

ROCK A-ROUND ROBIN

A Family Musical

Words and Music by

MARY HONOR

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

ROCK A_ROUND ROBIN

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SchoolPlay Productions Limited,
15 Inglis Road,
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The Cast:

Robin Hood	
Allen-A-Dale	
Little John	
Much	
Will Scarlett	
Friar Tuck	
Rufus	
Sheriff of Nottingham	
Badger	<i>The Sheriff's Henchman</i>
Pond	<i>The Sheriff's Accountant</i>
Hopper	<i>The Sheriff's Servant</i>
Eli	<i>A Sheriff's man</i>
Maid Marian	
Eliza	<i>A Dairy Maid and Eli's sister</i>
Una	<i>A Dairy Maid</i>
Old Emily	<i>A Dairy Maid</i>
Jake	<i>A Sheriff's man</i>
Tom	<i>A Sheriff's man</i>
Cyril Scraggett	
Scragg Ends 1,2 & 3	
Town Crier	
Innkeeper	
Richard the Lionheart	
4 Courtiers	

Non-speaking parts:

Rock 'n' Rollers, Robotic Musicians, all doubling as extra Dairy- Maids (one of whom is Grandma), Villagers, Courtiers, Heralds and Servants at the Banquet.

This update of an old tale is packed with music and dance and has plenty of skulduggery and tomfoolery, adding up to a whole lot of good clean fun!

COURT SHOE SHUFFLE - Dance instructions:

- Bars 1 & 2** snap fingers.
Bars 3 & 4 pivot to right, pivot to left
- Bar 5** place r. heel forward (1st beat)
place r. toe back behind l. foot (3rd beat)
- Bar 6** r. foot step to r. side, step with l. foot behind r.
r. foot step to r. side, close l.foot to r.
- Bars 7 & 8** repeat movements for Bars 5 & 6 to the left, starting on l. foot.
- Bar 9** step r. foot to side, close l. to r.
step r. foot to side, close l. to r. without putting any weight on l. foot. Flap elbows like a duck's wings.
- Bar 10** repeat as per Bar 9, but moving to l. starting on l. foot.
- Bar 11** step forward on r. heel, step forward on l. heel.
step back on r. foot, step back on l. foot.
- Bar 12** repeat Bar 11.
- Bar 13** step diagonally forward on r. and close l. foot behind r. with a jerky, galloping movement; repeat 3 times, putting no weight on l. foot on 4th beat.
- Bar 14** step back on l. toe, putting heel down on quarter beat.
step back on r. toe, putting heel down on quarter beat.
repeat sequence. (follow my lead).
- Bars 15 & 16** repeat Bars 9 & 10 to the left. Flap elbows Bars 14 & 16.
- Bars 17 & 18** repeat Bars 13 & 14 moving to left, starting on l. foot.
- Bars 19 & 20** repeat Bars 11 & 12.
- Bars 21 & 22** snap fingers.
Bars 23 & 24 pivot to right, then to left on the spot.

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ACT I

SCENE 1

House lights dim, ROCK 'N' ROLLERS gather on a dimly-lit stage and begin to whisper to each other "Who was Robin Hood?" and their voices build to a crescendo, at the same time the stage lights are getting brighter. Rock music introduction joins in and the ROCK 'N' ROLLERS perform the rap verses and sung choruses, with rock dancing.

MUSIC 1 - WHO WAS ROBIN HOOD?

Rap: *Who was Robin Hood?
Was he bad or was he good?
Was he fiction, was he real?
From the rich men did he steal -
To help the poor enjoy a meal?
Or was he just a heel?*

Sung chorus: *We'll delve deeper and deeper.
Turn every stone forsooth,
Yes delve deeper and deeper,
We may come up with the truth!*

Rap: *We love Robin Hood,
Whether he was bad or good;
A life of crime they say he led,
A price was always on his head,
He filled the Sheriff full of dread!
So say the books we've read.*

Sung chorus: *We'll delve deeper and deeper,
Turn every stone forsooth,
Yes, delve deeper and deeper,
We may come up with the truth!*

Sung - *Let's delve deeper and deeper*
final chorus: *To find that Robin Hood,*
Yes, delve deeper and deeper
Come down to old Sherwood!
Come down to old Sherwood! (repeated ad lib).

(*CHORUS* exit by degrees, beckoning to the *AUDIENCE* as they go and this scene 'melts' into the forest glade, possibly by use of curtains).

SCENE 2 (A Glade in Sherwood Forest)

(*Total change of style and tempo as Robin, together with his merry BAND, is rehearsing his latest song. TUCK has his "kitchen" area with cook-pot over a fire, work bench, where he prepares the vegetables, dough etc., and a washing line sports shirt, tights etc. Whilst the BAND sing, TUCK busies himself with domestic matters, but he too can sing-along.*)

MUSIC 2 - **HEY NONNY**

Robin & Band: *Hey nonny, hey nonny - when the corn doth ripen,*
Hey nonny, hey nonny - when seed pods do burst open,
Then my heart will follow suit,
Hey nonny, hey nonny,
Our love will blossom, blossom, blossom,
Whilst we're picking fruit!

Robin: Well played, my merry men - our band maketh progress and shall one day live a life of ease in the service of the King.

Men: (*muttering agreement*) Aye, indeed, verily etc.

Robin: King's Minstrels we shall be - up in the gallery at the Castle, the darlings of all the damsels!

Much: (*aside*) He's got WOMEN on his mind again!

Robin: Much! Sometimes methinks thou sayest too much, Much! (*He goes to cuff MUCH in a friendly manner, but does not look as he does so - MUCH ducks and ROBIN unbeknowingly cuffs WILL instead, who is most put out. MUCH laughs at WILL and they very nearly have a fight.*)

Robin: (*continuing, ignorant of what's going on behind him.*) Our rewards shall be many - juicy left-overs from the King's banqueting table....

Little John: On the topic of food....

Friar Tuck: Thou rarely hast any other topic on THY mind, or thy tongue....

Little John: ON the topic of FOOD - what hast thou prepared for supper tonight, Brother Tuck?

Friar Tuck: (*irritably throwing down his mixing spoon*) Thou triest my patience with thy questioning, Little John. Thou knowest full well that, being Monday, it is Rabbit Stew! (*He comes downstage centre*)

Little John: (*walking up to him*) Be it Monday OR Tuesday....

Much: (*also coming forward*) OR Wednesday....

Will Scarlett: (*joining in - they all bear down on TUCK, making him flinch with their teasing*) OR Thursday....

Little John: OR Friday....

Much: OR Saturday....

Will: OR Sunday....

All Three: It's ALWAYS Rabbit Stew!!

Rufus: (*going to TUCK'S aid, as he finishes up on the ground*) That's not nice! (*ROBIN also goes to help him up*).

Friar Tuck: Thou art unkind and ungrateful! I do my very best with the meagre resources to hand!

Robin: Yes, instead of baiting our noble cook, why not go and try thy hands at baiting something more appetising! (*TUCK began to look gratefully at ROBIN until the last rather unkind remark*).

Much: (*defensively*) I well nigh caught a hare last week....

Little John: A Hare! (*laughs*) Thou art so slow, thou couldst not catch the plague!

Will: (*to LITTLE JOHN*) And what about the bream and perch which thou SO nearly landed last week?

Much: Such fishy tales thou tellest! (*MUCH and WILL make wider and wider signs, MUCH'S hand cheekily flicks LITTLE JOHN'S face. He suddenly gets hold of the hand and puts MUCH into a half-Nelson and holds Will off with his other hand. With a look of innocence LITTLE JOHN lets go and steps back, which means that MUCH and WILL collide*).

Robin: Enough of this prattle! Remember we are MERRY MEN - we must not fall out over trivial matters. Come, let us sing for our suppers, albeit (*looking with resignation at TUCK*) the goodly Rabbit Stew, with one more burst of song. (*WILL and MUCH untangle themselves and give LITTLE JOHN a few menacing looks, but getting their instruments all begin to play and sing again, but are interrupted by the arrival of ALLEN-A-DALE, who carries a guitar. ALLEN acknowledges FRIAR TUCK and, after listening to a few bars of the BAND'S song, interrupts them*).

Allen: What kind of a 'merry' tune dost thou think this be? Thou soundeth distinctly dreary!

MUSIC 3 - A BIT MORE LIFT

(ALLEN can mime guitar, or perhaps can really play along with the pit band)

Allen: *You need something with a bit more lift
Come on, fellahs, do you get my drift?
Give me a beat, say, four in a bar -
Yea, yea, verily, you'll sure go far!*

*Learn a few wrinkles from Daddy-O
Your kind of music's a little too slow. (lute player comes forward)
The lute sounds sweet, I can't dispute
But your playing technique? Pure antique!
(lute player goes away disgruntled; lyre player comes forward)*

*You've just got to get tough with that lyre,
Take that music higher and higher,
Make those fingers attack that wire,
Play it so hot that it bursts into fire!
(lyre player can be lifted up by two of the BAND, as he strums)*

*(to ROBIN) Don't try to change your music by stages,
Take one big leap into the Middle Ages!*

Robin: *You send me reeling, stop it! STOP IT!*
Allen: *Can I help being born a prophet?
Give that music a bit more lift,
Come on, fellahs, now you've got my drift,
Give me a beat, say, four in a bar,
Yea, yea, verily, you'll sure go far!*

(All the BAND, except ROBIN, who is watching them, sulkily:)

Band: *We've got your message, Daddy-O.
And to Hey Nonny, we'll say, "Hey Nonny - NO!"
Our music is bouncing and coming alive,
Just as easy as beans making five!*

Allen: *When I hear you get tough with that lyre,
Sending the music higher and higher,
Notes and rhythm start to gel
Casting a magical rock 'n' roll spell.*

*Forget all your plainsong and ballades are out,
A rocking beat is something worth shouting about.*

Robin: *Enough of this - I'm losing my patience!*

Allen: *Come on, Band, let's start a Renaissance!*

Band: *Thanks to Allen now we're in the know,
We're really stomping and we're ready to go,
The rhythm is pounding, we're learning to bop,
Yea, yea, verily, we'll get to the top!*

*We'll give that music a bit more lift,
O.K., Allen, now we've got your drift,
We'll give you a beat, yes, four to the bar,
Yea, yea, verily we'll sure go far, sure go far, sure go far!!!*

(During the song FRIAR TUCK begins to dance, and by the end is really freaking out with the others, who begin by rocking 'n' rolling behind ROBIN'S back but finish up dancing in front of him).

