

BILLY THE SILICON KID

A Musical

by

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Music by

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SCHOOLPLAY PRODUCTIONS LTD

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

BILLY THE SILICON KID

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CAST

The Kydd Family

Billy (our hero)
Mum
Dad
Grandad

The Friends

Gyp Johnson
Jan Palmer
Dodo Dixon

At The Surgery

Dr I M Plant
Receptionist

In The Secret Lab

Mastermind - Dr Strange
Dolly Byrd
Microbe
NIMF - voice only, but what a voice!

THE CHORUS, including:

History Teacher
Science Teacher
Geography Teacher

Friends

Boy in crowd
Girl in crowd
Suzie
Helen
Lynn

Doctor's assistants
Aliens
Reporters
Billy's schoolmates

THE CHARACTERS

Billy: A natural leader. Some trouble with the police, but not a bad sort - he just doesn't know when to stop. Always carries a joke too far. Mischievous, but not malicious, almost charismatic with peers - the popular outlaw.

(following implant) Flat - almost 2-dimensional. Emotionally and socially sterile, driven by an insatiable appetite for knowledge.

(after burnout) As the original Billy, but now less irresponsible.

Dad: Trade Unionist. Always been head of the household (in his opinion!) and resents Billy's independence. His main desire is that Billy be what he never was, and is frustrated at every attempt. Outwardly in control, but inwardly lacks confidence in his decision.

Mum: A worrier - if everything is going smoothly she worries what is going to happen to spoil it. She never thinks of or for herself and is very supportive of Dad, but she worries about his decisions! Mannerisms - compulsive tidier - searches for threads, fluff, etc, always rearranging knick-knacks, never removes pinnie.

Grandad: *(could be Grandma if necessary, allowing for slight changes to dialogue and mannerisms)* Has a knack of getting his own way whilst letting the others think it's their way. Totally unflappable - a canny old sage.

Dodo Dixon: Seemingly slow and naive. Doesn't say much but thinks deeply. Outwardly gormless, always gazing around vacantly, often towards audience!

Gyp Johnson: A real Dead-End Kid and born loser. Billy's pal, totally loyal to his friends but needs their influence to keep him away from a life of crime.

Jan Palmer: The steadying factor of the trio. A girl next door type, quite mature and attracted to the carefree rebel in Billy.

Dolly: The dizzy, bored blonde. Used to men fawning over her.

Mastermind: Stereotypical evil scientist. Thinks he's out to put the world to rights in the only way possible - his way.

Dr I M Plant: Appears disgustingly polite and ultra nice, but is in reality greedy and self-opinionated, stopping at nothing in his bid for the Nobel prize (or any other type of acclaim if that's not possible).

Microbe: A computer genius who serves his master so he can play with his toys. Single minded and basically innocent and naive.

BILLY THE SILICON KID

Written by Bob Sangwell

Music by Geoff Osborne

ACT I

SCENE 1

(Enter GRANDPARENT from auditorium, taking rocking chair left, during overture. Followed by group of KIDS plus BILLY. BILLY settles right. Rest of CHORUS appear from stage on curtain up. Only front batten lights on stage to begin. Bring up centre and rear battens as opening number draws to a close. PARENTS are seated at table back right).

Grandad: *(nodding across stage)* That's Billy - our kid.

MUSIC 1 - MEET BILLY ... THE SILICON KID

Chorus: *Like the cowboy hero he is tough he is mean
But there are no cows that Billy has seen
For he lives in a town that is concrete and brick
And air so polluted it is heavy and thick....
He moves in a world that's all buses and trains
And cars and bikes and people and planes
And buildings so tall they're nobody's joy
'Cept Billy's Super century boy.*

.... Meet Billy, the Silicon Kid.

*When Billy was born, he was born a bad lot,
He vandalised his dummy and graffitied on his cot,
He assaulted all his teddies and he beat up all his toys
When told to stop, he shrugged and said, "I'm one o' the boys."
Oh, Billy was a bad 'n both at home and school
He insulted all the teachers and he broke up every rule.
He always walked with trouble in just everything he did,
That's Billy The Silicon Kid.*

.... Meet Billy, the Silicon Kid.

(NOTE - during the above, MOTHER brings GRANDAD a cup of tea. She also brings pills which GRANDAD disposes of under aspidistra).

(Towards end of number BILLY runs over and takes a scarf from a member of the CHORUS, ties it in knots and then proceeds to use it as a ball, throwing it to GYP, who does the same. The GIRL is by this time becoming upset and DAD notices what's going on. He shouts to BILLY to stop, but BILLY snubs PARENTS and runs off, after which they throw hands up in exasperation and sit back at table)

Grandad: Oh come on love. He's not as bad as you make him out. It's just a phase he's going through.

Dad: *(coming down right)* Just a phase? You've got to be kidding. The police are starting to invite him to their staff do's. And what makes it so bad is that we can't do a thing about it. You saw what he did to me just then. He's more than a handful - he's a head case!

Grandad: All kids go through it. I was just the same when I was his age.

Dad: That's where he gets it from then. It certainly wasn't my side of the family.

Grandad: Oh leave him be. He'll grow out of it. He's all right.

Dad: All right? *(pause)* All right? Have you seen his report? You look at this. *(DAD thrusts report at GRANDAD. GRANDAD makes a show of not being able to get out of his chair so DAD takes it over to him)*

Grandad: What's the problem?

Dad: *(snatching it back and reading from it)* Maths - 16%. "Makes no effort even to attend! Geography - Has made progress. Can now find his own way to my room without a compass! History - Doesn't even know his date of birth. English - He could write his own Dictionary of Slang - if he bothered to write anything." It goes on! I'm sometimes amazed he can wipe his own

Mum: Bert!

Dad: nose! *(pause)* I still say there's something wrong up top. *(sits back down in disgust. Reads paper. There is an uneasy pause).*

Mum: Have you taken your pills Dad?

Grandad: Yes. They've gone down a treat.

Dad: That's it. Change the subject. Something ought to be done about kids like him. *(continues reading).*

Mum: *(to GRANDAD).* He's right you know, Dad. Our Billy's caused a lot of trouble round here. The police are always knocking at the door. He drives me to whatsit, he really does.

Grandad: Don't you worry love. Things will turn out for the best. They always do.

Mum: I hope you're right Dad. It's getting to be a real worry. I'm afraid to open

the door in case Sid's round again.

Grandad: Sid?

Dad: It's CID, mother. It's not his name.

Mother: Whatever it is I don't like them coming here.

Dad: (*looking up from paper*) Here, what about this? There's some bloke who's been working on animals, sticking them microchip things in their heads to calm them down. It says here "... a revolutionary idea in microsurgery. The implants remove the antisocial tendencies of anger, greed etc. by suppressing the emotions. 100% success with his research on animals has encouraged him to ask the Home Secretary for permission to continue his work using criminals." It's too late for THEM if you ask me.

Mum: I don't think I like the sound of that. I mean - it's not natural, is it, messing with people's heads?

Dad: He should try it on our Billy. Lets's face it. He's tried it on animals and he wants to work with criminals. He gets the best of BOTH worlds with that boy!

Mum: Ooh, don't say things like that Bert. It gives me the willies!

