

WATCH THIS SPACE

An Original Musical

by

**GRAHAM FERGUSON
and DAVID HARDING**

Music by

DAVID HARDING

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

WATCH THIS SPACE

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SchoolPlay Productions Limited,
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CAST

Oliver Rix (*in the guise of Commander Orr*)

Katharine (*or KARL*) **Andrews** (*or Chief Navigator Kaa*)

Gavin English (*in the guise of Chief Engineer Gee*)

Samantha (*or SAMUEL*) **Stevens**

Matthew Hind

Joanne (*or JUSTIN*) **Tillett**

Simon Ruffle

Julie (*or TONY*) **Snow**

Edward York

Professor Stroganoff

Hercules Nisbett-Smith (*Mayor of Birchdale*)

Sue Nisbett-Smith (*Mayoress fof Birchdale*)

Chorus of Children and Villagers

WATCH THIS SPACE

by **Graham Ferguson and David Harding**

The scene is a barn, on the outskirts of the village of Birchdale (twinned with Abatoir in France). At the back of the stage UR is the model of a space ship, not very well made. Also at the back UL is a myterious cabinet with coloured lights on the exterior - this is the Professor's Time Machine. It has a door on the front, there is room for at least three people inside, and (unknown to the audience) it has a false back through which the cast can disappear during the action. Apart from this, the stage can be decorated with the sort of things one finds in a barn - rakes, cart-wheels, bales of hay - though the less clutter onstage, the better.

SONG 1 - SPACE INVADERS

(There is a short prelude on the piano, as the house lights go down. The curtain opens, revealing the empty stage. The children enter, one by one, in the following fashion:- On the first word "Space --", a child appears UL and stands. On the second word "Space --", a second child appears UR. The third child appears DL, the fourth child DR. Then the four children move together to centre stage, leaving room for the next four to appear in a similar way. One verse will bring on twelve children. If there are more, repeat the verse until they are all on stage. All the children are dressed in space suits. They group in a horseshoe round the stage eventually, with OLIVER standing DC, KATHARINE on his left and GAVIN on his right to dominate the group. As the other children reach a solo, they move forward, sing it, then return to their original place).

First Child: *Space -*
Second Child: *Space -*
Third Child: *Space -*
Fourth Child: *Space -*
All Four: *Invaders*

Out of a nebula fly!
Fifth Child: *Space -*
Sixth Child: *Space -*
Seventh Child: *Space -*
Eighth Child: *Space -*
All Eight: *Invaders*

Oliver Rix (Commander Orr) :

*When flying with Commander Orr,
You're sure adventure's in store,
We zap at Zygons
We pow at Vogons,
And then we count up the score!*

Katharine Andrews (Kaa) :

*When Navigator Kaa's on the screen
You don't know where you are until you've almost been!
A data board, in eights,
Lights with co-ordinates;
I programmed it, aged only seventeen!*

Gavin English (Gee) :

*Engineering's all up to me.
The panic button's for Gee!
If anti-matter fuses,
And the warp-drive power loses,
Then my biro top produces energy!*

**Samantha, Matthew, Joanne,
Simon, Julie, Edward:**

*We are the astronomical crew;
We're expert at just all we have to do:
Repair a broken door;
A planet to explore;
We're loyal, bright, courageous, brave and true!*

All Children:

*Here we race
In Outer Space
At hyperluminal pace!
Flying with Commander Orr,
Piercing through the Galaxy's core.
It's such fun
As on we run
While heading into the sun.
We graze Orion's knee
And fly in Zero Gee;
Space Invaders are we!*

Oliver: that box thing is meant to be a Time Machine?

(There is general laughter).

Joanne: *(aside).* Well, he certainly spends enough TIME working on it!

Matthew: It's going to be ready to try out soon.

Gavin: Ready for take-off?

Matthew: I'm not sure if it actually takes off.

Katharine: Could cause a few problems for Farmer Ogdon's roof!

Samantha: I expect the Professor has thought of that.

Matthew: Erm of course he has!

Joanne: Hm! Nothing that a few adjustments with a screwdriver won't put right!

Gavin: *(Looking at JOANNE disapprovingly).* What the average layman, or should I say laywoman

Katharine: Layperson is the acceptable term, Gavin dear!

Gavin: What isn't understood are the basic principles of time travel. Roofs are no problem. It's not your conventional take-off.

Matthew: *(Relieved).* Exactly. You've got it, Gavin. Another dimension.

Julie: *[She is sweet but slow and brainless].* What does that mean, Matthew?

Matthew: Erm what?

Julie: Another dim-

Gavin: Dimension, dear!

Julie: Ah! Dimensiondear! *(Laughter).*

Matthew: Ah well how should I put it?

Joanne: In plain English.

Matthew: Yes well It's quite simple, really

Katharine: Well. while Matthew's busy explaining the meaning of time travel, the rest of us had better get on finishing the float. Come on, people! *(She claps her hands).*

Edward: *[He is rather lazy by nature, resents OLIVER'S position as Commander, and resents KATHARINE'S bossiness even more]. (Up till now, he has been showing little interest in the proceedings, and has been dozing on the end of the float. He stretches and yawns languidly).* What's the rush? The Carnival Procession isn't until tomorrow.

Samantha: But you know what Councillor Nisbett-Smith said

Oliver: All floats must be ready for

Simon: inspection

Katharine: TONIGHT!

Oliver: Some kind of rehearsal she's planning.

Joanne: You know how touchy she is. If you're not ready, you'll be for it!

Oliver: Since Councillor Nisbett-Smith became Mayoress, nobody's managed to get a word in edgeways.

Joanne: Especially that husband of hers.

Samantha: And such a nice little man even if he is a dwarf.

Julie: Well, I like him. Alderman Hercules gave me a packet of Monster Munch last year for coming seventeenth in the Carnival Fancy Dress.