Robin: Didst we ask they opinion?

Allen: Nay - but thy music is so - so - out of vogue!

Robin: Good Allen, thou art always welcome in this glade, but we rely upon you for NEWS, not comment!

Allen: Be that as you wish - I shall take my leave. *(He starts to go).*

Robin: Nay - come back. What news hast thou to impart?

Allen: *(Pauses, teasing them all).* The sweet Maid Marian is well.

Men: *(Mockingly)* Ah, Marian! Ooooh! Robin's delight! *(Whistles etc....).*

Robin: This is of little consequence to me. Come, IMPORTANT news, please.

Allen: *(Pausing again).* The Sheriff is still avowed to catch thee.

Little John: That is not news.

Allen: *(thinks again).* There is to be held next week the annual Cheese Fayre in Chudlington.

Robin: Of course - 'twill be the first Tuesday in May.

Much: Such merriment there will be on that day....

Will: Folks dancing....

Much: Quaffing ale....

Rufus: Fresh oat cakes....

Little John: And pies....

Friar Tuck: Ah! Memories of boyhood pleasures!

Robin: There wouldst be little point in our going to the Fayre, as we have precious

little coin to spend.

Allen: Thou art still outlaws, even though you long since chose to lead a life of song in place of robbing, thou wouldst be arrested.

Robin: I avowed a solemn oath to my ailing father. He knew that we kept but little money for ourselves and helped the poor hereabouts, but in the eyes of the Sheriff we were to be outcasts.

Rufus: Canst we not go to the Fayre, Robin?

Little John: We couldst go in disguise.

All: Yea! Come on, Robin, we could do that, etc....

Robin: (*looking LITTLE JOHN up and down*) THOU wouldst be very difficult to disguise! And in truth, we have nothing to spend....

Allen: Thou couldst rob one more rich man, and in spending thy coin at the Fayre thou wouldst be helping the poor humble traders.

All: Great idea! Let's do that! Go on, Robin, etc....

Robin: How couldst thou suggest that I go back on my solemn word?

MUSIC 4 - DON'T KNOCK THE ROBBIN'

(*ROBIN watches dully, but by the end of the song is laughing*).

Allen & Band: *Don't knock the robbin', Robin,*
(**inc. Tuck**) *It was a good livelihood, Robin Hood,*
Don't knock the robbin', Robin,
That way of life was good,
Yes good!

Much & Will: *Remember when we all dropped from a tree*
And set the money-lenders's money free

Little John: *He begged for mercy on his knee*
But to the poor we paid his fee!

All: *Don't knock the robbin', Robin,*
It was a good livelihood, Robin Hood,
Don't knock the robbin', Robin,
That way of life was good,
Yes, good!

Allen: *And the Sheriff's bag of gold*
(His mean bailiff could not hold)

Will: *Brought such cheer to young and old*
Rufus: *Suff'ring from the winter's cold.*

All: *Don't knock the robbin', Robin
It was a good livelihood, Robin Hood,
Don't knock the robbin', Robin,
That way of life was good.*

Repeat chorus: *Don't knock... ..was good,
Yes, good!*

(During the song the MERRY MEN act out the verses to ROBIN'S eventual amusement. If preferred, the whole group, except ROBIN, could sing all the words)

Robin: Truly, a merry time we had, but thou wilt not persuade me to change my mind. A minstrel I now am and shall always be.

Allen: *(Casually)*. 'Tis a pity that thou art still outlawed, for thou wouldst have enjoyed the Minstrel Contest at the Cheese Fayre.

All: *(Eagerly)* MINSTREL CONTEST!!

Robin: Tellest me more!

Allen: Verily, there will be contest to find the finest Minstrel in this region and whomsoever is chosen shall have the honour of entertaining our Sovereign Majesty, when he visiteth the Sheriff next week.

Robin: Wild boars shall not hold me back from such a chance as this! Men! We SHALL go to the Cheese Fayre and SHALL wear disguises; our music shall so ENTRANCE the Sheriff that he will never begin to think that it be his old adversaries. What say thou?

All: Yea, yea! Truly! We agree! Whoopee!! etc....

Much: *(shouting above the rest)*. Good Robin - I have one question to ask.

Robin: A question, dear Much?

Much: Well, whilst we be at the Cheese Fayre....

Robin: Yes....

Much: Mayest we spend our last few pennies on a big piece of cheese?

Robin: That seemeth a reasonable request, but why?

Much: Then, for a nice change *(looking at TUCK)* we can have a bit of WELSH Rabbit!

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3 (A Room in the Sheriff's Castle)

(POND, the SHERIFF'S accountant, is sitting at his table, scratching away with a quill pen. HOPPER, the SHERIFF'S SERVANT, comes rushing in).

Hopper: Master Pond, Master Pond, I camest to warn thee that the Sheriff is

coming in this direction, and that he be on the rampage!

Pond: (*Sighs*). So what be new?

Hopper: He is refusing to agree thy figures for the household expenditure.

Pond: (*Wearily*). Really?

Hopper: If thou wishest to avoid his wrath, thou shouldst nip down the back stairs smartly!

Pond: Best to get it over with.

Hopper: Oh, go on! He'll be quieter by supper ti.... oh! Too late!!

Sheriff: (*shouting and grumbling all the while he is approaching. HOPPER hides behind the door, or at the side of the entrance, out of line of immediate fire. SHERIFF enters brandishing papers*) Pond! POND!! What dost thou mean by this, this - fiction!!

Pond: (*rising*) My Lord Sheriff, there is no mistake. Thou hast overspent by Twenty Seven Pounds and Three Shillings.

Sheriff: But I canst not be in debt - I am the SHERIFF, to whom all and sundry in the County must pay due levies!

Pond: With respect, Sire, thou didst buy ten fine horses this month, incurring extra farrier's costs immediately

Sheriff: A man in my position canst not be seen riding old nags such as were in my stables.

Pond: AND there is the small matter of your new clothes for the King's visit next week - nothing but the finest velvets and brocade. They do not come cheaply.

Sheriff: A man in my position canst not afford to look anything but - but - GRAND!

Pond: And of course, Sire, there is the inordinately large grocery order for the King's banquet.

Sheriff: Ah - but thou wilt observe that I have managed a few little economies there. The substitution of rabbit for chicken in the potage? By the time our cooks have overdone the spices, in the usual way, it will be impossible to tell the difference. And we shall not have to buy any cheeses. They do not know it as yet, but the prize for the finest cheese at the Chudlington Cheese Fayre will be to supply the cheeses for the King's banquet! Ha, ha, ha, ha - cunning eh? Thou didst not know that thy Sheriff had such a keen brain! (*POND looks pained*).

Pond: For all that, Sire, thou still hast the problem of how to pay the grocery bill BEFORE NEXT WEEK.

Sheriff: (*angry again*) Trust you to put out the spark of gaiety with a damp remark, Pond. Oh, Bother! Bother!! BOTHER!!! (*thumps fist on the table. HOPPER winces*). Thou art quite right! BOTHER!!

MUSIC 5a - SHERIFF'S SONG

Sheriff: *A man in my position needs to live in proper style
But I can't enjoy my status,
When you nag, nag, nag me all the while,
With balances and bills galore
You know, I've heard it all before
So, Pond, you're just a dull old bore
Who cannot even smile!*

*For a man in my position it's appearances that count.
And I've no desire to hear from you
Just how high expenses mount.
Don't bother me with all this trash,
Now rack your brains and have a bash
At coming up with ready cash
To stick in my account!*

Sheriff: Well, what dost thou suggest?

Pond: Perhaps sell a few horses, Sire?

Sheriff: Never! Thou wilt have to do better than that! (*he goes to the door/entrance and without seeing HOPPER he roars*). HOPPER!! (*HOPPER appears beside him, making him jump*).

Hopper: Yes, my Lord?

Sheriff: Aaargh!! What the deuce dost thou think thou art doing, making me jump like that?

Hopper: I'm sorry, my Lord.

Sheriff: Thou wilt be! Go at once and find Badger, and then....

Hopper: Yes, my Lord?

Sheriff: Oh cut along to the abattoir and get hold of a pig's bladder.

Hopper: A PIG'S BLADDER, my Lord? (*HOPPER looks sickened*).

Sheriff: Yes - this King is bound to be expecting all the trimmings with his banquet.

Pond: I do not think there be much FLAVOUR in pig's bladder, my Lord.

Sheriff: No, no! NO! It's not for eating! Hopper here will blow it up, tie it to a stick and waggle it about in Jester fashion. (*HOPPER is pulling 'surprised' faces*) Fix a couple of bells on your shoes, and your hat, think up a few inane gags and there you have it.

Hopper: Have what, my Lord?

Sheriff: A nice cheap turn, that's what! (*Poor HOPPER looks helpless*).

Hopper: But, my Lord - I can't...