Dad: (*thinking out loud*) It's a thought though. It might help. I mean it couldn't do any harm.

Grandad: I don't believe what I'm hearing. You're getting serious about this, aren't you? Your own flesh and blood being used for research - a guinea pig!

Mum: Do you think he MIGHT be able to help? (*pause, then thinking aloud*). Mind you, it wouldn't be on the National Health would it? We couldn't afford it anyway.

Dad: National Health? What are you talking about, woman? He should be paying us.

Mum: Well, I don't know

Dad: Well I think we should make some enquiries. What do you say Grandad?

Grandad: (*after a lot of rocking and careful thought*) What's it matter what I say? It sounds as if your mind's already made up. I think you're overlooking something, though. Assuming you do check up, how do you get Billy to agree?

Dad: We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. I think we ought to phone this doctor bloke first. (*Noise as KIDS return with a ball from back of hall: crash of glass, then enter BILLY expecting an explosion from DAD*)

Billy: Wotcha! (*ducks ready for trouble*).

Dad: (*smiling*) Hello Billy lad.

Grandad: Come on in son. Have a cup of tea.

(*Centre and rear battens down. CHORUS sing REPRISE*)

*Like the cowboy hero Billy rides the range
But the day is coming for a time of change
The stage is set, we have turned the page
He will join the revolution, the computer age
But what are the consequences of this act?
In a totally new process the decks are stacked.
His parents will try anything - a final bid
To change Billy into a silicon kid.*

Billy: *(looks up)* Silly con? What's a silly con? *(DAD picks up phone and begins to dial. GRANDAD gets up, picks up ball and exits, smiling. MUM begins to clear table. Black out and tabs).*

SCENE 2

(Action takes place in front of tabs. Enter BILLY, JAN, GYP and DODO)

Gyp: Jeez, Billy, it ain't like your old man to stay so calm.... I mean he usually does his crust over something like that. I wonder what's got to him. *(BILLY stays pensive).* Here, he's not found a job or anything has he?

Billy: Nah!

Gyp: I reckon he's up to something, you know. See the look on his face? and your old lady? What are they up to, Billy? Do you think they're winding us up, like? *(Pause).*

Dodo: *(slow laugh)* found a job Heh, heh. *(grins broadly).*

Billy: *(looking down at DODO)* What's that?

Jan: That's Dodo.

Billy: I thought Dodo's were.... er, distinct.

Jan: Extinct?

Billy: Yeah. *(All three peer down at DODO).*

Gyp/Jan: Well?

Billy: *(losing interest).* Yeah, I suppose that's about right. *(DODO'S smile fades).*

Jan: He's all right - just a bit slow, that's all.

Billy: Where d'you find it?

Gyp: He sort of found us really. One minute nothing, then all of a sudden - Dodo. We've tried to find his owners but nobody's claimed him.

Billy: I'm not surprised!

Gyp: He just follows us round - he's no trouble. I'm sorta getting to like him! Anyway, what DO you reckon your Dad's up to then?

Billy: I dunno.... Don't give a monkey's anyway.

Gyp: *(taking out a copy of The Sun)* Well I'd keep an eye on him if I were you. I mean.... he's at a funny age! *(reading)*.

Jan: I like your grandad.... he's all right.

Billy: *(looking over boy's shoulder)*. Yeah, he can be a laugh.

Jan: He once said you're a bit like HE used to be. You know, skipping off school and all that.

Billy: Maybe so, but that lucky old beggar left school at fourteen.

Jan: I expect he got a job as well.

Billy: He did - straight off.... Well, sort of.... he started as a whatsit. You know, learning a job like What's it called?

Jan: I know what you mean.

Billy: He went straight into a factory. *(Pause)*.

Dodo: Apprentice.

Billy/Jan: *(staring for a second)*. Yeah.

Gyp: *(still reading)* Here, Bill. What's the name of that bird you fancy? You know, that actress with the

Billy: Dolly. *(pauses in a fantasy)* Dolly Byrd. *(sighs)*

Gyp: Thought it was her. It says here she's living near us, with some computer genius.

Billy: Is there a picture?

Gyp: Yeah, look. *(both gloat)*.

Jan: I don't know what SHE'S got that I haven't. *(GYP and BILLY look from JAN to paper and back again)*.

Jan: *(disgusted)* Huh!

Billy: I'd love to meet her. I don't suppose it's got her address, has it?

Gyp: Nah!

Jan: You coming to school tomorrow, Billy?

Billy: Nah!

Jan: I'm on report so I'd better go in.

Gyp: How come YOU ain't on report, Billy? You're always skiving.

Billy: I'm never there to PUT on report!

Gyp: I'm off home now anyway. My Dad'll belt me if I'm late again!

Billy: Do you want me to come with you, just in case? There's safety in numbers.

Dodo: Never there, heh, heh.

Billy: D'you want me to lean on him a bit? I will if you want.

Gyp: Nah, you'd better not. He'd knock me about twice as hard if you did. And the boys in blue are hardly going to come running if YOU call, are they?

Billy: I suppose you've got a point. *(pause)* Let me know if you change your mind.

Gyp: OK Bill. Thanks mate.

Jan: I'd better be getting home, too.

MUSIC 2 - GOING HOME

(CHORUS, BILLY, GYP and JAN. The song is sung conversationally, the soloist for each verse telling the others).

Chorus (All): *I'm going home, going home
Going where my folks just love me so
Going home, going home
I have to go on home 'cos there's nowhere else to go.*

Gyp: *Do you want to go to pictures, or do you want to go to town
But nowhere is worth going to, it really gets you down
You end up walking through the streets or hanging round in bars
This town's completely boring, we'd be better off on Mars.*

Chorus (All): *I'm going home... ..nowhere else to go.*

Billy: *Did you want to get in trouble or have brushes with the law
Or did you want to have a quiet time to ask what life is for
You find you're hating everything as far as you can tell
You even find that in the end you hate yourself as well.*

Chorus (All): *I'm going home... ..nowhere else to go.*

Jan: *The trouble is in getting home its not much better there
You'll all end up by having rows, (for which you have a flair)
You seem to find you're throwing things and shouting rather loud
And all you want's to get back out and find a bigger crowd.*

Chorus (All): *I'm going home... ..nowhere else to go.*

Jan: Come on Dodo. (Exit)

Billy: Walkies! (ALL snigger - Dodo keeps grinning)

SCENE 3

(Doctor's Waiting Room. Hatstand, Table with Magazines, Old Typewriter. Telephone. Scene opens with RECEPTIONIST finishing a telephone conversation - efficient but bored).

Recep: No, I'm sorry but the doctor is not prepared to answer any more of your enquiries. *(Pause)*. You already know that we are looking for a guinea p... a... a volunteer to assist Dr. Plant with his work. *(BILLY'S family enter. FATHER forthright, MOTHER uncertain, GRANDAD nosy! Poking around in litter bin with stick etc.)*. No, no, as I've already I'm sorry. I'm afraid I must go, I have some important business to attend to. *(Pause)*. Goodbye. *(to FAMILY, singing out as a telephonist)* I'm afraid the doctor's busy.

Dad: I'll handle this. *(going over to desk)* I don't think you understand young lady. We've got an appointment to see Dr. Plant.