Edward: That's about the level this float will reach. Still, as far as I'm concerned, Carnival Processions are boring.

Katharine: Now, now, Edward. Stop putting the damper on things.

Oliver: A lot of hard work has gone into this

Simon: float.

Katharine: And there's still much to do.

Edward: I feel like a tin of baked beans, dressed up like this.

Katharine: Well you're certainly full of hot air, Edward, that's for sure.

Julie: I think you look pretty.

Edward: Ugh!

Matthew: What you need is something to bring the float to life.

Gavin: Like what, Matthew?

Matthew: Like a like a proper Time Machine.

Oliver: I thought "Space Invaders" was an exciting enough theme for any float.

Edward: Rubbish. It's all old hat. Out of date. Boring.

Gavin: Then let's make sure it's exciting.

Matthew: What are you thinking about, Gavin?

Katharine: Oh, no, Gavin, not another of your wild ideas!

Gavin: No, I think Matthew's got a point. Suppose Professor Stroganoff's Time Machine were to work

Edward: Suppose pige could fly!

Joanne: That'll be the day!

Matthew: Oh, it will work one day.

Gavin: Suppose the Professor were to travel through time.

Joanne: Great. I'll tell Grandpa to pack his bags!

Gavin: Supposing the Professor were to arrive on a planet and meet aliens

Edward: Supposing you've got a screw loose

Matthew: Aliens? What aliens? Who?

Gavin: US!

(Excited reaction. OLIVER holds up his hand).

Oliver: Wait a mo', Gavin. I'm no alien. It was agreed that I would be the Commander of the Space Invaders. Commander Oliver Rix. Commander

Orr, you said.

Edward: Yecch!

Gavin: I can see the headlines now. *(He points the words in the air).*
STROGANOFF MEETS ORR It'll be a brilliant way of testing to see how good our costumes and float are.

Edward: *(Sourly).* We'll also see how good a leader Oliver is.

Katharine: Come on, now. This isn't a time for playing games. We've got to face the Mayoress soon.

Gavin: Oh, hang the Mayoress. Who votes we give it a try?

(All except KATHARINE enthusiastically raise their hands).

Julie: I think it's a very clever idea. Well done, Gavin.

Edward: *(Yawning).* Might be a bit of fun.

Matthew: I don't know if Grandfather will swallow it. I mean, he's a very highly qualified man

Simon: He will if you and Joanne go with him and play along

Samantha: He'll be in his element

Joanne: Well, I'm game. Come on, Matthew. Be a sport.

Gavin: When will he be getting back?

Joanne: Very soon. He only went to "Braddle 'n' Bit", the ironmonger's

Matthew: He's working on one of the heat-resistant shields

Gavin: There's not a moment to lose, then. We must lure the Professor into his machine, and then simulate take-off. Joanne, you can pretend to pull the wrong lever or something. And then, when the three of you emerge

Katharine: Help!

Julie: He'll think he's in another

Simon: dimensiondear!

(Everybody laughs).

Julie: That's it! Did I get it right this time?

Oliver: We must all play our part.

Gavin: Matthew and Joanne, you'd better get back into your normal clothes. Your task is to lure him into the machine.

Simon: You're going to have a "little accident" with the controls, which sets you off on a trip to an alien planet!

Matthew: O.K.! I'll do it. Great!

Gavin: But we must move quickly and quietly. One thing said or done out of place will give the game away. Remember, everybody, Mum's the Word

SONG 2 - MUM'S THE WORD

Oliver: *Mum's the word!*
Katharine: *Keep it dark!*
Gavin: *Never nark*
Samantha *Little bird!*
All Four: *Our secret's safe as if you'd never heard.*
Matthew: *Mum's the word!*
Joanne: *Walls have ears!*
Simon: *All our fears*
Julie: *Are absurd,*
All Four: *If we agree it never has occurred.*
Edward: *And when you're travelling around,*
Matthew: *Don't make the teeniest sound;*
Joanne: *Your ear should be pressed to the ground*
Edward, Matthew: *Pressed to the ground.*
Simon: *And if you get in a fix,*
Julie: *Just take a tip from the flicks:*
Edward: *Try not to drop bricks,*
Matthew: *Play tricks,*
Joanne: *Say nix*
Edward, Matthew, Joanne, Simon, Julie: *So*
Oliver: *Mum's the word!*
Katharine: *Never fear!*
Gavin: *Nothing here*
Samantha: *Has occurred!*
All Four: *Our secret's safe as if you'd never heard.*
Matthew: *What a prank!*
Joanne: *Quite a jape!*
Simon: *No escape*
Julie: *If we bank*
All Four: *On sealing up our chatter with tape.*
Edward: *So keep it under your hats*
For the present;
Oliver: *Least said avoids what's*
Unpleasant.
Katharine: *Mute your drum;*
Gavin: *Act it numb;*
Samantha: *Play it dumb;*
All Nine: *Because Mum's the word!*

*Mum's the word! Keep it dark!
Never nark little bird!
Our secret's safe as if you'd never heard.
Mum's the word! Walls have ears!
All our fears are absurd,
If we agree it never has occurred.
And when you're travelling around,
Don't make the teeniest sound;
Your ear should be pressed to the ground -
Pressed to the ground.
And if you get in a fix,
Just take a tip from the flicks:
Try not to drop bricks, play tricks, say nix so
Mum's the word! Never fear!
Nothing here has occurred!
Our secret's safe as if you'd never heard.
What a prank! Quite a jape!
No escape, if we bank
On sealing up our chatter with tape.
So keep it under your hats for the present;
Least said avoids what's unpleasant.
Mute your drum, act it numb, play it dumb,
Because Mum's the word!*

(The CHILDREN race off to hide, leaving MATTHEW and JOANNE on stage. During the Chorus, they have shed their Space Suits, helped by the others, and are now in everyday clothes. Their space suits are stowed away on the float, which is then covered by a large sheet. Enter PROFESSOR STROGANOFF. He is a typical "absent-minded Prof" type. His clothing is untidy and carelessly assembled without any thought for style or colour. He walks into the barn during a short interlude on the piano, fails to notice the concealed float or any concealed SPACE INVADERS, and goes towards JOANNE and MATTHEW who are waiting Centre Stage).