Sheriff: No such word as 'can't' around here, Hopper. A jester thou shalt be - and you'd better be FUNNY! Oh, get off and find Badger. (*HOPPER still dithering*). HOP IT HOPPER!!

Hopper: Yes, my Lord. (*He exits*).

Sheriff: We shall see whether Badger has any ideas. He's no fool, and two heads must be better than one - unless one of them happens to be thine, Pond.

Pond: Yes, Sire.

Sheriff: That was a little joke, and thou gavest no sign of laughter - not even a ripple, Pond. Doth nothing ruffle thy calm, Pond? (*before he can answer, HOPPER returns followed by BADGER, the SHERIFF'S henchman*).

Badger: Good day to you, my Lord Sheriff. (*Bowing*).

Sheriff: Aye, aye, aye, never mind that - we need money - ready money, Badger. I'm relying on thy wit to come up with a solution.

Badger: (*thinks for a moment*). Well, my Lord, there are more fine horses in the stable than thou truly needs, couldst not one of them be so...

Sheriff: No, NO! NO!! Is that all that thy wit canst manage, thou half-wit? Get out! (*BADGER dutifully turns to go*) Where dost thou think thou art going? (*BADGER indicates that he was about to leave as requested, but looks bewildered*). Come back here! Try again. (*SHERIFF paces up and down*). We need cash to pay for the King's banquet.

Badger: (*tentatively*) If thou couldst capture Robin Hood before the King's visit...

Sheriff: What's that? Robin Hood?

Badger: If thou couldst capture him, then perhaps the King might reward thee.

Sheriff: Hmmm.... I need the money before the King's visit, but - yes - good old Badger! Thou hast shot an idea at me and it hath fired my brain! (*roars with laughter and BADGER, catching on to the feeble pun dutifully laughs too*). Now listen.... (*He draws BADGER towards him, but does a double-take at POND, who is standing behind the pair of conspirators with his ear cocked*). Go to lunch, Pond! (*POND looks put out, but exits with his nose in the air*).

Sheriff: (*as he and BADGER walk slowly in the opposite direction to POND'S exit*). Listen, Badger, we shall find everything we need at Chudlington next week.

Badger: Verily, my Lord - plenty of cheese, eh?

Sheriff: No, NO! Well, yes, yes! Of course there will be plenty of cheese, idiot! That's not what I mean!

Badger: Ah - thou meanest fair maidens!

Sheriff: No I dost NOT mean fair maidens! And with regard to such, thou wilt kindly refrain from dallying with every young lass in sight at the Fayre. Come, come, dumb dolt, what are we lacking MOST and need immediately?

Badger: Speaking for myself, my Lord, I could do with a nice mug of ale.
(*POND re-enters*).

Sheriff: For mercies sake! Art thou being deliberately thick? Thou art making my ire rise! (*seeing POND*). And what art THOU doing back here, Pond?

Pond: Forgive the intrusion, Sire, but I left my account books behind.

Sheriff: Well, take them and get out of here - and don't bother with lunch until thou hast cooked the books! (*fuming and talking to himself, and not attending to what POND and BADGER are saying*). I am besieged by fools!

Pond: (*aside to BADGER as he goes*) I say, Badger, don't send his ire any 'igher!
(*POND leers at BADGER, who sneers back. POND exits*).

Sheriff: Badger! Let me spell it out for thee - many people gather at Chudlington the day before the Fayre. They flock from neighbouring towns and where will they partake of refreshment?

Badger: At the Nag's Head?

Sheriff: Well done, Badger! At the Nag's Head - all guzzling away! That miserable landlord will sell enough ale to float a whale! He'll be rubbing his hands with glee over his takings.

Badger: I cannot see how that will help US, my Lord.

Sheriff: No, thou wouldst have difficulty in perceiving my ingenious scheme. We are going to help ourselves - or rather THOU art going to relieve the Innkeeper of the burden of his bounty.

Badger: What - steal his money?

Sheriff: SHHhhh! Not so bold! There be no doubt in my mind that our grasping Landlord owes my coffers a deal of taxes and, what is more, thou shalt be disguised.

Badger: Indeed, my Lord - how so?

Sheriff: Simply this - thou wilt wear a green hood in the manner of Robin Hood. That rascal has been lying low for far too long - no-one will be at all surprised to learn that he has been up to his old thieving tricks. Thou must wait until all is quiet at the Inn at dead of night, then creep up, rap on the door and hide in the shadows. When the Landlord appears, thou wilt leap out, attack him, nip into the Inn - and take the takings! Easy!

Badger: But, my Lord - what if....

Sheriff: Do not bore me with "What if's" - this be an order!

MUSIC 5b - SHERIFF'S SONG (Reprise)

Sheriff: *A man in YOUR position may not question or defy
The orders of your Master, who
Has far more brain and wit than you -
So to the Cheese Fayre haste away
My brilliant orders to obey,
Oh, clever me to find a way
To make an easy buck!*

Sheriff: Oh, by the bye - shouldst thou bungle the task and get caught....

Badger: Yes, my Lord?

Sheriff: Keepest thy big mouth shut!

Badger: (*sighs*). Verily, my Lord.

Sheriff: (*sings*) *Take care, remember all I've said,
I'm sick of being in the red,
And if you're caught - you're good as dead!
Beware! Be off! Begone!!*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4 (MAID MARIAN'S Dairy, the following week)

(MAID MARIAN and her DAIRY-MAIDS are busy preparing butter and cheeses, except two of the MAIDS, who appear to be daydreaming. GRANDMOTHER is sitting in a corner weaving mats, MAID MARIAN enters, followed by OLD EMILY, who is wearing a Milk-maid's yoke, if possible. She is assisted by the MAIDS, who take the buckets and pour the milk into a churn or a barrel. MARIAN could have herbs, or flowers gathered in her apron, which she empties onto a table).

Maid Marian: Come, come, there be no time for daydreaming. The Fayre be only one day hence, and we must make certain that our cheeses be the finest and the most plentiful.

Eliza: Grandmother has been very busy weaving rush mats to sell.

Una: And my father has been fashioning a goodly number of stout wooden bowls through the winter.

Maid Marian: May the good Lord grant us a fine day and big crowds.

Old Emily: The Fayre is a blessing. Sheriff's taxes be such a burden on poor folk

hereabouts, and a chance to make an honest EXTRA penny be all too scarce.

Una: There was a time once when my uncle was too ill to work and the tax collector would have turned him onto the streets, but that fair Robin Hood came to his aid with a bag of coin.

Eliza: Oooh! How I'd love to meet Robin Hood!

Old Emily: Many a tale of that young fellow's good deeds used to be heard around the village hearths, but it seems he has vanished from these parts.

Eliza: (*meaningfully to MARIAN*). Dost THOU not know of his whereabouts, Marian?

Maid Marian: (*indignantly*). Forsooth! Why shouldst I be privy to such knowledge?

Old Emily: I heardst tell that you and he once had a promise.

Maid Marian: Then thou didst not hear aright! He may be a friend to the poor, but he hath no mind for wedlock!

MUSIC 6 - OH, ROBIN

Una: *Oh, Robin, when wilt thou marry?*

Old Emily: *Here is one fool who would give him her heart* (*indicating UNA*)

Eliza: *In my dreams every night he doth carry -
Me off with the swiftness of Cupid's fine dart.*

Marian: *Come down to earth, girls, let good sense prevail,
The Sheriff is ever pursuing Robin's tail!
Life in the forest is cruel and tough
And all sense of loving would fail.*

All: *Oh, Robin, when wilt thou marry?
Here is one fool who would give him her heart,
In my/their dreams every night he doth carry
Me/them off with the swiftness of Cupid's fine dart.*

Old Emily: *Listen to one who is older and wise,
Thoughts on young Robin you'd better quell,
For over him you are wasting your sighs,
He'll never want to hear that wedding bell!*

All: *Oh, Robin, when wilt thou marry? etc...*
(*Before the last chorus is sung the music is repeated for a dance sequence.
Throughout the scene GRANDMOTHER continues to work, straining her*

ears from time to time to hear the conversation, and nodding to the singing).

Old Emily: They do say Robin only EVER waylays rich folk so as to help poor peo.... (*SHERIFF'S henchman, BADGER, followed by ELI enter and interrupt EMILY*)

Badger: More like to help himself! Good day, fair maids. Thou wasteth time sighing over that scoundrel.

Una: No, thou art wrong! Why, someone in my own family had good reason to bless him.

Badger: BLESS HIM! Thou meanest CURSE HIM! Weak women WOULD voice soft words about such a villain. Why not turn thine attentions to a fine upstanding tax collector? I shall be watching for thee, Una, at the Revels. (*He sidles up to her*). Thou couldst do worse than partner me when they play 'Kiss-in-the-Ring!'.

Una: (*pushing him away*). Get away from me! There'll be no dancing with me, thou hispid bumpkin!

Badger: (*roaring with laughter*). Didst hear that, Eli? She likes my beard. (*ELI has been chatting to GRANDMOTHER, but has become increasingly embarrassed by BADGER'S attitude*).

Una: Beard! Thy face has bristles like a hog!

Badger: (*changing from laughter to indignation*). A Hog!? (*He advances towards her*).

Maid Marian: Enough of this! Shame on ye, sir. State thy reason for entering my dairy at once, then leave!

Badger: (*with an important air*). Eli and myself are making enquiry as to the whereabouts of that rogue you maidens misguidedly sigh for.

Old Emily: Nothing has been seen or heard of Robin Hood for many a month.

Badger: He'll turn up again like a bad penny. Sheriff hath decreed that he MUST be caught. (*He laughs wickedly*). He shall be safe in jail sooner than ye can say 'Michaelmas.'