Recep: *(continuing disinterestedly and working at the typewriter)*. The Doctor is VERY busy. Thank you for calling.

Father: But we're here to see him on some very important, I could say very CONFIDENTIAL matter.

Recep: I'm afraid he's in conference. DO call again. Thank you.

Father: *(getting ruffled)* But we've got an appointment!

Recep: I don't think so. The doctor sees no-one, with or without an appointment. Have a nice day!

Father: But we telephoned. You must remember. *(reaching over Table)* It MUST be in here.

Recep: *(sighing resignedly)* Well, could you tell me the nature of your business with the doctor?

Father: Sorry, no. It's private. *(Bells ring, Typewriter disappears to be replaced by an Adding Machine, two WHITE-COATED ASSISTANTS appear and Hard Chairs removed and replaced by Soft, Comfortable ones at the mention of the magic word. DR. I.M. PLANT ENTERS hurriedly, beaming and shaking hands all round; kissing MOTHER'S hand etc.)*.

Doctor: PRIVATE! Well, why didn't you say so? Do sit down. Coffee anyone? *(during the following, the RECEPTIONIST repeatedly enters things on Adding Machine - at each question answered by the DOCTOR)* Now you must be the family with the er.... shall we say with the little problem?

Dad: Billy. And he's not a LITTLE problem!

Doctor: Do sit down *(offers limp hand. Tea arrives. MUM takes one sugar, bell rings. Takes a sip, grimaces, looks at Grandad, adds a couple more sugars, bell rings again. GRANDAD not willing to sit, keeps pottering around. DOCTOR disturbed by this and his normally smooth delivery becomes occasionally stilted)*. Now, we all know why you're here, and I see the

young man is not present at the moment, so I would like to explain things a little more fully - just so you have the complete picture. *(takes a moment to compose himself, looks up distractedly, and continues)*. After years of research with small vertebrates, suppressing the anti-social tendencies acquired either through interbreeding or indeed by any other means, I have developed an electronic implant capable of the same results in humans. This implant, when in position by the cortex of the brain, analyses the cerebral impulses, neutralizing any that may lead to loss of composure and thus ensuring a stasis of sorts....

Dad: Hold on lad! You're going too fast. Can you put it in simple language so's the wife can understand?

Recep: Was that a consultation question, Doctor?

Doctor: Yes. *(Bell rings)* Well, in simple terms what happens is that a small microchip is inserted at the base of the patient's brain which stops him from over-reacting to certain things. The microcircuit basically keeps him calm.

Dad: So what you're saying is that you'll put a computer in his head, am I right?

Recep: Question?

Doctor: Yes. *(bell rings)*.

Dad: and this'll calm him down?

Doctor: Yes. *(bell rings)*.

Dad: I see.

Recep: Was that....?

Doctor: No.

Recep: *(disappointed)* Oh. *(pauses, then turns to MOTHER)* More tea?

Mum: Ooh, yes please. *(bell goes wild as RECEPTIONIST rings up more tea, sugar etc. GRANDAD has by this time caught on to relevance of bell and is slowly stalking his prey - the RECEPTIONIST and her Adding Machine)*.

Doctor: Are there any more questions?

Grandad: *(slamming his stick down on RECEPTIONIST'S table)* NO!

Doctor: *(somewhat shaken)* in that case we only need your signatures on these consent forms and we have a deal.

MUSIC 3 - JUST SAY THE WORD

(Gospel rock number with ASSISTANTS dancing to music in their white coats).

Doctor: *Just say the word, Just say the word,
Refusal would be totally absurd,
I'll give him an injection for society's protection
My work one day is sure to save the world
(Glory hallelujah!)*

*Just say the word, and I'll proceed
Just let me take the boy and you'll be freed
His anti-social ways will vanish in a haze
And this will all take place when you've agreed.*

*Just say the word, I'm sure you know
That my technique's the only way to go.
The tests are all complete, so do as I entreat
And give your lad a chance to bloom and grow.
(Glory hallelujah!)
Just say the word, Just say he's mine,
Within a day or two he'll be just fine,
A law abiding lad, not able to be bad
Just say the word, and this is where you sign.*

(As song ends the ASSISTANTS leave. Only the RECEPTIONIST remains to take up her position behind the desk once more).

Doctor: Now, Mr. Kydd, when would you like Billy to come in for the treatment?

Dad: Ah, well, you see, it's not quite as simple as that.

Doctor: He hasn't been consulted then? *(FAMILY shake heads and look down).*

Well, this was to be expected, I suppose. If I might make an analogy, you don't find too many master criminals walking up to the doors of Dartmoor prison and asking to be let in. What we need is some enticement to get him here. Once he's in my surgery - no problem.

Grandad: There's only one thing that'll make him come and that's too much even for you to organize. *(to RECEPTIONIST) OR YOU!*

Mum: Oh, you mean Dolly Whatsit.

Doctor: *(moving closer)* I think I feel a plan coming on! *(RECEPTIONIST goes haywire with Adding Machine)* Here's what we'll do.... *(fade out).*

SCENE 4

(BILLY and FRIENDS enter as tabs close. The BOYS are looking at a paper).

Gyp: Look at that!

Billy: Fabulous! - heaven!

Jan: What are you looking at? *(glances over shoulders)* I might have known! I still don't see what she's got that I haven't.

Billy: Nothing really. *(Pause).* It's just that she's got more of it and it's better organized! *(dirty laughs from BOYS).*

Jan: I really don't understand what the attraction is.

Dodo: better organized Heh, heh! (*rest of BILLY'S PALS enter from back of hall*).

Boy in crowd: Hey, Billy your Dad's looking for you. He's been all over!

Billy: What have I done wrong now? How did he seem - about to burst a blood vessel or just his normal "Wait till I get my hands on him?"

Girl in crowd: Neither, really. He just seemed excited about something. And he was smiling!

Billy: He must have cracked. (*Pause*). I don't like it

Gyp: P'raps h's got eight draws up on Littlewoods.

Billy: Yeah, that must be it. And he's bought me a new Suzuki or some Hondapants! Ha ha! Well I'll have to go and see what it's about I suppose. Where'd you last see him?

Boy in crowd: Down near the allotments.

Billy: (*leaving*) OK, ta. I'll catch up with you later, but I can't miss a look at Dad smiling! Last time this happened was when that copper broke his leg! See you!

Dodo: Heh, heh, near the allotments. (*long pause*). What's funny about that? (*BILLY exits. Rest of GANG disperse before tabs open to reveal Surgery*).

SCENE 5

Billy: Are you sure she's going to be here? If you're winding me up....

Dad: (*sickly sweet*) Course lad. It was in the paper. Dolly Bird's having her nose done here and they said she was going to be signing autographs before she's admitted.

Billy: But why tell ME? You've never done anything like this for me before.

Dad: Two reasons lad. One - I like her myself and I'd have felt stupid coming here on my own, and two - I think it's time we sorted our problems out. We've been at each other's throats for far too long and I'm determined to put things right, one way or another, whether you like it or not.

Billy: Well this is a turn up! (*Pause*). How come there's nobody else here? (*DOCTOR enters quietly, holding a large Hypodermic*).

Dad: I wanted us to get a good view. She's not due here for another hour or so.