SONG 3 - SNAP FINGERS

Professor: *Months and months I've wrestled with the problem.
Could I be the first to win the race?
Break the barrier through the fourth dimension;
Make the jigsaw puzzle fit in place.*

***But there's no need to ponder very deeply,
Sitting like a statue made of wax:
Snap your fingers clap your hands and whistle;
Answers come if only you relax.***

***Snap fingers, clap hands, and there you are: A.B.C.!
You snap fingers, clap hands, and you'll go far with this policy.
Not a bad plan - quite a mad plan -
I've got it tied up and signed and sealed.
It's a hot plot - hits the jackpot!
How's it done? Everything is revealed if you will
Just whistle. Soon this'll send you up (here goes!)
To the top. (Let's do it!)
Snap fingers, clap hands, and you will never want it to stop!***

(The PROFESSOR has been demonstrating what he means to JOANNE and MATTHEW who have been endeavouring to copy his actions rather clumsily. Now they've got the hang of it, and all three throw themselves wholeheartedly into it).

THE ACTIONS OF THE SONG:-

<i>Snap</i>	<i>(next beat, snap fingers to the Right)</i>
<i>fingers</i>	<i>(next beat, snap fingers to the Left)</i>
<i>clap</i>	<i>(next beat, snap fingers R)</i>
<i>hands and there you are</i>	<i>(next two beats, clap hands to the L)</i>
<i>A.B.C.</i>	<i>(next beat, smack knees bada bada bom bom*BOM bom)</i>
<i>*YOU snap</i>	<i>(next beat, snap fingers R)</i>
<i>fingers</i>	<i>(next beat, snap fingers L)</i>
<i>clap</i>	<i>(next beat, snap fingers R)</i>
<i>hands and you'll go far</i>	<i>(on "far", put hands on hips)</i>
<i>with this policy</i>	<i>(on "-cy" stamp R foot, stamp L foot, stamp R foot)</i>
<i>Not a bad</i>	<i>(on "bad" draw R hand outwards, palm upwards)</i>
<i>plan, quite a mad</i>	<i>(on "mad", draw L hand outwards, palm up)</i>
<i>plan I've got it</i>	<i>(next beat, lift both hands as high as poss)</i>
<i>tied up and signed and sealed</i>	<i>(on "sealed" lower hands slowly)</i>
<i>It's a hot</i>	<i>(on "hot", L foot steps L, snap fingers R same time)</i>
<i>plot</i>	<i>(next beat, R foot crosses in front of L foot.; snap L)</i>
<i>hits the jack-</i>	<i>(on "jack" LF steps L, snap R)</i>
<i>pot</i>	<i>(next beat, RF X L, snap L as before)</i>
<i>How's it done?</i>	<i>(next two beats, clap R)</i>
<i>Everything</i>	<i>(March back to orig. place RF on "thing"</i>
<i>is re-</i>	<i>(LF on "re"</i>
<i>vealed</i>	<i>(RF on next beat</i>
<i>if you</i>	<i>(LF on "you"</i>

will just (RF together with LF on "just"; next beat whistle)
whistle (next beat, whistle)
Soon (next beat, whistle)
This'll send you up
(here goes!) ("here goes" is shouted).
to the top
(let's do it) ("let's do it" is sung)
Snap (next beat, snap R)
fingers (next beat, snap L)
clap (next beat, clap R)
hands and you will never want it to -
never want it to stop.

Snap your fingers,
Clap hands,
And there you are
No bar
To how far
You'll go
If the star
You know
Is on top -----! (Slowly raise hands high)

(* BOM and YOU coincide on the same beat).

(The PROFESSOR, JOANNE and MATTHEW get into the Time Machine. The other CHILDREN reappear and gather round the box).

SONG 4 - TAKE-OFF

Gavin: *Fifteen seconds and counting!*
Samantha: *Fifteen seconds and counting!*
Oliver: *Flaps!*
Simon: *Flaps!*
Edward: *Ten seconds and counting!*
Gavin: *Ten seconds and counting!*
Samantha: *Ig-nite!*
Oliver: *Ten seconds and counting!*
Simon: *Ig-nite!*
Edward:
Gavin: *Five seconds and counting!*
Samantha: *Five seconds and counting!*
Oliver: *Fire!*
Simon: *Five seconds & counting*

Edward: *Fire!*
Samantha: *Fire!*

(Chorus goes "o" for two bars, with each child on a different note giving a wide band of sound, low-pitched, rising to medium. Then two "ah" bars with medium sound rising to scream).

Oliver: *Co-ordinates!*
Katharine: *Three six zero!*
Oliver: *Fire booster!*
Gavin: *Booster fired!*

(Chorus splits into four groups. First group during the above do a voiceless "ch" as in Scottish "loch" to represent the roar of the rocket; second group do "sh" sound increasing in volume to represent the whoosh of the spacecraft through the air; third and fourth groups make low humming noises, crescendo and rising in pitch).

Oliver: *Here we go!*
Katharine: *Here we go!*
Gavin: *Here we go!*
Oliver: *Taking off!*
Samantha: *Taking off!*
Simon: *Taking off!*
Oliver: *We have Lift Off!*
Katharine, Gavin: *Lift Off!*
Samantha, Simon: *Lift Off!*
Julie, Edward: *Lift Off!*

(First group continue "ch" sound during the above; second group do low rolled "r" rising gently in pitch; third group sing "o" individually, overlapping in loops as on the musical score; and the fourth group do trilled whistles rising in pitch, sounding like electronic music).