Eliza: (*timidly going up to him*). I heard tell that he no longer waylays rich men so as to help the poor.

Badger: (*going to put his arm around her, but she ducks and runs away*). Tell me more, pretty maid!

Eli: (*anxiously*). Come, Master Edward, we'd best leave these maids to their tasks.

Badger: Thou hast no stomach for sport! (*He starts to chase ELIZA around the table; the MAIDS all scream and shrink away, but OLD EMILY snatches a broom and drives him out, followed by the MAIDS. In the confusion, ELIZA remains behind and ELI manages to have a quick private word with her*).

Eli: Meet me tonight on the green, under the beech tree, at eleven of the clock.

Eliza: But Eli... (*OLD EMILY and the MAIDS return and shoo ELI out too, leaving ELIZA looking after them, puzzled and alone, as GRANDMA also joined in the pursuit of BADGER.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE 5 (*The Village Green, that night*)

(*There is a beech tree, an Inn with a sign, "The Nag's Head," with a door if possible and, downstage to one side, the stocks. ELIZA creeps in, looking round about - she hears MEN loudly laughing, about to come out of the Inn, so she hides. BADGER, followed by JAKE and TOM come, none too steadily, out of the Inn - door if possible - laughing and joking. The INNKEEPER also steps out appearing to be shooing them out in disgust.*)

Innkeeper: Begone from my house, thou rowdy, uncouth knaves. (*BADGER and JAKE are roaring with laughter and JAKE is staggering.*)

Badger: Truly, Jake, thou tellest a merry jest!

Jake: Where's Tom? (*shouts*) Tom! Tom! Ah - steady, now!

Innkeeper: (*pushing TOM out, who tumbles over the balcony, or simply falls flat.*)
Thou wilt sup no more ale here this night! (*JAKE tries to help TOM up, without success.*)

Tom: (*lying on his back.*) What a beautiful night! Look at those stars! I shouldst like to take a walk up there and leap from star to star.

Badger: Two jugs of ale - and nonsense flows from Tom's lips!

Jake: Nay, 'tis not nonsense but po--try!

Badger: Humph!

Jake: Thou hast no sssoul, Master Badger. Why, on such a night as this I too feel as free as a bird and as lively as a youth. Forsooth, I may not reach the stars, but I mean to get a little closer to them. Help me climb this tree. (*ELIZA is quaking for fear of being discovered, but TOM interrupts JAKE'S train of thought by trying to get up. BADGER stands bemused and examining the stocks.*)

Tom: (*shouting*) Eli! Where's Eli got to? Come on, Eli - 'tis time we be off to get our beauty sleep. (*JAKE goes to help him up, but they both end up on their knees, giggling.*) We wants to look win - win WINSOME TOMORROW!

Jake: And - HANDSOME! (*BADGER stands behind the giggling pair.*)

Badger: That be impossible for you two cabbage-heads! (*He pretends to knock their heads together and they roll round the ground moaning.*) Sheriff's

arriving in the morn! Must be up betimes. Come on, Eli will follow - when he's paid for our ale! *(They all go roaring out and almost at once ELI comes out of the Inn).*

Eli: *(softly)* Eliza! Be thou near?

Eliza: *(emerging)* Oh, brother, d'ye think it be safe? Thy senior officers have only just passed this way.

Eli: Yes, and they be going to their lodgings. They'll sleep as deeply as babes this night.

Eliza: Why didst thou wish to see me, Eli?

Eli: Well, as thou knowest, sister, I am MISERABLE being bound in the service of the Sheriff - but I have thought of a way to escape.

Eliza: Escape? How?

Eli: Dost recall how the Sheriff's Gentlemen-At-Arms were set upon by Robin Hood last year?

Eliza: Yes, but....

Eli: Sheriff was so contemptuous of their weakness in allowing themselves to be beaten, that he sent them packing and they now live peaceful lives as humble woodcutters.

Eliza: Yes, but....

Eli: MY plan is to make believe that I ALSO have been set upon by Robin Hood.

Eliza: But how?

Eli: I need thy help. It be very late - all decent folk be abed. I want you to put me into the stocks.

Eliza: *(loudly)* Into the STOCKS?

Eli: Hush! Do not argue with me, sister. Come....

Eliza: But Eli, thou wilt be the butt of the villagers' jibes.

Eli: That be a small price to pay for my freedom. *(He climbs into the Stocks and ELIZA closes them on him)*

Eliza: How it maketh my heart sore to see thee thus. How wilt thou sleep?

Eli: With difficulty, my lass. But away with thee - safely to thy bed, and not a word of this to anyone. *(She starts to go).* Oh, sister - come back! A favour I must ask.

Eliza: Yes? What can I do for thee?

Eli: Giveth my nose a scratch!

BLACKOUT

(Lights up dimly, after a few seconds. ELI appears to have dozed off. BADGER, wearing a green hood and a cloak, enters stealthily. He creeps up to the Inn door and raps on it. INNKEEPER eventually comes out, sleepily, and BADGER keeps to the shadows. INNKEEPER looks to left and right, not

noticing ELI in the Stocks, and BADGER goes to hit INNKEEPER on the head. INNKEEPER turns round and is just able to say "Robin" before BADGER knocks him out. He leaves INNKEEPER where he is and steals into the Inn, emerging shortly afterwards carrying a money bag. As he exits in the direction of his lodging, ELI, who woke with a start on hearing the INNKEEPER speak, strains his ears to hear what is happening, and he just manages to catch a glimpse of BADGER disappearing, but is none the wiser because of the disguise.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 6 *(The same, the next morning)*

(ELI is in the Stocks and VILLAGE CHILDREN are pelting him with fruit and vegetables, and as the ADULTS gather, they laugh and mock, although some can be trying to stop the CHILDREN whilst others join in the assault. All are engaged in setting up their Stalls for the Fayre etc. OLD EMILY and MAID MARIAN set up a table and the MAIDS bring in the cheeses, along with small samples of cheese. MUSIC 7a - FAYRE MUSIC plays until the arrival of the SHERIFF).

Old Emily: *(at the height of the noise)* The Sheriff's coming! The SHERIFF'S coming!! *(She is scarcely heard above the Crowd as the SHERIFF enters, followed by POND, BADGER, JAKE and TOM).*

Sheriff: What is this? WHAT IS THIS UPROAR?! *(The Crowd simmer down).*

Badger: *(seeing ELI in the Stocks)* Mine eyes deceive me! My Lord Sheriff, 'tis Eli - thy bondsman, Eli!

Sheriff: Such disgrace! Who put this man in the stocks and for what reason? *(ELIZA, who has been joined by ALLEN-A-DALE, turns her head away in shame, but no-one notices).*

Eli: *(meekly)* My Lord, forgive me. Thou wilt be mighty sore to learn that I was set upon last night by none other than Robin Hood and his gang. *(consternation from the Crowd).* They took what little money I had and then forced me to sit here - helpless.

Sheriff: The impudent dogs! Landlord, didst thou hear nothing of this dire deed last night?

Innkeeper: My Lord Sheriff, I saw nothing of thy bondsman being put into the stocks, but I too was attacked by Robin Hood. *(more consternation from the Crowd).* He hammered on my door at dead of night, knocked me senseless and then stole my takings. *(Crowd reaction).*

Sheriff: Master Hood seems to have been extremely busy last night, whilst honest citizens slept, eh, Badger? *(Slyly winks at him).*

Badger: Indeed, my Lord.

Sheriff: Robin Hood MUST be captured without delay. Badger, scour the countryside - ferret in the forest! Suspect everyone and trust no-one. Turn every stone until that INSECT crawls out on his belly begging for mercy. *(cheers from the Crowd and BADGER instructs JAKE and TOM to go looking. They go off for a short while but soon return to enjoy the Fayre).*

Sheriff: As to thee, thou feeble, useless dolt - *(as he is addressing ELI someone throws something at ELI, making the Crowd and the SHERIFF roar with laughter)* Oh thou art a pathetic, but comic sight - set him free from the stocks and he can join the hunt for that villain! *(ELI is released. The TOWN CRIER enters, ringing his bell - SHERIFF holds his ears).*

Town Crier: Oh yez, oh yez! Be it known that the annual Chudlington Cheese Fayre shall now commence! *(Everyone cheers - a Group of Villagers perform a folk dance to MUSIC 7b - VILLAGERS' DANCE. INNKEEPER serves ale from jug, a PIE-MAN arrives with a tray of pies, one of the MAIDS has a basket of flowers to sell. The SHERIFF makes his way to the Cheese Table with POND, BADGER, JAKE and TOM and they proceed to sample the Cheeses, whilst everyone else is concentrating on the dancing. When the dance finishes, to cheers from the Crowd, the TOWN CRIER rings his bell again).*

Town Crier: Oh yez, oh yez!! My Lord Sheriff will now announce the winner of this year's Chudlington Cheese Competition. *(The SHERIFF at first takes no notice, until one of his men nudges him and he turns around with his mouth full)*

Sheriff: Will I? Oh, oh yes, I will. Hmmm. After due consideration and after tasting little morsels from each lovely cheese on display, the men and....

Old Emily: *(Who has been in charge of the Cheese Stall).* Little morsels? Nearly cleared the board, they did!

Sheriff: *(glowering).* Hold thy tongue, woman! As I was saying, er, yes, my men and I chose No. - 4. Will the maker of this cheese kindly step forward to receive the prize.