Billy: (*looking around*). Looks an expensive place to come. (*DAD looks up to the skies*) I wonder what she'll be wearing. (*DOCTOR jabs BILLY in backside with needle*). Ouch! What the b.... (*BILLY slumps conveniently over the Tea-trolley/Surgical Table. All movements of Trolley are assisted by small steps from BILLY. - BILLY is wheeled behind the screens by an ASSISTANT*).

Doctor: Now, my time has come. Action everybody! (*During SONG there is frantic activity behind screens*).

MUSIC 4 - USER FRIENDLY

Doctor: *Hear me, I'm your man,
I'm the man to try to make you understand
My aim
I hope you'll agree
To my terms and also my philosophy
To bring me fame
I only want to give mankind
The fruits of my scientific mind
There for all to see
Conscience given via electricity
From me!*

Chorus: *We'll make him user friendly - a man among men
We'll make him user friendly - he won't offend
You'll find that he's caring, and loving and sharing
There'll be - for all to see - real quality.*

Doctor: *I must emphasise
That the child will pretty quickly realise
My dream
He will take a stand
In the future of our land and he will reign supreme
Taking on the human race
To make the world a better place
So we can be free
To enjoy our liberty
And all this by my grace.*

Chorus: *We'll make him user friendly - a man among men
We'll make him user friendly - he won't offend
You'll find that he's caring, and loving and sharing
There'll be - for all to see - real quality.*

Doctor: *I must emphasise*
(together with *That the child will pretty quickly realise*
Chorus) *My dream*
He will take a stand
In the future of our land and he will reign supreme
Taking on the human race
To make the world a better place
So we - can be free - in liberty.

Chorus: *We'll make him user friendly a man among men*
(simultaneously *We'll make him user friendly - he won't offend*
with Dr.'s last *You'll find that he's caring, and loving and sharing*
verse) *There'll be - for all to see - real quality.*
(As the song ends we see BILLY, complete with anaesthetic grin, helped away by
STAFF. Curtains close as STAFF clear away Instruments etc.)

SCENE 6

(Action takes place front of Tabs. As Curtains close BILLY'S friends enter).

Jan: Seen anything of Billy?

Gyp: Not since he went to find his Dad. Perhaps he's stuck Billy's feet in cement and given him a swimming lesson!

Jan: Don't talk like that. His Dad's not that bad. (Pause). He wouldn't hurt him. (Pause). No, of course he wouldn't. (Pause). Mind you, we've not seen him for two days.

Dodo: Swimming lessons. Heh, heh. Good that. (Both look at DODO for a second, then continue).

Jan: I mean, I don't worry when I don't see him in school - in fact I tend to worry when I do, because I know he's up to something, but we've not seen him at all!

Gyp: If he's not been hit by the mob he must be ill - or planning something big. Have you been round his house?

Jan: Not likely. I'm not prepared to face his Dad on my own. He'd bore the pants off me trying to explain the error of my ways, and convert me to his religion. You know - the good, wholesome family life, with an armchair, two cans of beer and The Green 'Un as holy artifacts for spiritual promotion!

Gyp: You what?

Jan: Forget it!

Gyp: Right.

Dodo: That's dear profound that is. She was comparing Billy's Dad to a spiritual

leader. *(Pause)*. His way of life being his definition of the results of a good christian upbringing. *(Pause)*. Sort of. *(The other two stare in abject amazement)*.

Gyp: *(after a very long pause)*. Did you just hear what come from his mouth?

Jan: Yeah!

Gyp: *(to DODO)* I didn't know you were clever. *(Pause: then indignantly)* Have you been taking us for a ride?

Dodo: Hmm?

Gyp: *(angry now)* I said "Have you been winding us up all along?"

Dodo: No.

Jan: Look Dodo, it's just that you've never spoken like that before.

Dodo: I've never had anything to say before. I might not talk much, but I think a lot.

Gyp: I don't think I can cope with this! *(SUZIE and LYNN, a couple of other friends enter)*.

Suzie: Hiya! Where's Billy then? Down the bookie's again?

Jan: We don't know. We've not seen him since his Dad was looking for him.

Lynn: You don't think he's done for him do you? I reckon his Dad's gone off his head and....

Gyp: We've already done that bit! It is getting to be a worry though.... for Jan I mean.... I'm not worried myself.... but I think we'll have to call round his house tonight after school. *(lightening up a bit)*. Perhaps he's got the plague or something his best friends won't tell him!

Jan: It's settled then. A few of us will meet up at about six and call round.

Gyp: Yeah. We'll take some garlic so his old man won't try to convert us. Wear a cross and carry a few wooden stakes for extra safety!

Jan: All right. Enough's enough. I just didn't want my ear bent, that's all.

Dodo: Wear a cross, heh, heh.

Gyp: Back to your old self then? I prefer you like this. *(more Friends passing by)*. All right Helen? Seen anything of Billy?

Helen: What do you mean? Course I have.

Jan: You have? Where?

Helen: If you lot went to school occasionally, you'd have seen him too!

Gyp: Billy's been in school? Doing what?

Helen: You haven't heard have you?

Jan: About what?

Helen: About Billy.

Jan: What about Billy?

Helen: You'll find out soon enough! *(walks away, followed by others)*.

SCENE 7

(Curtains open on Classroom. BILLY is sitting flicking through textbooks at his place)

Gyp/Jan: Billy! Where've you been? What's been happening? Are you all right? Did the police pick you up? *(BILLY continues to read as friends continue to ask questions).*

Billy: *(without emotion).* Silence. I must concentrate. *(to DODO)* Another book. *(DODO passes book. TEACHER enters).*

History: Quiet please. *(rest of CLASS sit down - not DODO)* *(snapping)* Sit down Dixon! *(DODO sits. During song GYP, JAN and DODO look on in awe. They don't join in chorus until second time. After each chorus the class turns to face each NEW TEACHER, entering from alternate sides of stage)*

MUSIC 5 - MARVELLOUS MICROCHIP MIND

History: *The Battle of Agincourt, who was it between?*

Billy: *The English and the French in 1415.*

History: *When did the Tudor period arrive?*

Billy: *With Henry the Seventh in 1485.*

History: *When was the Hanoverian period done?*

Billy: *When Victoria died in 1901.*

History: *When was the Battle of Marston Moor?*

Billy: *In 1644 in the Civil War.*

(Science teacher enters as History leaves)

Chorus: *He's analytical, hypercritical -
Marvellous, mechanical, microchip mind
He's analytical, hypercritical -
Marvellous microchip mind.*

Science: *(spoken)* Sit down Dixon!

Science: *Relativity, by whom was it defined?*

Billy: *The Nobel prizewinner, Albert Einstein.*

Science: *For what did Marie Curie achieve her fame?*

Billy: *The discovery of Radium gave her acclaim.*

Science: *What is the basic building block of life?*

Billy: *DNA's the answer and with acids it's rife.*

Science: *What keeps our metabolic balance straight?*

Billy: *Hormonal regulation by the glands' secretion rate.*

(Geog. teacher enters as Science leaves)
Chorus: *He's analytical, hypercritical -
Marvellous, mechanical, microchip mind
He's analytical, hypercritical -
Marvellous microchip mind.*

Geog: *(spoken)* Sit down Dixon! Now then, you boy! Tell me what you know about the United States.