(Lights flash on the Time Machine. One group of children rock the box from the left, a second group rock the box on the right.. The PROFESSOR, MATTHEW and JOANNE slip out of the false back of the box, which now permits the cast to lift it slightly and wobble it. Later the PROFESSOR returns to the box when it is back on the ground, followed by MATTHEW and JOANNE.

(Some of the remaining children mime with arms and hands, suggesting images of shooting stars, asteroids and meteorites whizzing by; while others float around the rest of the group, bending up and down to suggest travelling, and motion through a no-gravity area.

On music cue, the CHORUS forms into lines and sings one verse of the Space Invaders Song).

SONG 4a - *SPACE INVADERS* - (REPRISE)

Reprise of No. 1 (without middle section).

(The simulated flight ends. The door of the Time Machine swings ajar. The CHILDREN hide within earshot of the next section of conversation, which takes place inside the Time Machine. The PROFESSOR, MATTHEW and JOANNE will have to keep their voices up if the Time Machine muffles the sound).

Matthew: I think we have landed.

Professor: Extraordinary! Ah well ha! My goodness! I didn't think it was ready! Something has certainly happened. Hm! Remarkable! We do appear to have stopped. Who would have thought Phew! What a relief!

Joanne: I feel sick!

Professor: Hm! Oh dear! It was bumpy. For a moment, I almost thought we had taken off. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!

Matthew: Let's explore.

Professor: Explore! Ha-ha-ha! I don't think we've gone really very far, Matthew.

Matthew: *(Pretending to be shocked).* But Grandfather, you said that this machine was capable of travelling through time!

Professor: Ah! Hm! It is! Rather, it will be one day.

Joanne: This door won't open properly.

Professor: That's the one way lock. I knew it needed adjusting.

Joanne: Just get it open before I

Matthew: Isn't this exciting? Who knows what we will find!

Joanne: I need some fresh air.

Matthew: Wait. Grandfather, won't we need breathing apparatus?

Joanne: I will, if you don't get that door open.

Professor: *(Opening the door).* Ah that's it; good lock, that one. Come on, then, Matthew. Do your exploring!

(All three exit from the Machine)

Professor: Sorry to disappoint you, Matthew. We're still in Farmer Ogdon's barn.

Joanne: *(Looking distastefully at the Time Machine).* Even the air in Farmer Ogdon's barn is better than in that thing.

Matthew: What a let-down!

Professor: *(Laughing).* Never mind! I tell you what why don't you explore? Check things out. Use that imagination of yours. Search out alien creatures.

(He is joking, of course, but at the same moment the "SPACE INVADERS" appear behind him, and the float is pushed forward, as four Children carefully remove the drapes surrounding it).

Professor: You never know what you might find. *(Dreamily)*. What it is to be young! *(He notices the glazed look on the faces of his GRANDCHILDREN)*. Matthew! Joanne! Everything all right? *(Laughing)*. I know, you're dreaming of alien worlds aliens in Farmer Ogdon's barn! Ho! Ho! Ho! The mind boggles!

Joanne: *(Pointing)*. Look!

Professor: Eh? What?

Joanne: THERE, silly. *(He looks in the opposite direction)*.

Matthew: BEHIND YOU, Grandfather!

Professor: Ugh! Aliens!

(He collapses, supported by MATTHEW and JOANNE).

Gavin: *(Putting on a synthetic voice)*. Do- not- be- afraid!

Joanne: *(Playing her part, but cynical as usual)*. That's a daft thing for an ugly, alien creature to say. We don't meet your sort every day of the week, you know!

Oliver: We come in *(He holds up his hand)*.

Simon: peace.

Joanne: That's it - they're Red Indian Space Invaders!

(OLIVER looks embarrassed. EDWARD gives an exaggerated laugh).

Edward: Earth woman speak with forked tongue.

Gavin: *(Aside to EDWARD)*. Don't overdo it. You'll give the game away.

Oliver: Allow me to introduce myself. I am Commander Orr.

Professor: Ugh! Oooh!

Edward: Orr, he said.

Oliver: This is my Chief Navigator, Kaa.

Edward: Peanut, without the Pea, as she's known.

Oliver: And this is the Chief Engineer, Gee.

Edward: General Electric.

Gavin: Edward! Stop it!

Samantha: Come on, you two. You'll frighten the earth people!

Professor: Ridiculous aliens amazing!

Joanne: We're very pleased to meet you

Matthew: Where are we exactly?

Oliver: Don't you know?

Edward: He wouldn't have asked. Come on, Commander Orr, tell him.

Professor: *(Laughing hysterically)*. Farmer Ogdon's barn Farmer barn
Time Machine aliens Help!

*(He collapses in a heap, again supported by MATTHEW and JOANNE.
Meanwhile, EDWARD, seen by the Audience, lets off a stink bomb).*

Gavin: Time travel can play havoc with a sense of direction.

Matthew: *(Sniffing)*. What's that?

Joanne: I think I'm going to be sick.

Katharine: *(Aside)*. That's all we need - one of Edward's stink bombs!

Matthew: I knew it. A poisoned atmosphere. We need oxygen!

Professor: *(Recovered, and now a little angry)*. Well, I haven't got any! I told you
not to fiddle with my instruments. Ultra-sensitive, I said and they were.
Now look what's happened. You've transported us through some kind of time
warp quite how, I just can't

Julie: Rather like turning the clock forward.

Gavin: Be quiet, silly.

Samantha: Gee, don't be a bully!

*(As everyone is still reeling from the smell, MATTHEW has an idea and rushes into
the Time Machine).*

Matthew: I know!

Professor: Where are you going? Leave my controls alone!

Joanne: We shall be stranded here for ever.

(MATTHEW reappears, wearing a World War One gas mask. Everyone laughs).

Matthew: That's it! Fresh air at last!

Julie: Oo, isn't that clever!