Maid Marian and Maids: *(excitedly).* That be our cheese! Wonderful! We've won! *(MAID MARIAN steps forward, curtsys and looks ready to receive her prize. POND passes a scroll to the SHERIFF)*

Sheriff: Well, the charming Maid Marian! I congratulate thee and thy Dairy-Maids. *(He hands her the Scroll).* Here is your prize - it is my permission to supply all the cheeses for the Royal Banquet tomorrow night. Make sure you deliver it in good time!

Maid Marian: And who will pay me for the cheese, sire?

Sheriff: (*angrily*) Pay? Pay? who would even think of asking for PAYMENT for such an honour as this?!! (*MAID MARIAN and her MAIDS look crestfallen and angry, but the TOWN CRIER prevents any further wrangling by ringing his bell and announcing the Minstrel Contest*).

Town Crier: Oh yez, oh yez! Draw near and hear the Grand Minstrel Contest! First for your delight - Master Cyril Scraggett and “The Scragg Ends!” (*Crowd applaud as CYRIL SCRAGGETT and SCRAG ENDS 1, 2 & 3 step forward, stand in a group and sing. CYRIL wears floppy hat*)

MUSIC 8 - CYRIL'S SONG

Cyril: *Sadly stand I, all alone,*

Scragg End 1: *Alone*

Scragg End 2: *Alone*

Scragg End 3: *Alone*

Cyril: *And all my sorrows bemoan,*

Scragg End 1: *Bemoan*

Scragg End 2: *Bemoan*

Scragg End 3: *Bemoan*

Cyril: *Like as the wind I wail and groan,*

And howl,

Scragg End 1: *Howl!*

Scragg End 2: *Howl!*

Scragg End 3: *Howl!*

Cyril: *As a dog cries for a bone.*

All: (*off key*) *Howl!!*

(*This Group gives scope for much mirth - they should look extremely dopey. The SHERIFF has been sitting listening intently and, as the song finishes, he dabs his eyes, whilst the rest of the Crowd have been wincing at the awful dirge and applaud half-heartedly*).

Sheriff: Most affecting! Who singeth next?

Town Crier: Oh yez! Oh yez! Good gentlefolk, hear ye now a sweet ballade from Maid Marian and her Maids. (*BADGER and MEN brighten visibly*).

MUSIC 9 - CHUDLINGTON CHEESE

Maid Marian & Maids:

*How pure a sight is milk so white
“Thank you,” we sing to the cow,
Girls, you should learn to paddle a churn,
Come, and we’ll show you how.*

*The way to man’s heart’s through his stomach, they say,
But once in his heart, that is where you’ll want to stay,
So come to the dairy, we’ll show how to please
By making the very best Chudlington Cheese!*

All:

*How pure a sight is milk so white,
“Thank you,” we sing to the cow
Girls, you should learn to paddle a churn,
Come, and we’ll/they’ll show you how.*

Maid Marian & Maids:

*Miss Muffet ate curds and whey, ’tis said,
But a man needs a hunk of cheese on his bread!
So come to the dairy, we’ll show how to please,
By making the very best Chudlington Cheese!*

(The music has a repeat, during which the MAIDS dance a Gavotte. Throughout the song the Girls flirt with the Boys, much to the annoyance of OLD EMILY, who, whilst also engaged in the song and dance, tries to correct the Girls. After the song the Crowd applaud much more enthusiastically this time, especially BADGER and the others. When the TOWN CRIER announces one more item, the Crowd look surprised and mutter at the strange Group’s name).

Town Crier: Oh yez, oh....

Sheriff: Yez, yez, yez! Get on with the announcement.

Town Crier: *(looking hurt).* The Forest Fellows! *(ROBIN and the BAND enter and, arranging themselves into a group with ROBIN in the centre, begin to sing their “Hey Nonny” song. They are all wearing some kind of disguise, such as hoods pulled well down, or cloaks. After a couple of lines of the song, ROBIN’S hood slips off his head).*

Eliza: *(screams)* It’s Robin! ROBIN HOOD!! *(She screams and faints into*

BADGER'S arms. *There is two second silence whilst everyone takes in the shock).*

Sheriff: Seize him! SEIZE ROBIN HOOD! AND HIS GANG!!

MUSIC 10 - THE CHASE (a great melee breaks out. What ensues is really up to the Director, but UNA should deliberately "faint" so as to impede the progress of one of the SHERIFF'S MEN. The other Maids can also faint. Stalls can be upset, etc. The outcome must be the escape of all the BAND, followed by ALLEN-A-DALE and ELI, but ROBIN HOOD is actually caught by the SHERIFF himself, who delightedly holds him by the scruff of the neck).

Sheriff: At last!! Thou shalt be brought to justice - Robin Hood is in my power!! "Hey Nonny," indeed!! *(Manic laugh to be linked with a recording of his manic laugh, through an echo chamber effect and amplified. Dramatic descending octaves from the MUSICIANS).*

*CURTAIN
END OF ACT I*

ACT II

SCENE 1 (*The Glade in Sherwood Forest*)

MUCH and WILL come rushing in very breathless.

Much: That were a narrow squeak!

Will: Didst see me foil that Sheriff's sergeant?

Little John: (*also out of breath*). Come on, Rufus lad, thou art safe now.
(*RUFUS also comes puffing in and FRIAR TUCK enters from the opposite side*).

Friar Tuck: Do I gather that the attempt at Minstrelsy went awry?

Will: (*casually*). A mere hiccup.

Rufus: Aye, Robin will think of another way.

Friar Tuck: Where be Robin?

Much: Was he not ahead of thee, Little John? (*before LITTLE JOHN can answer, ALLEN-A-DALE enters with ELI. All the OUTLAWS immediately adopt a defensive attitude*).

Allen: Thou seemeth to have lost one member of the Band and found a new one.

Little John: Who be this stranger?

Allen: This is Eli - a Sheriff's man.

Rufus: (*alarmed*). A Sheriff's man?

Much: Aye I recognise thee - thou ugly monster! (*goes to attack ELI, but ALLEN stops him*).

Allen: Stay! He followed thee from the Fayre. He genuinely hates the Sheriff and wouldst do anything to join with thee in the forest. Thou hast an ally in Eli.
(*He makes faces at the tongue-twister*).

Will: How canst we be sure?

Allen: Trust my word - I am acquainted with his sister, Eliza.

Friar Tuck (*knowingly*). Oh ho! (*Others nudge each other, wink, whistle etc.*).

Eli: 'Tis true! I will even go back to the Sheriff's castle and help Robin escape from jail.

All: (*except ALLEN and ELI, very agitated*). ROBIN'S IN JAIL?!!

BLACKOUT

The same - later that evening. The lights come up after a few seconds, during which time the BAND have arranged themselves sitting around and looking thoroughly fed-up. RUFUS and ELI are offstage.

Much: (*gloomily*). Well - that be that!

Will: What be what?

Little John: Much meaneth that, without Robin - *(sighs)* that be that!

Allen: A fine bunch of MERRY men thou art - this is not what Robin would wish to hear.

MUSIC 11 - MERRY, MERRY MEN (Round for 3 voices)

Allen & Band: *Merry, merry, merry, merry men etc.....*

(ALLEN begins to sing and one by one the men join in, eventually getting up and dancing an increasingly abandoned jig, but at the end of the song they each return to their original positions and go back to looking gloomy).

Rufus: *(entering, carrying FRIAR TUCK'S hat and being followed by ELI).*

Look, Tuckie, I went to show Eli my pet hen, and thou wouldst not believe where I found her -

Will: Sitting in Tuck's hat?

Rufus: How did you guess? *(WILL and the Others groan and look heavenward).*

But look what I found underneath her - a beautiful fresh egg!

Friar Tuck: The clever creature! *(He takes the egg out of the hat to admire it and then replaces it in the hat).*

Much: 'Twill not be easy to share out one egg between us.

Rufus: Share it? Tuckie shall have it for toiling over the cook-pot. *(He places the hat down on the rustic seat).*

Eli: So thou art the cook?

Friar Tuck: Aye - and I'll suffer no jests about cooking CHIPS with everything because I am a FRIAR.

Eli: Such thought did not enter my head - we have two centuries to wait for potatoes! *(Pauses for a moment).* Bet thou givest them CROUTONS.

Much: CROUTONS! Nothing fancier than BLACK BREAD for us!

Friar Tuck: I dost not bake BLACK BREAD!

Little John: *(slowly).* Maybe it STARTETH OUT white.

Friar Tuck: Art thou implying that my hands be dirty? Look - see! They be perfectly clean!

Will: Aye, because thou hast just made the bread! *(Drum roll as TUCK seizes his mixing spoon and proceeds to chase WILL around. WILL dodges behind the Others and weaves around until he backs into the rustic chair and accidentally sits down heavily on the hat. Gasps from the Others).*

Rufus: My egg!!

Will: *(getting up, pulling faces, feeling the seat of his pants, he hands the hat to TUCK).* YUCK, TUCK!!

Rufus: That's NOT NICE! *(TUCK sighs)*

MUSIC 12 - KICK THE HABIT

Tuck: *When I jumped over the monast'ry wall
Full of high hopes about what might befall,
This kind of lifestyle I'd never have planned -
Working as a skivvy for Robin Hood's band!*

Chorus: *Oh, I'm stuck here in the forest cooking rabbit,*

Men: *Rabbit!*

Tuck: *Rabbit
And there's no way this monk can kick the habit*

Men: *Habit*

Tuck: *Habit!*

(MEN sing Chorus, with reversal of the 'Rabbit' and 'Habit' sequence, i.e. TUCK echoes the MERRY MEN'S singing).

Tuck: *When lonely for hours I'd sit in my cell,*

Men: *Ah!*

Tuck: *Thoughts on escaping I could not dispel,
Away from the silence of chapel and cloister,
It seemed that the whole world could become my oyster!*

(During the previous two lines, the MERRY MEN engage in actions such as reading a prayer book, ringing bells etc., and on the word 'oyster' shape their hands like oyster shells and look inside).

