound effects include the sound of the surf on the beach and the sound of helicopter. These sounds can be obtained from most electronic keyboards.

(Spotlight on the castaways. Sound of surf on the beach.)

Angus (Scottish):	"Oh dear, it's two days since our cruise ship went down in that terrible storm. I wonder what happened to everyone?"
Elizabeth (English):	"I only hope that the others are okay...wherever they are."
Colleen (Irish):	"Faith and begora, t'was the luck of the Irish that our lifeboat washed up on this island."
Gretchen (German):	"Neon. This wasn't all luck. We had Senor Loni with us."
Juanita (Mexican):	"Si! Senor Loni, he sure knows how to get around on the water."
Loni (Hawaiian):	"Well in Hawaii, we are as at home on the water as we are on the land. Our ancestors were the Polynesians. They sailed across the Pacific Ocean in giant canoes to settle in Hawaii."
Lena (Ukrainian):	"I'd give my best babooshka to see one of those canoes right now...or any kind of boat for that matter."
Torbin (Dane):	"Yaw! It would be nice to be rescued so that we could all be home in time for Christmas."

## COMPONENT 3 - CHRISTMAS IN DENMARK

### CHARACTERS:

Mom	Dad
Grandfather	Grandmother
Child #1	Child #2
Child #3	Child #4
Cow #1	Cow #2
Sheep #1	Sheep #2
Bird #1	Bird #2
Pig #1	Pig #2
Horse	

### PROPS AND COSTUMES:

**Home Scene:** Danish flag (on the wall of the home); sign - Sorenson's Home Sweet Home; 4 chairs; 4 wheat sheaves; 1 large book; red and white clothing for the people (Danish colours); beard and cane for Grandfather; glasses for Grandmother; apron for Mom.

**Stable/Barn Scene:** Painted cardboard front for stable/barn; 2 poles on stands; animal costumes.

### STAGE SET:

Two scenes are set on the stage. The home scene is set on the left side of the stage and the stable/barn scene is on the right side. As the curtain opens, the whole stage is lit. In the home scene, Grandma and Grandpa are seated on chairs helping the children who are seated in front of them on the floor, working at tying wheat sheaves. In the stable/barn scene, Mom and Dad are feeding the animals. The birds are slightly apart from the barn, beside the poles.

(Spotlight on the castaways)

**Torbin (Dane):** "Yaw! In Denmark it is very important to make a Christmas tree for the birds."

**Gretchen (German):** "Did you know that the first decorated Christmas tree originated in Germany?"

**Loni (Hawaiian):** "Well, I know that in almost every country people have a Christmas tree, but I never knew where the tradition started."

**Gretchen (German):** "Yaw! I remember when I was young, my grandmother would take English walnuts and split them in half. She would write a wish on a tiny slip of paper, place it inside the nut and glue the halves back together. She would print your name on the nut and hand it on the Christmas tree."

**Elizabeth (English):** "Oh! How exciting it must have been to find your walnut on the tree and see what it said inside."

**Gretchen (German):** "Yaw! One year mine said, 'To Gretchen. May your new baby doll behave as well as you have.'"

**Colleen (Irish):** "What other customs originated in Germany?"

**Gretchen (German):** "Gingerbread is also a German custom...gingerbread cookies, gingerbread houses...(Wistfully) Oh how the kinder love the tree and the gingerbread..."

(SPOTLIGHT ON STAGE. CURTAIN OPENS.)

## COMPONENT 4 - DANCE OF THE TOYS - CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY

### CHARACTERS:

Children	Toy Soldiers
Dolls	Robots (Transformers)
Gingerbread Cookies	

### COSTUMES AND PROPS:

Gingerbread house (which can be made from a clothes dryer box); Christmas tree; pillows. Music needed: Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker". The following costumes are appropriate for the characters to wear:

1. Children - pyjamas; gingerbread decorations to hang on the tree.
2. Toy Soldiers - red or blue pants and jackets; white gloves; black rubber boots; toy rifles; red cheeks.
3. Dolls - fancy dresses; exaggerated eye lashes; red dots on cheeks. Raggedy Ann, Barbie, or Ballerina costumes would be appropriate.
4. Robots (Transformers) - spray paint cardboard boxes gold or silver and cut out holes for their arms and head to go through. Paint their faces the same colour.
5. Gingerbread Cookies - costumes can be made using a commercial pattern for a dog costume. Trim the brown fabric with white ric-rac. Paint red spots on their cheeks.

### STAGE SET:

The gingerbread house is placed in front of the center back stage door. The back of the gingerbread house is open to allow students to come on stage through the door in the front of the house. The Christmas tree is at the back left of the stage and the pillows, to signify beds, are at the far right side of the stage.

## COMPONENT 7 - YOUR HOME IS YOUR CASTLE

### CHARACTERS:

Phil Winsor (married to Betty)	Aunt Maggie (Betty's sister)
Betty Winsor (wife and mother)	Willy & Harry (sons of Charlie)
Grandmum Lizzie (Betty's mother)	Tim (Annie's latest husband)
Charlie (oldest son)	Beatrice And Eugenie (Andy's children)
Andy (next son)	Annie (oldest daughter)
Eddie (next son, unmarried)	

### THE SCENE (COSTUMES, PROPS, AND STAGE SET):

Set in the living room of the Winsor family. At stage left there is a card table covered with a cloth, with a chair behind for Grandmum. There is a teapot and an assortment of cups on the table. There are two more chairs to the left of this table. At center stage is a chesterfield (4 chairs covered with a quilt) and a coffee table. At stage right there is a T.V. with remote. A coat rack stands in the back of stage left and a decorated Christmas tree stands toward the center behind the chesterfield.

The scene opens with Grandmum, in her hat, seated at the table sipping tea. Phil is seated on the chesterfield watching T.V. with remote in hand. Betty is fussing nervously about the room. They are all excitedly awaiting the arrival of the rest of the family for Christmas celebrations together.

(Choir sings the following rendition of "Donald Where's Your Troosers", written by Stuart/Grant and found on the recording, "The Irish Rovers Greatest Hits".)

Choir:

### SANTY WEAR YOUR TROOSERS

Oh he just came back from the old North Pole  
He's not very big but he's a jolly old soul  
He canna wear his kilt on Christmas night  
Santy, my goodness, what a sight!

### CHORUS:

Let the wind blow high, let the wind blow low  
Through the skies in his kilt he'll go  
All the reindeer say hello  
Santy wear your troosers.

He told the elves it was cold up there  
He might even freeze his underwear  
Scotty gave him good advice  
Wear your troosers, you'll feel nice.