Edward: Why, it's Captain Hun of the Starship Trench Digger.

Professor: *(Who is beginning to come to his senses, pointing to the float)*. Is this
your machine?

Oliver: Yes. That is our space

Simon: vehicle.

Professor: Ah! Hm! Fascinating!

Joanne: It's got more go in it than your bodged box!

Edward: One year old, one owner, low mileage. Any offers?

Professor: Are those wheels?

Gavin: Er well similar slightly advanced design!

Professor: You mean, they're PERFECTLY round?

Gavin: Perfectly

Simon: adapted for making circles in cornfields!

Professor: Fascinating. Wheels on a space

Oliver and Simon: vehicle!

Edward: Got a good spare as well! Not bad for the year 3087!

Professor: Hm! And where is it you said you came from?

Julie: (*Automatically*). 23 Thorndon Gardens

Gavin: Julie! You twit!

Oliver: Space we come from space. We are Space Invaders.

Gavin: Yes. We wander beyond the limits of your universe. We know no frontier.
Our task is to seek out and destoy evil.

Katharine: Ridiculous!

Edward: Robbing the poor to give to the rich.

Joanne: A sort of celestial Robin Hood?

Gavin: Confronting every danger - Daleks, Zoids

Oliver: Boldly going where no man has gone in search of

Simon: Treasure!

Oliver: Treasure?

Simon: Treasure!

Edward: (*Hopping on one leg*). Aha! That be right, Jim lad!

Joanne: Oh, you're space pirates?

Simon: Exactly.

Julie: This is our ship, our space ship.

Professor: Hm! Ingenious! I've got to hand it to you. You nearly took me well done!

Katharine: He's twigged AT LAST!

Professor: Imagination! Well, I never! What it is to be young. To think you nearly had a member of the Royal Society confused!

Katharine: I thought all professors of Physics were permanently confused!

Professor: (*Examining the float in more details*). Tin foil! Ingenious! Milk bottle tops!

Edward: Pasteurised.

Professor: An old cart! Wonderful! Congratulations!

Katharine: Listen! I heard a car pull up outside.

Professor: I see it all now. This is your carnival float.

Katharine: Stop, everybody! Someone's coming!

Professor: Not another alien. Ha-ha-ha!

Katharine: No, much worse. The Mayoress!

Oliver: Oh dear.

Simon: The Battleaxe of Birchdale!

Katharine: And the float is still not ready because of your games.

Julie and Oliver: Oh dear!

Professor: Ah, now! Perhaps I can assist.

Joanne: Mr. Universe couldn't restrain Councillor Nisbett-Smith.

Professor: I may be getting on, but there's fire in the old

Katharine: One thing's for sure. That wimp of a husband of hers doesn't stand an earthly!

Samantha: A nice man, though.

Matthew: If that's what marriage does to a man, I never want

Katharine: Quiet! She's coming! Remember the March we have to sing when she mounts the Carnival rostrum. Let's do it now, then we might get away with the float.

Edward: See the conquering battleaxe come

SONG 5 - TRIUMPHAL MARCH

(Triumphal fanfare and march. The CHILDREN make up a ceremonial formation in which the PROFESSOR good-naturedly joins. Once in their ranks, making a sweeping arc of welcome towards the doorway of the bar, they sing the Anthem of Welcome. There is widespread suspicion that the Mayoress herself wrote the words of this particular song).

Omnes: *Mayoress of Birchdale, so strong and brave and fair!
Steadfast, she leads our noble town, (and also the Mayor).
Praise to the Mayoress, let hearts and voices now acclaim
Sue Nisbett-Smith! (As well as he who also bears her name!)
Praise to the Mayoress, let hearts and voices now acclaim
Sue Nisbett-Smith! (As well as he who also bears her name!).*

(But to everyone's relief, and to a complete anti-climax, in comes pattering the Mayor, Hercules Nisbett-Smith. He is a small insignificant man, but is prepared to try hard. He also cowers to the pressure of his wife).

Hercules: Hello, everyone! Sorry to bother you!

Edward: It's the Wild Man of Birchdale!

Katharine: Where's the Mayoress?

Simon: Ugh! She'll want that March done all over again.

Hercules: Just thought I'd pop in. My wife is having words with the chauffeur.

Joanne: Poor man!

Simon: Doubt if he'll get away alive!

Hercules: But, as I said to her, driving down farm tracks, one has to expect it.

Oliver: Expect what?

Edward: Use your imagination! (*Everyone chuckles*).

Hercules: It'll wash off easily enough.

Mayoress (Off): : HERCULES!

(Deathly silence, as everyones's head slowly turns towards the door).

Hercules: (*In a baby voice, shuddering*). Oh Lord! (*Calling*). Yes, dear!

Mayoress (Off): : Hercules! Can you hear me? (*She is roaring at full volume*).

Hercules: Yes, dear. Just about.

Mayoress (Off): : Then kindly come here. How many times have I told you NOT to wander off?

Edward: Heel, Hercules!

Hercules: (*Aside*). Bother! (*Aloud, as he moves towards the door*). Coming, dearest!

Mayoress (Off): : NOW! IMMEDIATELY!

Joanne: So commands a whole lot of woman

SONG 6 - WHOLE LOTTA WOMAN

Hercules: *She's only to wink with her eye*

Chorus: *She's a whole lotta woman!*

Hercules: *Whole lotta women ain't nice.*

Chorus: *Whole lotta woman!*

Hercules: *She doesn't need a second try
Before you're trapped in her vice.*

Chorus: *Whole lotta woman, lotta woman!*

Hercules: *You can scream and shout,
Still you'll never break out
When Red Alert's the condition,
And when you're under duress,
She'll find the button to press,
And bang goes your commanding position!*

Her littlest finger goes flick!
Chorus: *She's a whole lotta woman!*
Hercules: *Whole lotta women can be hard ...*
Chorus: *So hard!*
Hercules: *'Cos it'll make you sick -*
They always pocket every trick.
And you are left without a single winning card!
Chorus: *Whole lotta woman!*
Won't you give me a chance?
Whole lotta woman!
Let me out of your trance!