Tuck: *But I'm stuck here in the forest, etc....
(Chorus repeated as before).*

Tuck: *When they complain about every meal,
My job as cook tends to lose its appeal.
(MEN all kneel/stand around him for the next two lines).
Why do I stay here and suffer this strife?
'Cause being an outlaw is such a good life!*

Tuck: *So I'll stay here in the forest, etc....
(Dance sequences with the MERRY MEN throughout the song and scope for plenty of business).*

Allen: Come, now, Good Friar Tuck thy cooking-pot smells very interesting.
Mayest we eat to revive our spirits?

Friar Tuck: *(resignedly)* Oh, very well. *(He goes to his large stew-pot and they*

queue up with wooden/earthenware bowls. He ladles each a portion and they sit around to eat. The OUTLAWS exchange glances indicating that it is quite good).

Eli: Tell me. Friar, what is the name of this dish?

Much: Rabbit Stew - it's Tuesday. We'll all be digging burrows soon!

Friar Tuck: That be not altogether correct, dear Much. In fact - this dish be - er
(thinking) Rabbit Surprise!

All: Rabbit Surprise?

Little John: How come?

Friar Tuck: *(hesitantly)*. Ah - thereby hangs the surprise - or, in truth, the tale. A very long tail. TODAY in the rabbit trap *(He picks up a rustic rabbit trap)*. I found - a nice - fat - *(opening the trap)* RAT!! *(He pulls out a very long pink tail. The BAND put or throw their bowls down in disgust. MUCH even runs offstage for a few moments, holding his stomach as he goes)*.

All: Ugh! Oh no! etc.....

Rufus: That's NOT nice! *(MAID MARIAN arrives in the midst of the confusion, and they quickly pull themselves together)*.

Maid Marian: How glad I be to see thee still a happy band without thy Robin.
(TUCK discreetly collects up the bowls).

Allen: *(bowing, and the Others nod politely, bow etc.)* Sweet Maid Marian. welcome. Hast news of Robin?

Maid Marian: Indeed - word has it that he hath renounced all his old ways and he is to become a monk.

All: Oh no! He can't do that! A Monk! What about us, etc....

Friar Tuck: The life in cloisters would never agree with him - it was too quiet for me!

Eli: He MUST have been BRAIN-WASHED. That Sheriff has evil ways.

Allen: We must act, and quickly! Dost thou all still want to be Minstrels?

All: Aye! You bet! Course we doth etc....

Allen: Then I will show thee how to be the finest band in the land. Thy songs shall be fit for none other than the ears of the King himself! Sweet Marian, wouldst thou help our plan by stitching a few fair seams?

Maid Marian: I might - if THOU couldst persuade Robin to honour his promise of wedlock to me.

Allen: *(aside to the Others)*. Methinks he will gladly agree, in order to gain his freedom. *(to MAID MARIAN)*. My powers of persuasion are immensely strong - Robin will be hurrying to wed thee very soon.

Maid Marian: Good! Then I shall help thee, but we must make all speed, as the King's banquet taketh place tomorrow night, and THAT CYRIL

SCRAGGETT is even now preparing to play for him.

All: Cyril Scraggett!! He's a rotten singer, etc....

Allen: (*calling them to order*). Men! We shall prepare one surprise for Master Scraggett - and another fit for a King!

All: Yea! Verily, etc....

Allen: Men! Gather thy instruments together. (*They bustle about, getting their musical instruments. ALLEN begins to chat with MAID MARIAN about what is to be done. RUFUS stands daydreaming*).

Will: (*to RUFUS*). Come on!

Rufus: How didst they do that then?

Will: Do what?

Rufus: Take Robin's brain out and wash it.

Will: (*disdainfully*) Even MERLIN couldst not manage such a thing! You be really ignorant.

Rufus: No I not be!

Will: Thou certainly art! If thou hadst ANY brain in THY head, then thou wouldst have worked out how 'twas done.

Rufus: Dost THOU know?

Will: Course I do - Anybody would know how to brainwash a person.

Rufus: Come, then, Mr. Clever - how was it done?

Will: (*Pause*). 'Tis plain - They squirted water up his nose! (*Exits*).

Rufus: Now that's DEFINITELY not nice!

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2 (*In the Dungeon beneath Sheriff's Castle*)

(*ROBIN is inside the jail singing and JAKE is sitting on guard*).

Robin: (*singing*). Laudate Domine, laudate Domine....

Jake: Thou singest right well, Master Hood - a goodly voice for one who wishes to enter a monastery.

Robin: That be most generous of thee, Jake. Perhaps thou wouldst speak to the Sheriff on my behalf.

Jake: (*laughs stupidly*) Nay, I feel right certain that our Sheriff wouldst not take notice of one so humble as myself, but I could ask Master Badger to speak for thee. Thou art a most amenable prisoner and doth sing so engagingly. I enjoy a good chant myself, especially in the Latin. Couldst teach me to sing a chant? We could pass a merry hour here singing together.

Robin: Well - dost thou have a knowledge of Latin?

Jake: (*laughs again*). Nay, Master Robin. My lowly beginnings barely afforded me enough mother tongue, let alone any learning! But I do love to hear the Latin sung well.

Robin: Then I shall teach thee a chant especially for thyself - let me see.... (*He sings*). “Vocate me stupidum.” Try that, Jake.

Jake: My, that soundeth right noble! How did it go again?

Robin: (*sings*). Vocate.

Jake: Vocate.

Robin: Me stupidum, dum, dum.

Jake: Me stupidum - (*getting the hang of it*). Vocate me stupidum, dum, dum. Come, Master Robin, tellest me what it means.

Robin: Ah - well - it be not a HOLY chant - more of a jolly jape, Jake.

Jake: Never mind - I not be very holy, but I do like the Latin. And the meaning?

Robin: Yes - er - well - it meaneth - “Call me in when the stew is done.”

Jake: (*more goofy laughter*) Ah, that be a noble song - stew be my favourite dinner - particularly when it be made with a nice rabbit.

Robin: Really!

Jake: (*sings with gusto*). Vocate me stupidum, dum, dum. (*BADGER bursts in followed by CYRIL SCRAGGETT and the SCRAGG ENDS*).

Badger: Jake, the Sheriff has ordered thee and me to join the guard of honour for the King’s arrival.

Jake: What, ME?

Badger: That’s what I said.

Jake: This is a proud day!

Badger: Sheriff’s a bit short of men, thanks to that infidel’s gang. (*He indicates ROBIN*) Tom has not quite recovered from the injuries he received in yesterday’s brawl and, as thou art aware, Eli was captured by the outlaws.

Jake: Poor old Eli! Oh, Master Hood, methinks it will take more than thy fine singing to persuade the Sheriff to let thee go to the monastery.

Badger: Singing! Monastery?! What nonsense! Ha! Why wouldst thou ever wish to leave this snug spot? Thou art so safe and sound. Make thyself at home and enjoy Cyril Scraggett’s band. They need to practice their song for tonight’s performance at the banquet, and this be the ideal place. Whilst singing as loudly as they please, they will be keeping thee company and taking our places as jailers. Cyril, keep an eye on this slippery toad.

Cyril: Aye, that we shall. Come boys, let us tune up - our performance tonight must be our best ever! Listen, Master Badger, we shall sing for thee. (*He sings*). Here I stand, etc....

Badger: Thank thee, but no. Let us away, Jake, and leave them to it. I would

prefer to wait until tonight to hear thy performance, Cyril. (*CYRIL goes on singing whilst JAKE and BADGER hurriedly exit. ROBIN rattles his prison bars with frustration*).

SCENE 3 (A passageway leading to the Dungeon at the Sheriff's castle)

The following dialogue could be spoken into a microphone with echo chamber effect, and amplified. Alternatively the Group could come out of the shadows and disappear again at the approach of BADGER and JAKE).

Much: Ooooooh! 'Tis dark down here.

Will: And damp....

Little John: And creepy! (*He tickles RUFUS on the head, making him squeal*).

Allen: Shhhhhh!!

Little John: Pity Friar Tuck had to stay behind.

Rufus: Why's that?

Little John: He would have loved the scrumptious big rat which didst just run over my foot.

Much, Will & Rufus: UGH!!

Allen: SHHH!! (*There is the sound of a heavy lock turning and bolt sliding back. A heavy door slams, then footsteps*). Not a word, Band! Press thyself against the wall! (*JAKE and BADGER enter - JAKE is singing, "Vocate me stupidum."*)

Badger: Aye, he'll not escape from there and that be a fitting punishment for young Hood - being forced to listen to the Scraggs' bawling and howling. Given the choice of listening to them or a turn on the rack or thumbscrews, I knowest full well what would be my choice.

Jake: (*He stopped singing to listen to BADGER*) Aye, in that case 'twould only be thine own bawling and howling to endure. (*BADGER looks perplexed. JAKE begins to sing his "Vocate me" song again*).

Badger: And I have no wish to endure that noise from thee! Whatever be this idiotic wail?

Jake: 'Tis not idiotic - and I be SINGING, not wailing. 'Tis a delightful chant which Master Hood composed especially for ME. Even an outlaw's not bad all through. (*sings again*). Vocate me stupidum, dum, dum... I knows it be not a holy chant - but it is in lovely Latin, which THOU wouldst be at a loss to understand.

Badger: Ha! I need be no Latin scholar to recognise that our captive Jackanapes has had a merry game with thee, Jake.

Jake: Oh? How so?