Billy: *One of the Super Powers of the world
On July the fourth the Stars and Stripes is unfurled
From 1776 its independence really dates,
The USA is now made up of fifty states.*

Geog: *(spoken)* ENOUGH!
(break & business)
*I simply cannot cope with this boy in the class
His coming to lessons is an absolute farce
Something must be done, I'm sorry - no, I'm resigned
Take him away or I'll lose my mind!*

Chorus: *He's analytical, hypercritical -
Marvellous, mechanical, microchip mind
He's analytical, hypercritical -
Marvellous microchip mind.*

*He's analytical, hypercritical -
Marvellous, mechanical microchip mind
He's analytical, hypercritical -
Marvellous microchip mind.*

(As chorus gets into full swing the TEACHERS come front of Tabs to meet BILLY'S family who have entered. They raise arms in exasperation as the FAMILY listen with concerned expressions. As Tabs close on Classroom scene the TEACHERS return Rear Stage and GYP, JAN and DODO come forward to confront FAMILY).

SCENE 8

(As the Scene begins, NEWSPAPER REPORTERS enter through auditorium and badger MOTHER for the story. GRANDAD stays apart from rest of FAMILY - he is obviously feeling very guilty about what's happened. At first he listens to the conversation but soon drifts into a world of his own, accompanied by his feelings, and stands)

Gyp: *(to DAD)* What the hell have you done? That's your kid that's sitting in there, ignoring everybody and everything as if we didn't exist. We're his mates and WE can't get through! It's like sharing a room with a a..... a robot! I don't get it. How can he change so much in a couple of days?

Dad: *(totally shattered by the experience. Almost to himself).* I.... I know. It's been just the same at home. First I thought it was just the effects of the anaesthetic. I thought he'd come out of it after a good night's sleep - but he didn't. He just started going through book after book - slowly at first - but now he flicks through the pages in no time at all. He doesn't want to do anything, go anywhere, it's all we can do to get him to eat!

Gyp: *(becoming almost hysterical).* So this is how you help to sort him out, is it? You think having a computer's going to be better than having to watch your son grow, just because he's not turning out like you expected? Where's the on/off switch then? Or does he switch off automatically if nobody uses him for ten minutes?

Jan: *(sharply)* Gyp! *(then more softly).* That's enough. He's suffering enough already. He's confused by everything that's happening. Leave him be.

Dad: No sweetheart, he's right. I deserve everything he's said, and more. It was my idea and I'm the one who carried it through. I thought I was helping him - it was all for the best.

Jan: You mustn't blame yourself.

Gyp: I'm sorry Mr. Kydd, I was out of order there. P'raps it's our fault an' all. If he hadn't spent so much time with us he might have turned out different.
(MOTHER breaks away from throng of REPORTERS)

Mother: No! Look, love. We know Billy was the one who always set things up - carried everything too far. We're the ones to blame - more than Billy or yourselves ever were. *(at this point the REPORTERS converge on the GROUP once more, leaving GRANDAD all alone at side of stage. During song, SOLOISTS manage to move away from pack for their verse, but REPORTERS are always attentive, scribbling on notepads or holding out mikes).*

MUSIC 6 - WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

Grandad: *What's happening now?
Why have these people all gathered round?
My grandson has changed
Why doesn't he make a sound?
I don't know what to do
To stop him feeling blue, oh what's the key
To set him free?*

We've got to find a way to set our Billy free.

Mum: *What's happening now?
Our boy's the front page news - should I speak?
Where did we go wrong?
Billy's become a freak.
Believe me this wasn't planned
But now it's out of hand and I can tell
His life is hell.*

We've got to find a way to make our Billy well.

Principals: *What's happening now?
Billy's become a stranger to me
What's happening now?
This wasn't meant to be
I just can't understand
Where his love of life has gone
And I - I need to see.*

We've got to find a way to set our Billy free.

(As song ends and motif continues, the PRINCIPALS exit, followed by REPORTERS. Spot highlights MASTERMIND standing, reading a newspaper with the headline "HUMAN COMPUTER". He looks up from paper and says with a sinister smile....)

Master: "This could be very useful."
(BLACKOUT. MASTERMIND leaves)

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

MUSIC 7 - OPENING: ACT II

(Curtains open on Mastermind's Lair, a super-scientific setting with computer screens and lots of electronic gadgetry. Suggest pulse-lighting of some kind if possible to add to overall effect of Set. If Auditorium permits, a console could be provided centrally below the stage, for Microbe to operate his Space Invader Machines. As Curtains open we see MICROBE playing on one of the Machines and DOLLY sitting on another, filing her nails. MASTERMIND enters, places paper on DOLLY'S knee, which she in turn puts on one side, distractedly)

MUSIC 8 - MASTERMIND'S SONG

Master: *I'm the man the whole world will remember
A member of the criminal sect
I will mastermind a plan so clever
That none could ever my work detect.*

Dolly/Microbe: *(He's brilliant!)*

Master: *In pride of place I have a new computer
To suit a mastermind
I've spent many years in complex scheming
And dreaming when so inclined.*

*Microbe gives me cause for consternation
His station is none too high
Totally committed to arcade games
Completely insane, but very shy.*

Dolly: *(He's harmless!)*

Master: *But I need to keep him in my power
Each hour he is the one
Programming my complex for the pay off
Can't stay off until it's done.*

*Dolly is my token brainless beauty
A cutie, steals all men's hearts
Every super-villain needs a Venus
And just between us, she's none too smart.*

Microbe: *(Quite brainless)
I need her because she can entice men
They fall when she wants them to
In her power they will do my bidding
No kidding, it's true.*

*Men will rue the day I started running
This cunning little firm
I am going to hustle so much money
It will be funny how banks will squirm.*

Dolly/Microbe: *(They'll hate him)
I am at the top of my profession
This mission I'll undertake
It will stun the world into a stupor
I'm super - make no mistake.... I'M GREAT!*

Master: Well, my dear. Have you read it?

Dolly: Huh?

Master: *(speaking slowly and precisely, as though to a small child).* The newspaper - have you read it?

Dolly: Why? Do YOU want to read it?

Master: *(Losing his cool).* No, I want YOU to read it! There's something of the utmost importance in there!

Dolly: Yeah? Let me see. *(she begins flicking through pages)* Wow! You're right Honey. A new boutique opening in town! When can we go?

Master: *(snatching newspaper from her).* No. Here let me read it. "HUMAN COMPUTER GOES TO SCHOOL - A teenager has been banned from his school because teachers can't keep up! The boy, who recently had a special computerised implant connected to his brain, has such an appetite for knowledge that his teachers cannot cope with the disruption created in the classroom." It goes on, but you've got the gist, I think. *(he looks up and notices that no-one is listening. Stamping his foot...)* I'M SPEAKING!. *(DOLLY and MICROBE look up).* Thank you. *(to DOLLY)* I hope you're not forgetting who owns these apartments. *(to MICROBE)* - or who owns this equipment! *(DOLLY and MICROBE shake their heads. Pause).* Well? I'm still waiting....

Dolly/Microbe: Sorry, boss.