(Enter the MAYORESS, Sue Nisbett-Smith. She is enormous in every way, and her personality engulfs the whole stage. She wears outrageous clothing with an enormous bonnet. HERCULES shrinks back into the shadows, the CHILDREN sing sotto voce. Only the PROFESSOR has the courage to stand up to her).

Mayoress: *So where is that miserable Mayor?*
Chorus: *She's a whole lotta woman!*
Mayoress: *Why are you skulking in here?*
Chorus: *Whole lotta woman!*
Mayoress: *You really get in my hair!*
I s'pose you're after the beer!
Chorus: *Whole lotta woman! Lotta woman!*
Mayoress: *Look, you brainless clone,*
I've the teeniest bone:-
Your crummy organisation
Has left me out in the cold
And down the river I'm sold
'Cos why isn't the band at their station?
And who are these horrible kids? (She points at the CHILDREN)
Chorus: *She's a whole lotta woman!*
Mayoress: *And what's this trash when it's at home? (Indicates Float).*
It all gets up my nose,
But I'll get even, stone the crows!
And what's this smell?
And who's this ugly little gnome? (Pointing at PROFESSOR).
Chorus: *Whole lotta woman!*
She's a terrible drag!

***Whole lotta woman!
Nothing but an old bag!***

Mayoress: Enough. (*There is immediate silence*). And where was the fanfare I told you to practise?

Oliver: Well, we were just doing it when your husband

Mayoress: Hercules! What is the meaning of stealing the not waiting for me?

Hercules: (*Sneezing*). Harraasha!

Mayoress: Stop snivelling, Hercules!

(*She starts to inspect the Float, HERCULES following her closely and frequently getting in the way*).

Mayoress: And what is this? (*She draws attention to a piece of decoration that is loose. Hercules tries to inspect it but is brushed aside*).

Gavin: Part of the heat-resistant fuselage.

Mayoress: Don't try and be clever with me, young man.

Oliver: It's tin foil.

Mayoress: I can see it's tin foil. Why isn't it pinned down properly?

Katharine: (*Nervously*). We were going

Mayoress: It's always "We were going to", young lady! The procession is tomorrow.

Hercules: And I AM looking forward

Mayoress: Hercules! This is not the moment for petty statements of personal fancy!

Hercules: Yes, dear. I mean, no, dear.

Mayoress: (*To CHILDREN*). You are no exception. Why, then, is this float not ready? (*KATHARINE goes to speak but is stopped in her tracks*). Quite frankly, I'm not sure that I can allow your entry to go ahead. I have my I mean, Birchdale's reputation to think of. Is that not right, Hercules?

Hercules: Yes no whatever you say, my dear.

Edward: (*Aside, does a cruelly accurate imitation of the sound and tone of Hercules's voice*). Whatever you say, my dear!

Oliver: It won't take long to put things

Simon: right.

Mayoress: Hmph! (*She storms across the stage, followed obediently by HERCULES. This brings her face to face with the Time Machine*). And what is this pile of scrap?

Matthew: (*Deeply offended*). Pile of scrap!

Joanne: (*Aside*). Not far off the mark!

Mayoress: (*To MATTHEW*). Young man, if you think THAT hideous heap is going to be in evidence at my OUR town's Carnival, you've got another think coming. (*To HERCULES*). The cheek of it, Hercules. Children these days have no sense of propriety.

Hercules: Yes, dear. The cheek of it.

Edward: The cheek of it!

Julie: (*Innocently*). What's pr pro proprie-ty?

Professor: (*To HERCULES. He is becoming increasingly agitated*). Oh , do stop being your wife's poodle!

Hercules: I

Mayoress: And who do you think you are, speaking to my husband, Hercules Nisbett-Smith, the Mayor, in that insolent fashion?

Professor: Stroganoff's the name.

Matthew: PROFESSOR Stroganoff!

Professor: And this "pile of scrap" as you have the nerve to call it, is MY time machine.

Hercules: My word! What a good idea!

Mayoress: Quiet, Hercules! Well, Professor Stroganoff, you should be ashamed of yourself, behaving like an overgrown schoolboy. Encouraging these children. Time machine, indeed throwing my OUR Carnival plans into disarray!

Professor: Pipe down, you inflated old windbag!

Matthew: You tell her!

Edward: This is more like it

Mayoress: (*Loudly*). WHAT did you call me?

Julie: (*Sweetly and softly*). I think he called you a silly old windbag begging your pardon, ma'am. (*She curtsies*).

Edward: You missed out the inflated bit!

Mayoress: HERCULES!!! (*HERCULES shudders once again*).

Hercules: (*In a miniature voice*). Yes, dear?

Mayoress: Are you going to stand there while this senile eccentric insults me?

Hercules: Yes, dear I mean, no. dear Oh, heck!

Mayoress: (*Brushing HERCULES aside and storming over to the PROFESSOR*). Kindly remove that object from my barn!

Professor: Certainly not. It has every right to be here. As much right as you.

Matthew: Farmer Ogdon gave Grandfather permission. This is his workshop.

Mayoress: Nonsense! I am requisitioning this barn.

Joanne: Didn't know there was a war on.

Professor: You have no right to

Mayoress: I am the Mayoress! (*GAVIN does a chicken walk*). Hercules!

Hercules: Yes, dear?

Mayoress: Get these children to remove that thing outside. (*She pushes HERCULES forward*).

Professor: (*Eyeball to eyeball with HERCULES*). It stays where it is!

Mayoress: Move it! (*She pushes HERCULES forward*).

Professor: Leave it! (*He pushes HERCULES back to the MAYORESS*).