Badger: Thy chant doth call everyone to call thee stupid - and well they might!
Ha,ha, ha, ha! Hood hath hoodwinked thee right enough!

Jake: *(singing slowly)* Stupidum, dum, dum.... *(Angrily realising the truth of BADGER'S words)* Ooooh! Wait until I get my hands on him! He shall be punished for this!

Badger: I doth suggest that we deprive him of his piece of blue mouldy bread and pond water tonight.

Jake: Nay, I canst do better than that. He shall be forced to watch whilst I EAT his mouldy bread!

Badger: *(Aside).* Methinks Master Hood's chant rings true! *(to JAKE)* Come, put on a smile for the King.

Jake: Makes a change to join a guard of honour - hast thou ever seen the King?

Badger: *(As they walk off).* Aye, lots of times.... *(ALLEN, RUFUS, WILL, MUCH and LITTLE JOHN come out of the shadows).*

Allen: That were close! This must be near the meeting pla....

Eli: *(enters from same side as BADGER and JAKE'S entry)* Ah, thou didst follow my instructions well. Dost thou have the gowns? *(LITTLE JOHN is carrying a bundle of clothes).*

Little John: *(handing them to ELI).* Here they be.

Eli: And the instruments?

Much & Rufus: Aye, we do.

Eli: And the silent weapon?

Will: This be it, though 'tis not QUITE silent - it be humming a little on account of it being made from one of Little John's socks! *(the Others chuckle).* One whiff - knockout! *(He swings the sock weapon around, and Others respond suitably).*

Little John: 'Ere! How darest thou!! *(a scuffle breaks out).*

Allen & Eli: SHHH!! Now LISTEN. First we be going to release Robin, then we find the Scragg Ends and deal with them.

Little John: *(flexing his fists).* I cannot wait!

Eli: Stay in the shadows until I givest thee the word. *(He leads them all into the prison room - perhaps by going offstage for a brief scene change, then re-entering. The BAND keep well to the back of the set. A jail is indicated at one side of the stage and Robin is behind bars. CYRIL SCRAGGETT and the three SCRAGG ENDS are dumbly laughing at him. CYRIL wears his floppy hat).* Why, Master Scraggett! Fancy thee being down here!

Cyril: Been asked to give an eye to the prisoner. Sheriff was a bit short of men to form a guard of honour for the King's arrival. We've been cheering Robin Hood up with our rehearsing for tonight's banquet.

Eli: *(going to look into the jail).* So this be the notorious Robin Hood - being put

into a cage appears to have tamed thee. (*ROBIN scowls*). Well, Master Scraggett, I be right glad to have found thee, as the Sheriff sent me urgently with these gowns. He be particularly keen for thee and thy Band to look thy best tonight and has had these made especially for thee.

Cyril: How kind of him. Boys! Let us try them for size. (*They take off their tunics - comic underwear possible - and put on the new ones, which are ludicrously 'loud' with lengths of rope dangling. ROBIN'S BAND have crept in and are lurking in the shadows upstage. ROBIN looks flabbergasted, but the BAND signal to him not to give the game away*)

Eli: My! How, er - different thou lookest. (*trying not to laugh*).

Scragg End 1: Why dost they have bits of rope dangling?

Eli: Dost not know? 'Tis the latest fashion from London. Sheriff would not wish the King to think we be out of date in fair Nottingham. (*They all nod in agreement and swagger about, very pleased with themselves*). Wouldst thou do me the kindness of singing thy charming song? See how thou feelest, dressed and singing in thy new tunics.

Cyril: Very well! A pleasure! Scragg Ends! One, two...

MUSIC 13 - CYRIL'S SONG

(The SCRAGG ENDS sing their song. At the point in the song where they each echo the 'howl', ROBIN'S BAND, who have positioned themselves behind the singers, take action. MUCH stands behind SCRAGG END 1, WILL behind SCRAGG END 2, LITTLE JOHN behind SCRAGG END 3 and ALLEN behind CYRIL. RUFUS watches the action keenly. MUCH bops NO. 1 with the sock as CYRIL sings "And Howl," SCRAGG END 1 howls and falls into MUCH'S arms. MUCH has passed the sock to WILL immediately after 'bopping.' The whole process is repeated with WILL and SCRAGG END 2 and LITTLE JOHN and SCRAGG END 3. CYRIL is looking intently at his music scroll and does not notice what has happened).

Cyril: Boys, I think you missed the harmony there - let's try that last bit once again. As a dog cries for a bone. (*with a delighted expression, ALLEN bops him just before he sings 'Howl!' and CYRIL howls and collapses into RUFUS'S arms. The BAND set about dragging the SCRAGG ENDS into position, so that they are all sitting back to back, them, using the dangling pieces of rope on the tunics, tie them up together*).

Will: There they be - the Scragg Ends - out - cold as MUTTON !

Robin: Well done, Band. I've been trying to get them to put a sock in it for the past five minutes. But how about letting ME OUT?

Eli: (*going over to release ROBIN*) Much, Will, all of thee, get dressed in the

Scragg Ends' clothes. Make haste. Here, Robin, a tunic for thee also. (*as there are four tunics from the SCRAGG ENDS, these are worn by WILL, MUCH, RUFUS and ROBIN. LITTLE JOHN can wear a cloak belonging to one of CYRIL'S Band, over his own costume. ROBIN needs to wear CYRIL'S tunic; ALLEN stays as he is. ROBIN also takes CYRIL'S hat*).

Robin: What IS happening?

Allen: Our good friend, Eli, here, has helped us to work a wonderful trick.

Robin: (*to ELI*) I thank thee.

Allen: The fair Maid Marian and her Maids have given their aid by stitching all through the night and making yon daft garments. (*pointing to the sleeping SCRAGG ENDS*)

Robin: I shall thank Maid Marian heartily.

Allen: Right HEARTILY indeed. (*He gives ROBIN a knowing nod and indicates his own heart*).

Robin: Oh, no!

Allen: Oh, yes! She has done all this on condition that thou honours the promise made long ago.

Robin: (*panicking*). Thou meanest that I must MARRY HER?

Allen: Such was the message.

Robin: How rash I was when a youth! Is there no chance that Marian spake in jest?

Allen: (*shaking his head*). None.

Will: (*coming forward and slapping ROBIN on the shoulder*). There it be, Robin - thou wilt have to swap your OUTLAWS for INLAWS!!

Robin: (*resignedly*). So be it. I canst not bear to stay here.

Little John: Word had it that thou was to become a monk.

Robin: (*brighter*). That was my ploy - I knewest that such news would hasten my Merry Band to my rescue. (*pointing to the heap of SCRAGG ENDS*) Now wouldst kindly explain WHAT GOETH ON HERE?

Allen: Thou art going to pretend to be Cyril and his Band and play in the gallery at the King's banquet.

Robin: But we couldst NEVER sing their crummy song!

Allen: Worry ye not! The Band and myself have perfected a song fit only for a King's ears. When he hearest it he will have no choice but to employ thee as his minstrels and set them free from outlawry.

Robin: But I know NOT this song. How canst I perform it?

Allen: I shall be concealed behind thee, and thou must do what all the BIG STARS do - stand there and MIME!!

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4 (The Castle Banqueting Hall)

(At the rear of the Set is a raised Minstrels' Gallery. To one side of the Stage, at an oblique angle is a long banqueting table. COURTIERS are grouped around watching the SERVANTS place dishes and goblets on the Table. If possible there should be a Spit with meat being rotated by a SERVANT).

MUSIC 14 - COURTIERS' SONG

Courtiers: *Oh, what a scene of delight!
The castle is quivering with excitement!*

Chorus: *Fetch the trenchers, trenchers, trenchers.
Bring the dishes, dishes, dishes.
Put in motion, motion, motion,
Sheriff's wishes, wishes, wishes.*

Courtiers: *All around there's hustle and joy.
Among each one in the Sheriff's employ,
All their skills they must deploy
From the majordomo to the kitchen boy.*

Chorus: *Fetch the trenchers, etc....*

Cooks: *We're making the most of a bill of fare
Chosen by the Sheriff with economy spare!
If we cook it with infinite care -
The King may enjoy a meal most rare!*

Chorus: *Fetch the trenchers, etc.... (HOPPER enters during chorus)*

Courtiers: *Here comes Hopper quite comically dress'd*
Hopper: *To please the King I've done my best
To find an original royal jest
Which will tickle his ribs right through his vest!*

Chorus: *Fetch the trenchers, etc....*

All: *We'll make the finest banquet
And everyone agrees (MAID MARIAN enters with cheese)
The special tasty finishing touch
Is Maid Marian's cheese -
Hurrah! for the cheese!*

*A Splendid task accomplished,
We've set out everything,
Now summon up the heralds
To welcome in the King! (MAID MARIAN exits at end of song)*

(Two HERALDS appear and 'play' MUSIC 15 - FANFARE. This signals MUSIC 16 - LIONHEART PROCESSION to begin, and the KING, preceded by BADGER and JAKE who are carrying banners and followed by the SHERIFF, POND and other dignitaries, process from the back of the auditorium - or otherwise at the Director's discretion. The KING acknowledges the COURTIERS and takes his place at the end of the table, so that his back is virtually to the AUDIENCE. The SHERIFF sits at the opposite end with POND beside him. They toast the KING with their goblets. SERVANTS discreetly bring on more food and HOPPER begins his 'turn' by somersaulting, if possible with drum roll accompaniments).

Hopper: Your Majesty, my Lord Sheriff, ladies and gentlemen! How about a conundrum or two? Here - What did the brown mummy frog say to her naughty brown baby frog? "Do as you're toad!" *(All groan)*. Here - Why is Master Pond's cricket score like unto a mallard going for a stroll?