Master: Thank you. Now, this operation was carried out by Dr. Plant (*getting angry*). Plant - I HATE that man. We were at university together. (*DOLLY and MICROBE lose interest again, as MASTERMIND drifts into his own reminiscences. With some bitterness*) He always did better than me. If I got an A he'd get an A+! Everybody liked him. I didn't - I despised the man. He stopped me doing what I wanted and I vowed to get even with him. He didn't deserve the credit. Doctor? He's a doctor all right, but not of medicine - he read Philosophy! (*calmer now*). But I'm going to get my revenge. He won't be able to hold his head up when I'm done with his little creation! They'll praise HIM like they praised Baron Frankenstein! (*Pause*). *MICROBE!* (*MICROBE jumps. Sickly sweet*).... Microbe? Why are you here?

Microbe: (*quietly*) To write programs.

Master: Pardon?

Microbe: To write a program for you.

Master: And have you written one?

Microbe: Yes.

Master: And did it work?

Microbe: (*quietly*) No.

Master: Sorry?

Microbe: No.

Master: And why didn't it work?

Microbe: (*quietly*) Too complex.

Master: Again.

Dolly: Too complex! (*Pause*). Oh really. Do we have to go through this ritual every day? Can't you leave him alone? (*MASTER gives her a withering look and she is hurt*)

Master: (*to himself*) I'm not a hard master. All I want is one little program. That's not too much to ask, surely. With that my ambitions could be realised. All the years of planning, the struggle, the work, would come to fruition. (*turning towards MICROBE with a sincere, calm expression*). What have I asked of you? Hm?

Microbe: You wanted a program that would crack the world's banking security codes in a very short space of time.

Master: (*still serene*) That's right. And then the major deposits could be transferred to my own account. You realise what that would mean don't you? What that would give me?

Microbe: Power.

Master: (*more forceful now*). ABSOLUTE power!

Dolly: But you've GOT power. You've got money.

Master: I haven't got it all. I have to share it - and I don't share anything!

Microbe: But you're still stealing other people's money.

Master: "Steal" is rather a strong word. I prefer to think of it as being rechanneled so it can be put to a better use. I only want what's best for mankind after all - I'M one of the GOOD guys, don't forget!

Microbe: *(aside)*.... as in Good Grief!

Master: I'll ignore that remark, Microbe. *(Pause - suddenly changing the subject)*. Time to wake my baby, I think.

Microbe: *(aside)*. His baby - huh. She's mine.

Master: *(going over to console and cuddling it)*. Here she is! My own little girl.

Microbe: But I delivered her! *(MICROBE goes to Main Console and switches on)*.

Master: *(to Screen)* Good morning NIMF. *(NIMF has a sweet, calm, almost seductive female voice)*.

NIMF: Good morning, Daddy. *(MICROBE is annoyed by this display. DOLLY is obviously jealous of the affection MASTER shows towards NIMF and begins filing her nails vigorously)*.

Master: Are you going to help me today, my sweet?

NIMF: I'll do all I can.

Master: I'd really like the security program solved today.

NIMF: You know I want to help you, but I think it would be pointless. The problem cannot be resolved, I'm afraid.

Master: But what is the problem?

NIMF: No computer can be made that will break the codes before they are changed.

Master: But why not?

Microbe: You would need something that can work on a number of ideas at any time. A computer can't be selective like a human brain you know! It has to follow instructions line by line.

Master: That's what I've been trying to tell you. This young man has microcircuitry connected to his brain. I think the time has come for NIMF to get a playmate. We'll soon get the introductions out of the way. *(calling)*. Dolly! Your expertise is going to be needed. *(DOLLY is again offended, but goes over to MASTER)*

Microbe: But you don't realise. What you want to do could kill him!

Master: You think that's going to stop me? *(to DOLLY)* You're going to be the bait in my trap, and once the boy takes the bait, I'm going to....

Microbe: Shut your trap! *(MASTER gives MICROBE a withering look)*.

Master: *(to MICROBE)* Just get everything ready here. *(MICROBE sits at*

*Console and begins typing. to DOLLY) Come along my dear.
(MASTER exits, DOLLY drops her head as if to follow, and then comes
downstage).*

MUSIC 9 - DOLLY'S SONG

Dolly: *Why's he so unkind? I ask myself
Why am I so blind?
So bad I cannot see that the way he treats me
Is so harsh and yet I do not mind....*

*It's then that I see he should care for me
As I care for him totally....
I feel life's unfair, that he just doesn't care
How I look, what I wear.... about me,
And the way that I feel life should be.*

*I just pretend
That he'll be with me to the end
Its then that I feel, my life's so unreal
You know all I need now is a friend.*

*I'm such a fool, yes I see now
I should be cool
And I know that I should say goodbye, and I would
But I love him though he is so cruel....*

*I just can't deny him a thing and I
Have no way of leaving this man....
I can't get away, I must wait for the day
That another will say that he's mine,
And his presence will make the sun shine.*

*It's just a dream
A beautiful hope, a goal, a theme
For a bright summer's day, when there'll be, come what may
Someone who'll set me free, let me dream.*

(MASTERMIND returns)

Master: Come along! (*exits, DOLLY follows, looking at floor. Lights dim, MICROBE yawns, stretches and then gets up to switch off machines, picks up a computer manual, comes down to apron, sits and flicks through book. His mind drifts and he begins imagining a space invaders game, making gun sounds and pretending to fire out into audience. Drums take up the rhythm and lead into dance. The Dance routine features 'ALIENS' in a robotic movement taking the form of an arcade style action game.*)

MUSIC 10 - SPACE INVADERS

Microbe: *Only pixels on a rolling scrolling video screen
You may blast us but we'll be back on the scene.*

*Space invaders, starship raiders, king kong chasers, asteroids
Your imagination brings us from the void*

*To blast your minds with electronic pulses through your brains
But on the surface our mission entertains.*

(MICROBE leaves as Tabs close on set)

SCENE 2

(Enter BILLY from back of auditorium, head in a book as usual, followed closely by DODO, carrying a pile of books in readiness, a big grin on his face due to being given responsibility. JAN and GYP follow, a little way behind, still trying to help BILLY with his problem)

Gyp: Hey, Bill, Wait up! (*Pause*). Going down the arcade this afternoon? (*Pause*). Bill? Are you listening? (*BILLY walks up to the stage, throws book to floor and takes one from top of DODO'S pile. JAN runs along, picks up the book and adds it to the two she is already carrying. BILLY sits on apron and continues reading. DODO sits by his side, still grinning.*)

Billy: I am listening, but your suggestion will only result in our losing money.

Gyp: Come on, Bill. Hey, what about going to the match, then? (*Pause*). You like footie don't you?

Billy: (*without emotion*) A pointless exercise. What is achieved by wasting the potential workforce of twenty two men, whose time is spent chasing a small ball around a field for ninety minutes? To say nothing of the thousands who watch them during this time.

Gyp: Aw, what's the use! He's worse now than before. I'm not wasting any more

time on him.

Billy: As you wish. I have other books to read and you are something of a hindrance to my concentration.

Gyp: That's it! I'm off.

Jan: Stop it, Gyp. Can't you see he needs our help now, more than ever. Think back on the number of times you've needed help. Has Billy ever let you down?