Mayoress: Move it! (*She pushes HERCULES forward again*).

Professor: Leave it! (*He pushes HERCULES back again*).

Hercules: (*Storming away, head held high*). That's it! There's a limit to what a man can take!

Mayoress: (*Furiously*) Hercules! (*HERCULES does not answer; he is standing with his back to the Compasny with his arms folded, sulking. The MAYORESS turns back to the PROFESSOR*). War, you said. Then war it is..

SONG 7 - CONFLICT

Mayoress: *As I've told you once before*

Professor: *Just behind you is the door*

Mayoress: *Don't you dare address me in that tone of voice!*

Hercules: *I should merely like to say*

Mayoress: *Just you keep out of the way*

Professor: *I'm afraid you've left me very little choice.
Would you care to come inside?*

Hercules: *It'll help you to decide.*

Mayoress: *Why, it's nothing but a mouldy lump of tin!*

Children: *Oh, no!*

It's a mega-gyroscopic

Bio-rhythmic telescopic

Time convertor - won't you step right in?

Professor: *You are surely never scared?*

Mayoress: *No, I'm merely unprepared.*

Hercules: *You could always give the box a little go.*

Mayoress: *Where's your dignity, you fool?*

Professor: *Let us not forego our cool!*

Mayoress: *I just don't believe a word you say, you know.
Get that rubbish out of here!*

Hercules: *Oh, now, don't be hasty, dear.*

Mayoress: *What d'you think it is? I ask you, use your brain!*

Children: *Ah, well:-*

*That's a time and motion scooper
And it's mega-super-doooper.
You may never get the chance again!*

Mayoress: *It's a hollow, empty box
With a set of fancy locks.
Look, I'll show you just exactly what I mean. (She goes inside).*

Professor: *Here's a chance that is the best
To give my ideas a test.
Now I'll PROVE I've really built a Time Machine!
(He follows her in).*

Hercules: *Steady on, don't go so fast.
You might finish in the past!
Retroactive murder's quite a serious crime!
(The CHILDREN slam shut the door).*

Children: *Keep calm!
For when Stroggy starts to navigate,
The centuries disintegrate -
At least, we hope they do, this time!*

[Without a break, straight into]

SONG 7a - TAKE OFF! - (REPRISE)

(Reprise of SONG 4 complete, breaking off before No. 4a).

(During this song the MAYORESS and PROFESSOR slip out of the false back of the box. At the end of the song, if possible, they should both try and agitate the box from behind, so that it appears to be moving of its own accord. This produces horror and surprise from all on stage).

Hercules: Oh dear! What's happened? What will she say? *(He goes over to the Time Machine nervously).* Your worship! *(There is no reply. He knocks feebly on the side).* Sue, dear! *(No reply. He knocks slightly louder).* Suey, poppet!

Edward: *(Going to the machine and giving it a hefty knock).* Are you in there? Hubby Hercules wants you!

Matthew: It's no good. The wall of that machine is nearly half a metre thick. They won't hear you.

Oliver: Well we heard YOU!

Hercules: Oh dear! I hope she's all right.

Oliver: I'm sure she is. Having a good look round, I dare say.

Katharine: We can forget our Carnival entry now. She'll never agree to it after all this.

Matthew: That's what comes of playing around with highly-developed technology one doesn't understand.

Joanne: You should know.

Hercules: Yes. Oh dear But Hadn't we better check to see if all's well? She can't stand confined spaces. It could bring on one of her headaches. Oh calamity!

Matthew: The locking system for the door is on the inside.

Gavin: Has to be. Can't travel through space and have uninvited callers at your front door!

Edward: (*Going up to HERCULES and putting arm round his shoulder*). What is it like to be a free man?

Hercules: What do you mean?

Samantha: (*Tactfully*). He means, what does being a Freeman of the Borough involve?

Edward: (*Turning away*). Something like that.

Hercules: You don't seem to understand. I'm a worried man.

All: We do!

Simon: only too well

Hercules: Then please try to open that thing. Oh dear! I'll never hear the end of this!

Katharine: Come on, Matthew, Gavin. Do something practical for once.

Matthew: Oh, very well. I think there is an emergency release over here (*He fumbles around*). I think it's (*The door swings open*). There! Clever little device, eh?

(*KATHARINE, OLIVER and HERCULES go into the Time Machine*).

Oliver: All well in there?

Hercules: Sorry about this, darling Sue Your Worship

Katharine: But there's nobody in here.

[*The next fifteen lines need to be very rapid and will require drilled rehearsal*].

Edward: Heavens!

Oliver: They've gone!

Hercules: Oh, no!

Katharine: He's right!

Simon: They've vanished!

Matthew: Great!

Hercules: How awful!

Samantha: There must be a simple explanation!

Joanne: Just disappeared?

Gavin: They couldn't, could they?

Julie: I knew it would work!

Matthew: They must have set off the dematerialisation!

Hercules: You mean, my wife's dematerialized?

Edward: Yes.

Hercules: Well I never!

(There is a pause. HERCULES considers the situation and smiles happily - his chest visibly expands. Then he remembers himself, and pulls himself together).

Hercules: What am I saying? Vanished dematerialized! My wife! Councillor Nisbett-Smith! Mayoresses don't dematerialize!

Edward: More's the pity.

Gavin: This one has!

Simon: I'm sure there's a simple explanation.

Julie: Perhaps there's a hole in the back.

Matthew: What, a magician's box with a false bottom? Don't be silly.

Joanne: Have a look inside. It's nothing like that, I'm afraid. Two minutes in there, and you can't breathe.

Matthew: No, there's no other explanation. Grandfather's designs have worked perfectly. At this moment, he and the Mayoress are in a different time.

Katharine: And probably still arguing.

Hercules: Help! I may never see her again!

Simon: Do you really want to?

Edward: More to the point, you'll never HEAR her again!

Hercules: What are you going to do?