Courtier: I don't know - why is Master Pond's cricket score like unto a mallard going for a stroll?

Hopper: Always out for a duck-Pond! *(All laugh this time - POND looks daggers at HOPPER, who makes matters worse by giving him a bop with his 'bladder' on a stick. KING enjoys this very much. HOPPER is gaining confidence all the time and in danger of going "over the top")*. Here - this be a good one - Why is our good Master Badger an old stick-in-the-mud eh?

Courtier 2: I expect our Master BADGER is an old stick-in-the-mud because he is too SETT in his ways! *(Boom, boom on the drum and HOPPER looks indignant and bops the COURTIER with his 'bladder' on a stick. Merriment from Crowd)*.

Hopper: O ho! There be a smart Alec in our midst!

Courtier 2: Come, Master Hopper - I be the one who gave thee that jest!
(BADGER has been looking put out and now directs his look to COURTIER 2)

Hopper: That be true, but hear this - what did the Scottish Cockerel say to the

little Scottish hen?

Courtier 3: Er - tell me - what did the Scottish Cockerel say to the little Scottish hen?

Hopper: Cock-a-doo-the-NOO!! (*more mirth from Everyone - even the SHERIFF*).

Hopper: (*now really back on form*) Likest that one, eh? Thou art like that little Scottish hen - she likes plenty of corn too! Here's a little bird impression for you. (*He spins around on the spot a couple of times, saying "Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!"*) There - the Sheriff said he wanted a CHEAP TURN for tonight! (*SHERIFF looks a bit uncomfortable. The Crowd are lapping-up HOPPER'S impertinence*),

Hopper: Phew! I be quite giddy, so I'll spin thee another yarn. Here, here - why shouldst our noble Sheriff's dear old Mum have been a film-star?

Courtier 4: (*a little warily, as the SHERIFF'S face is looking decidedly less happy*) I dost have no idea why our noble Sheriff's dear old Mum shouldst have been a film-star.

Hopper: What? With a name like that? Ol'Ma SHEREEF !! (*This is too much for the SHERIFF, who snatches the 'bladder' and bops HOPPER. The HERALDS quickly appear and play another Fanfare, saving the SHERIFF from making too nasty a scene. This is a signal for the BAND to enter, take up their instruments and begin playing THE COURT SHOE SHUFFLE. ROBIN, ALLEN and the MERRY MEN are of course disguised as CYRIL SCRAGGETT and his BAND. HOPPER joins the Crowd, who slap him on the back, etc.*).

MUSIC 17 - THE COURT SHOE SHUFFLE

Robin & Band: *Take a Lionheart-beat!
You can feel it move your feet;
Start walking like a buffle -
Do the Court Shoe Shuffle!*

(*As soon as the music begins, SHERIFF registers shock and horror, sits bolt upright - maybe even loses a mouthful of food - contorts his face, holds his ears and eventually explodes with rage.*)

Sheriff: Cyril Scraggett! Cease! CEASE!! What NOISE is this? (*He leaps up*) It's certainly NOT the music thou hast been employed to play! Play thy howling song, or thou shalt visit my dungeon forthwith! (*suddenly feels very embarrassed and addresses the KING*). Your Majesty! Forgive my outburst - and I trust thy ears hurt not. (*KING shakes his head. ROBIN and the*

BAND look helplessly at each other, muttering such words as ‘What do we do now?’, etc. ALLEN indicates that ROBIN gets on with it and promptly gives him a shove, so that he is standing alone in front of the gallery. He makes a brave attempt at singing Cyril’s song, and the others join in with horrible howls).

Robin: *I’m all alone,*
Band: *Alone, alone, alone, alone, alone!!*
Robin: *And I - I - (remembering) groan!*

King: *(holding his ears and becoming increasingly distressed, in spite of a fixed satisfied smile on the SHERIFF’S face). Enough! (KING leaping up) ENOUGH!! If thou dost not play thy first joyful tune, I shall have thee all thrown into the Tower! (with jubilant expressions the BAND launch once again into their song, and come down from the Gallery. They dance too - see dance instructions in production notes).*

Robin & Band: *Take a Lionheart-beat!*
You can feel it move your feet;
Start walking like a buffle -
Do the Court Shoe Shuffle!

Chorus: *One, two, one, two, follow my/his lead,*
The Court Shoe Shuffle sure satisfies a need!
All: *One, two, one, two, follow his lead*
The Court Shoe Shuffle sure satisfies a need!

**Robin, Band
& Chorus:** *Take this Lion-heart beat!*
You can feel it move your feet
Kick up a kerfuffle -
Doing the Court Shoe Shuffle!

All: *One, two, one, two, follow my/his lead,*
The Court Shoe Shuffle sure satisfies a need!

Robin & Band: *One, two, one, two, you can’t deny it,*
Jump to your feet now, you’ve simply got to try it!

King: *Yeah!! (He leaps up and joins in the dance. RUFUS tries to get the SHERIFF to dance, but he refuses, so RUFUS dances with one of the LADY*

COURTIERS. The KING drags the SHERIFF to his feet, who in turn makes POND join in too. POND keeps his usual straight face, but dutifully dances).

Robin, Band

& Chorus: *It's the Lionheart-beat
That is starting to move your feet,
All the chicks' feathers ruffle,
For the Court Shoe Shuffle!*

All: *One, two, one, two, follow his lead,
The Court Shoe Shuffle sure satisfies a need!*

Robin & Band: *One, two, one, two, oh so simple!
Ladies, let your hair down and throw away your wimple!*

(Old EMILY pulls off her wimple, displaying tangled hair, and grinning, showing blacked-out teeth. Everyone groans).

*Yes, the Lionheart-beat
Sure is turning up the heat!
Now you're walking like a buffle -
Doing the Court Shoe Shuffle!*

All: *One, two, one, two, follow his lead,
The Court Shoe Shuffle sure satisfies a need!*

Robin & Band: *One, two, one, two, it's just the thing
To serve up hot and set before the King!*

All: *Doing the Court Shoe Shuffle! Yeah!!*

(By this time everyone is dancing, and the KING has led the way round the stage, and he finishes up either alone, or with others up on the table, so final lines of song have BAND kneeling in front of the table, arms outstretched to the KING).

King: Forsooth! Yes, verily! Phew!! *(mopping his brow).* 'Tis many a moon since I was so joyful. *(jumps down from the table).* I didst enjoy that more than my last skirmish with the infidels! *(Expansively)* How canst I express my PLEASURE to the WORLD?

Will: Forgive me, your Majesty, *(bowing).* but an amnesty for prisoners and outlaws always goes down well.

King: Forsooth! Agreed! I hereby make decree - All prisoners and outlaws shall forthwith be set FREE! *(ALL cheer - The BAND leap around in sheer*

delight and ROBIN throws the big floppy hat, which belonged to Cyril, in the air).

Robin & Band: We're free We're free!!!

Sheriff: *(weakly, on recognising ROBIN).* Robin Hood! ROBIN HOOD!! I shouldst have guessed. He is free to rob the rich again. With respect, your Majesty, this man is too dangerous to be allowed freedom. Why, only the other day, he cruelly attacked a local Innkeeper and robbed him of his takings.

Robin: *(heatedly).* No, my Lord - thou mayest not wish to believe it, but I have long since repent of my old ways, and this one year past have robbed no-one. *(looks at his clothes).* Aside from borrowing Cyril's robes. *(before the KING can reply, ELI comes bursting in, falls on his knees before the KING)*

Eli: Permit me to speak, your Majesty. *(The KING is so surprised that he signals for ELI to continue).* I canst bear witness to Robin's innocence, for I was close by when this crime was committed. Here is proof that it was none other than the Sheriff's henchman, BADGER, who robbed the Innkeeper. Here is the green hood which he wore - I found it - in Badger's closet! *(gasps from everyone).*

Pond: *(clearing his throat).* Might THIS be the Innkeeper's money-bag? Our noble Sheriff handed it to me - on the day of the Fayre. *(more gasps from the Crowd).*

Innkeeper: *(stepping forward).* Let me see. *(he examines it carefully).* Yes! Certainly! This be my money- bag! *(more Crowd response).*

Badger: *(panicking).* I was only carrying out Sheriff's orders.... *(SHERIFF has been making 'hush-up' signs to BADGER, who ignores him).*

King: *(sternly to SHERIFF).* Be this the truth?

Sheriff: *(flinging himself at the KING'S feet, and clutching at the KING'S robes).* MERCY, your Majesty! - What about the amnesty?

King: THY misdeed has been brought to light AFTER mine decree. Therefore thou must suffer punishment. I banish thee forthwith! Badger! Takest thy master from my sight! *(Crowd boo and hiss as the SHERIFF is led away, and POND at long last breaks out into a loud hearty laugh).*

King: And as for thee, Robin Hood, whatever thy past, I command that ye become mine own Minstrel. How sayest thou?

Robin: *(dropping to his knees).* Oh, my liege - a dream come true! But I canst not forsake my merry Band, *(he does a double take, as MAID MARIAN has arrived with FRIAR TUCK, and they are standing in the Group with the BAND)* nor my intended wife, Marian, not to mention our good cook, Tuckie *(ROBIN stands up).* AND our new-found friend, Eli.

King: *(drily).* Be that the lot?

Robin: *(suddenly noticing a hopeful-looking ALLEN-A-DALE).* Er - no! We cannot do without our musical adviser, Allen-a-Dale.

King: *(after a teasing moment of consideration)* Thou art all welcome. Come! Strike up thy Band once more - mine courtly shoes DEMAND that they SHUFFLE!

Rufus: Now, that IS nice!!

REPRISE - COURT SHOE SHUFFLE

THE END