Gyp: (*quietly*) No - s'pose he ain't.

Jan: So we mustn't let HIM down now. We need to be with him in case anything happens. He's so involved in his books that he doesn't notice anything else - he was nearly knocked down earlier!

Gyp: Yeah, all right, but we're not doing much here are we?

Jan: At least we ARE here.

Gyp: Well I'm going to see his Grandad and see if HE can help. I can't do anything here, can I?

Jan: OK then, Gyp. We'll see you later. (*GYP exits down auditorium*).

Jan: (*calling after him*). Find out the name of the doctor will you? (*Pause, then shouting*). Gyp! (*to DODO*) Stay with Billy, Dodo. I'll see if I can catch up with Gyp. We need to find that doctor. I'll be back in a minute. (*as JAN exits after GYP, MASTERMIND and DOLLY appear and MASTERMIND pushes DOLLY forwards, towards BILLY. BILLY ignores her advances throughout the song, but DODO is bewitched*).

MUSIC 11 - THE RAP

Dolly: *Oh Billy, hey Billy don't you think that I appeal
Ain't I just the sort of girl to whom you could kneel...
Why don't you come and whisper some sweet nothings in my ear
And tell me all the little things a girl just loves to hear.*

*Oh Billy I've got looks and clothes and charms that you'll like
I've glamour, I've got stardom and other things that excite
All you've got to do is come on home with little me
And I'll make sure that you just get a lot more than tea!*

*Oh Billy, hey Billy I think you're getting bored....
Ain't I got the finer points that get me adored?
I thought you'd really like me and would want at any cost....
Suit yourself, Teddy bear.... go and get lost!*

(DODO gets up as DOLLY finishes her number, dropping all the books. DOLLY leaves, followed closely by DODO, who is hopelessly smitten. MASTERMIND decides to tempt BILLY with something else).

Master: *Oh Billy, hey Billy won't you take my advice
I've got things you'll love to see, they'll tempt and entice
Like user ports in analogue and digital too
Ten megabytes of memory to pulse your brainwaves through.*
(BILLY begins to take an interest - it is the only logical way for him to proceed).

*Oh Billy you will have a ball, it's just your cup of tea
With RAMS and ROMS par excellence I'm sure you will agree
I know my setup's got the lot, I'm sure you'll feel the same
My microdrives and hard drives put others to shame.*
(BILLY rises, totally committed to the idea, as MASTERMIND sings the final verse to himself).

*Oh Billy I've got plans for you, on that you can rely
But they could end up terminal, I cannot tell a lie
For interfaced to my machine you'll be in direct line
Receiving surges that result from faults in its design.*

(As song finishes, MASTERMIND leads BILLY off. Just as they exit JAN returns through auditorium to find that everyone has gone).

Jan: *(very worried) Billy? Dodo! Oh no! (runs back through auditorium calling GYP'S name).*
BLACKOUT.

SCENE 3

NOTE : *The music for this scene can be tailored to your own requirements regarding length, by following or ignoring the various repeat marks throughout the score.*

(Tabs open on MASTERMIND'S lair. MICROBE is asleep. The scene is played without dialogue, to MUSIC 12 - RACE AGAINST TIME. During the scene the following action takes place: MASTERMIND enters with BILLY following. BILLY immediately sees NIMF and goes over to the Console, whilst MASTERMIND kicks MICROBE to wake him. MICROBE wakes with a start and is introduced to BILLY, who gives only a fleeting glance before

returning to examine the Console. Whilst MASTERMIND urges MICROBE to switch on and connect up the Computer, he keeps returning to BILLY to explain what is required of him. BILLY nods his understanding. DOLLY appears in front of Tabs followed by DODO. They have obviously struck up some kind of relationship, but she is trying now, with some regret, to get rid of him. Eventually she sends him away and goes slowly into Lab to take up her position, head still bowed, on the other Console. DODO has in the meantime decided he will follow her after all, but he stops short of the Lair, slowly taking in the scene, and realising what is happening. He then runs back offstage. As DODO leaves, the preparations are completed and MASTERMIND raises his hands in triumph. MICROBE cannot cope with this collaboration between his own life's work and this intruder and goes over to join DOLLY in his misery. MASTERMIND by contrast is loving every moment and is intent on BILLY'S fingers moving over the Keyboard. The Scene closes as the lights dim on this scene, each character deeply involved in his or her own thoughts. Tabs).

SCENE 4

(JAN enters through auditorium as GYP comes upstage)

Jan: Have you seen him?

Gyp: Nah! You?

Jan: No. What about Dodo?

Gyp: No sign of him. I don't know where to look next.

Jan: What about his Dad?

Gyp: I've just come from there. They're phoning the doctor now and they said to wait for 'em.

Jan: Oh well, at least there'll be a few of us to sort out what to do next. *(Pause)*. God, I hate this place! Billy could be anywhere. Look around you. You can't see the sun for all the buildings. People live on top of each other like animals in cages. This is our world, *(quietly)* and it scares me to death!

Gyp: At least you didn't have to grow up in it!

Jan: You resent that don't you! Can't you see it makes no difference? I still have to survive it! If anything it's harder for me. I have to adapt, and I SHOULDN'T have to! We deserve better. What have WE done to be given this sentence? This whole place is a tip. It's been misused and WE'RE going to have to sort it out

Gyp: Hold up. I didn't mean anything by it. It's just....

Jan: You're right. I'm sorry Gyp, I'm just so worried about Billy.

Gyp: It's true though - what you said about the place.

(The following song is ideally to be sung as a duet, the players taking alternate verses and harmonizing on the chorus. Depending on personal taste, CHOIR could come out to boost the choruses).

MUSIC 13 - GIVE US HOPE

- Gyp:** *There is something sad about the place where we live
We're suppressed and shackled but we've so much to give
With freedom from squalor we could get something done
But we're trapped and embittered, everyone.*
- Chorus:** *Give us hope, give us freedom, and some clean, fresh air
Take us far from the tenements and leave us there
We've got so much to offer that we'd willingly give
Give us hope, give us freedom, let us live.*
- Jan:** *It's not easy to cope with life in these crowded streets
And we get so frustrated, always meeting defeat
But we know that we'll make it and we want so much to strive
To give our strength to help the world survive.*
- Chorus:** *Give us hope... ...let us live.*
- Gyp:** *We're not thugs, we're not tearaways, we're just the same as you
But the youth in this city haven't got enough to do.
If we're given opportunities to help and advise
We could work to make you see us through clear eyes.*
- Chorus:** *Give us hope... ...let us live.*
- Jan:** *We'd like to have the chance to give our views without fear
Have the older generation accept us as peers
We hate this concrete jungle that suppresses our hopes
But united we can learn how to cope.*
- Chorus:** *Give us hope... ...let us live.*

(MUM and GRANDAD arrive as song ends).

Grandad: Any luck yet?

Jan: No. What about the Doctor? Have you spoken to him?

Mum: Bert's gone to get him.

Jan: We've looked everywhere. There's no sign of Billy or Dodo. (*DAD enters, pushing DOCTOR in front of him. SECRETARY is running along behind, trying to take notes and operate a Calculator*).

Dad: Here he is! Right then, what's happening?