Matthew: The Professor will have everything under control.

Joanne: Including that woman?

Katharine: Do you think they'll be back in time for the Carnival?

Matthew: That I cannot say.

Oliver: *(Suddenly revealing that he is, after all, a real leader).* That's it!

Edward: What is? Have I missed something?

Oliver: While the Mayoress is away, the

Simon: (*Interrupting once too often*) mice will play!

Oliver: No, Simon. The Carnival must go ahead. Our float can celebrate the first venture into space and time

Gavin: man and woman

Joanne: Birchdale's Mayoress

Oliver: have ever undertaken.

Simon: We'll be famous.

Hercules: Famous, eh? That's what she's always wanted. The times she's dreamt of being interviewed by Terry Wogan!

Gavin: I can see it all: (*Pointing to imaginary headline*). SPACE INVADERS AT BIRCHDALE; PROFESSOR AND MAYORESS IN ORBIT.

Joanne: What a pair!

Katharine: Excellent. Then we've not a moment to lose.

Simon: We must complete our preparations!

All: Hooray!

SONG 8 - THE CARNIVAL IS TODAY

(This is a country dance, which the CAST perform in folk style. It becomes a Maypole dance, with HERCULES in the middle).

Omnes: *The sun is high in the cobalt sky,
Our hearts are merry and bright;
The bunting flutters along the street,
Filling everyone with delight.
The crowd's excited, down in the Square,
The horses jingle their brass,
So let's go to the Carnival too,
And we'll see the procession pass!*

*Hooray! Hooray!
The Carnival is today!
Hooray! Hooray!
So join the village display.
The church bells merrily start to ring;
Our hearts are full of the joys of Spring;
It's holidays and we'll have a fling
In the merry month of May!*

*Hooray! Hooray!
The Carnival is today!
Hooray! Hooray!
The donkeys happily bray.
With flowers amassed at the Village Green,
'Twill be the best we have ever seen,
And everything is new and clean
At the fete today!*

(At the end of the song, with the CAST exhausted and panting, PROFESSOR STROGANOFF and the MAYORESS enter. They are drenched and dripping. There is silence all round).

Hercules: *(Running over with open arms).* Darling! I'm sorry

Edward: Monster from the Blue Lagoon!

(SAMANTHA assists the MAYORESS to dry off)

Matthew: *(Excitedly).* What happened? Did you see any aliens? What time dimension were you in?

Professor: I'll tell you what happened, Matthew. The only aliens we saw were ducks.

Matthew: Ducks?

Professor: The ducks in Farmer Ogdon's pond!

Joanne: Gosh! Are his ducks in one piece?

Julie: You must have given the poor things an awful fright.

Hercules: How terrible for you, dear.

Mayoress: *(In a matter-of-fact voice).* Quite.

Hercules: Mud everywhere, dear.

Mayoress: I know.

Hercules: Completely spoilt your dress, dear.

Mayoress: Indeed.

Hercules: *(One suspects he is enjoying this!).* And your bonnet's drooping awfully.

Mayoress: Evidently.

Hercules: And where's your handbag?

Edward: Sunk without trace.

Hercules: *(Acting the loyal husband, turns on the PROFESSOR).* And what is the meaning of this? Taking my wife for a ride?

Professor: Well. I

Mayoress: (*Mildly*). Don't fuss, Hercules.

(*HERCULES, who had drawn himself up to his full height to speak to the PROFESSOR, now cringes*).

Katharine: Wait for it!

Mayoress: Don't worry, dear, I won't bite.

(*EVERYONE gasps in astonishment*).

Edward: She must have lost her false teeth in the pond as well!

Mayoress: (*Smiling*). The Professor kindly explained the workings of his remarkable invention. Most impressive.

Hercules: You could have been killed, dear.

Mayoress: One expects a few hitches on a test flight.

Simon: You don't expect to end up in a duck pond!

Joanne: Crikey, Matthew, that could have been us!

Mayoress: Immaterial! The Professor is to be congratulated. When this wonderful machine is perfected, it will bring great prestige to him and to Birchdale.

Hercules: And to you, dear

Mayoress: Hercules!

Hercules: (*Meekly*). Yes, dear?

Mayoress: The last few minutes have taught me that we that **I** must not pre-judge people.

Katharine: She's changed her tune!

Mayoress: People are to be appreciated, not bullied. The Professor has taught me that.

Matthew: I told you he was clever.

Edward: She must have swallowed too much pond water!

Mayoress: Here in Birchdale, there is a wealth of talent. Look at that wonderful float.

(*The CHILDREN'S mouths drop open*).

Gavin: You ought to travel through time more often!

Oliver: Does that mean we can enter the Carnival procession as well?

Mayoress: Of course, my dear. You'll have a good chance of winning First Prize.

Hercules: Certainly is a good float.

Mayoress: Thank you, Hercules. And you, dear, will judge the floats this year.

Hercules: Such honour I don't deserve!

Matthew: But, Grandfather, did you actually

Professor: Well, not through time, Matthew. We just shifted a couple of hundred metres through space

Joanne: To a duck pond!

Oliver: But even that's pretty marvellous.

Simon: And the change in the Mayoress. Gosh, Professor, I wish I was as clever as you .

Professor: Easy, when you know how. You just

SONG 9 - FINALE - SNAP FINGERS - (REPRISE).
(reprise of SONG 3 letter G)

Omnes: *Snap singers - clap hands - and there you are: A.B.C.!*
You snap fingers - clap hands - and you'll go far with this policy.
Not a bad plan - quite a mad plan -
I've got it tied up and signed and sealed.
It's a hot plot - hits the jack pot! How's it done?
Everything is revealed.
If you will just whistle. Soon this'll
Send you up (here goes) to the top. (Let's do it)
Snap fingers, clap hands and there you are,
No bar to how far you'll go
If the star you know
Is on top!

THE END