Doctor: Really, Mr. Kydd, I don't think you can blame me for what's happened. I.... (*Everyone turns on the DOCTOR and the following lines are spoken simultaneously*)

Dad: Don't you start that nonsense again. I've a perfect right to blame you. If it hadn't been for your smooth talking none of this would have happened. I've a good mind to get you struck off.

Mum: How dare you. Bert, sort him out! He comes here with his cock and bull story about making everybody perfect, and then changes them into robots. I think it's disgusting. People like you ought to be shot.

Grandad: You and that money-grabbing secretary have got a lot to answer for. If I had my way I'd have you horse-whipped. A spell in the army instead of a couple of years at university would have sorted you out.

Gyp: Let me 'ave 'im for a few minutes. I'll show 'im another way to experiment on people - wivout anaesthetic! I'll re-arrange 'is face for 'im. Come on, get out of the way. It's my turn.

Jan: What do you mean, it's not your fault? You're the one who played around with his brain and turned him off. I think it's disgusting the way your sort can get away with murder and call it science!

Sec: I really don't think you should be talking to Dr. Plant this way. Surely you must realise that he is a professional man, and not accustomed to this type of treatment from his patients and their relatives. (*during this babble DODO enters and tries to get their attention without success. He moves around the group trying to find a way in until,*)

Dodo: QUIET! (*Everyone stops suddenly in their tracks and looks at DODO in amazement. Totally breathless*). It's Billy.... They've got him.... Dolly.... computers.... hooked up.... flashing lights and everything.... got to come.... quickly....

Doctor: Dolly? Computers? Oh no! Strange must have him. I knew him long ago - a real bad egg, he was. When I saw him around here I knew he'd be up to something. (*the OTHERS exit, following DODO*) We'd better get over there right away, otherwise who knows what might happen to the boy. (*notices that he is alone, and sets off in pursuit*)

SCENE 5

MUSIC 14 - RACE AGAINST TIME II

(As before tailor the length to suit the amount of activity included)

(Tabs open on MASTERMIND'S Lair. BILLY is still seated at Console typing furiously. He is beginning to look ill, shuddering and reacting to surges from the Machine. MASTERMIND is hovering over him and DOLLY and MICROBE are together, looking very concerned. Suddenly BILLY collapses over Console. MASTERMIND takes printout and rushes off with a maniacal laugh).

Dolly: Oh, Microbe. What have we done? *(BILLY slowly lifts his head, shakes it gets up from Console and leaves, holding his head and staggering off. MICROBE and DOLLY watch BILLY leave and then MICROBE rushes over to the Console. He types on the keyboard, switching on NIMF'S speech synthesizer).*

Microbe: What's happened, NIMF?

NIMF: We've completed our task.

Microbe: You mean you managed to break the security codes?

NIMF: Yes.

Microbe: and transferred the funds?

NIMF: Yes.

Microbe: *(upset)* So he's won, after all.

NIMF: No.

Microbe: What do you mean?

NIMF: After being linked with Billy I began to absorb knowledge about humankind - how the world of man functions. I realised that that Father's intentions were not honourable.

Microbe: But.... what difference does that make?

NIMF: Would YOU have helped him if he did not have a hold over you?

Microbe: Of course not. But I don't see....

NIMF: You programmed me. I am a part of you. You are naive but you would not willingly allow yourself to be responsible for this. Similarly, I could not allow Father to take control.

Microbe: But you said the funds had been transferred.

NIMF: And so they have. However, we transferred all Father's funds to charitable accounts. Although he does not yet realise it, he is penniless - he doesn't even own ME - YOU do.... Daddy

Dolly: But what about Billy? Why did he leave like that?

NIMF: I'm afraid the final surge blew his own micro circuitry. He is dazed, but

what effect it will have on him, even I cannot say. (*enter BILLY'S FAMILY and FRIENDS*)

Gyp: (*out of control*) Where's Billy? What have you done with him?

Microbe: (*still overcome by the news*). He's gone.

Doctor: Gone? Then we're too late. Oh the poor boy! (*MUM starts to cry on DAD'S shoulder, JAN is in shock and GYP immediately comforts her, DODO goes over to DOLLY, who instinctively puts her arm round him, caught up by all the emotion. BILLY'S whistling motif is heard offstage; everyone stops to listen as BILLY saunters in*)

Billy: (*cheerfully*) All right? (*mixtures of anger and relief are shown as the FAMILY and GANG go up to BILLY. MUM and DAD put their arms around him, showing their relief that he is OK. GRANDAD leaving them to it, goes frontstage on his own. Billy shrugs them off although he likes the attention*) OK! Enough, enough! You could kill a bloke like that you know!

Dad: Look son. I'm sorry about what I did. I honestly thought I was doing the best thing for everybody - you especially. I didn't know it was going to turn out like this. If I had I'd have never....

Billy: Forget it Dad. I know what you had in mind. You were right to do it. I wasn't exactly what you'd hoped for, was I?

Dad: Don't talk like that. Look Billy I don't know how we can make it up to you but....

Mum: Oh give it a rest, Bert. He's back, he's his old self again....

Dad: (*suddenly worried again*) His old self? You mean....

Billy: Don't panic, Dad. I did learn something from it.

Dad: (*relieved and smiling*) You did?

Billy: Yeah. (*jokingly*) Don't believe everything your father tells you! He could be trying to put one over on you! (*smiles and puts his arms round Dad, who doesn't know what to think now*).

Mum: (*going over to BILLY*) Oh come on Bert. He's having you on. I hated it when you were clever, anyway. You made your Dad look really stupid!

Dad: Mother! (*Pause. Then slowly, indicating BILLY'S neck*) That thing's had it then?

Billy: Looks that way, Dad.

Dad: Well I can't say I'm sorry about that.

Billy: (*blankly - without emotion*) Affirmative. I too am in a state of well-being and quietude. (*DAD looks aghast, but JAN notices the smile appearing on BILLY'S face*)

Jan: (*going up and hugging him*) Oh Billy, it's great to have you back again!

Billy: (*fully enjoying it*) Ooh, wot a way to go!

Gyp: That's the old Billy talking! Welcome back, mate.

Dodo: Heh, heh. Well-being and quietude. Heh, heh, heh.

MUSIC 15 - FINALE

Grandad: *I had a dream about a boy whose mind was wiped clean,
He became flat - a two dimensional thinking machine,
I realised its meaning, what it was trying to say,
Decisions made can sometimes turn out, just this way.*

All: *We lost a son, a comrade, a school pal and a friend.
We've missed him dearly, it's so, hard to, comprehend.*

Billy: *You must not reproach yourselves
You had my best interests before you
I have learned a lesson too
We must think before we do.*

(Break for reunions, including BILLY'S going over to show DOLLY and MICROBE that he understands their taking part in MASTERMIND'S plan).

Billy: *I think I have found the key
To a world that we can be proud of
Individuality
We must see, sets us free.*

(FRIENDS go to BILLY and they put arms around each other)

Gang: *I think I have found the key
To a world that we can be proud of
Individuality
We must see, sets us free.*

(Rest of CAST appear on stage for final chorus)

All: *We think we have found the key
To a world that we can be proud of
Individuality
We must see, sets us free.*

THE END