

STUFF AND NONSENSE AT CHRISTMAS

INSPIRED BY THE NONSENSE OF EDWARD LEAR

Words and Music by JOHN MILLS

ACT 1, SCENE 1: MR C'S GROTTO

'HELLO MR C!'

(Mr C.)

*(Well-stocked and festive Christmas Grotto with touches of daring and flounce. **Music starts for #01 Main Theme.** MR C enters jingling bells, wearing Christmas overalls which have signs of hard work e.g. paint, glue, glitter. Sits at a small table which has a copy of 'The Christmas Times' and bunch of oversized mistletoe on it.)*

MR C.

Stuff And Nonsense At Christmas. Ho! Ho! Ho! It's nearly Christmas. Whoopee!
(Opens 'The Christmas Times') Mr C here with the latest weather report Brrr, Rudolf says it'll be a rosy-cheeks sort of day! Ho! Ho! Ho! I've mince pies fresh in the oven. Sprig of mistle-toe for my hair. Give us a kiss for Christmas! *(Airkiss)* Fluffy reindeer slippers for cosy toesies.

(To AUDIENCE)

Come closer. Listen. I've been keeping a close eye on things around here. There's a bit of nonsense going on which I'm not completely happy with! Ho! Ho! Ho! Let's see what happens!

(MR C 'business' until music stops. MR C exits)

ACT 1, SCENE 2: OUTSIDE MR LEAR'S HOUSE

'HELLO HOOTIE, FOSSIE AND MR LEAR'

(Hootie Owl, Old Foss & Mr Lear)

*(Outside a large Edwardian villa, Mr Lear's home. It is bitterly cold and windy. **HOOTIE OWL** enters strumming his guitar and intermittently blowing on cold fingers)*

HOOTIE OWL

Brrr! T'Whit T'Whoo-Hoo! No fun busking today, there's a freezing Easterly wind. Brrr!
(singing) Silent Night, Holy Night! All is ... *(spoken)* c..c..c..cold! Whoo-Hoo, enough of this! It's nearly Christmas for goo-hoo-oodness sake. I'll sing something more jolly!

(Sings short extract from 'Song #11 The Owl and The Pussycat)

'The Moon, the Moon how we danced by the light of the silvery moon! The Moon, the Moon how we danced by the light of the silvery moon!'

OLD FOSS

(Enters in a rush) Mee-ow. Such a beautiful tenor voice! You sing beautifully... er ... Mister ...?

HOOTIE OWL

T'Whit, T'Whoo! Hootie Owl ... and you are?

OLD FOSS

Old Foss, but you can call me 'Fossie' ... if you like.

HOOTIE OWL

'Fossie', I like! T'Whit T'Whoo, very pleased to meet yoo-hoo.

(Offers sweet from packet) Would you like a jellybean? I've got blue ones .. or green ones?

OLD FOSS

Oh .. no .. thankyou, Hootie. I need something to warm me up. A hot milk would be heavenly with sticky-squidgy dollops of double-cream.

HOOTIE OWL

T'Whoo-hoo, Fossie that's some picture you're conjuring there! Whoo-hoo, another enticing picture. May I sing to you-hoo-hoo, Fossie?

OLD FOSS

Prrr. Lovely, but I really need to get home. I'm housekeeper to Mr Lear ... in that big house. He's been away travelling and is due home just before Christmas, and I'm so behind with everything. Cards, presents, food, ribbons and decorations for the tree. So much to do. Sorry to leave. I really loved your singing. Goodbye, Hootie.

(OLD FOSS exits into the house)

HOOTIE OWL

T'Whit, T'Woe-oh-oh! Ah well!

(MR LEAR enters carrying a very large suitcase and wearing a huge reindeer scarf.)

Oooh. Someone approaches. T'Whoo-Hoo-Hoo! Big suitcase, eh? Going far?

MR LEAR

Coming back. Been travelling far and wide. Wonderful. Thrilling. I feel so alive. I have breathed in the sweetest alpine air. Aaah! And I have swum in the coldest, bluest lakes you can imagine.

HOOTIE OWL

(In DR CALICO'S voice) Yez, I can imaginez. So bluez, zhee lakes of Bavaria perhapz?

(In HOOTIE OWL'S voice) T'Whit, T'Whoo, I did a study tour through Germany in my You-oo-outh!

MR LEAR

You've a very good accent!

HOOTIE OWL

Thank-yoo-hoo. Er, spare a copper or two-oo-oo, Mister ... er?

MR LEAR

Mr Lear. Edward Lear.

HOOTIE OWL

Ah! You live in that big house over there. I've just met your lovely housekeeper-cat, Fossie. Whoo-Hoo!.

MR LEAR

Well, here I am! Brrr! My, it's so cold. Good job I've got my reindeer scarf to keep me warm. A present from Old Foss. I wear it wherever I go, in the bath, on holiday, on the beach too! Stripey speedos and reindeer scarf. What a sight! Nice to meet you, but got to get home into the warm!

(MR LEAR exits into the house)

HOOTIE OWL

T'Whoo-hoo! Home, for me too, I think.

(SFX Upward harp glissandos) Whoo-Hoo Fossie! I have to get to know you better. But how do I get inside the house?

(In DR CALICO's voice) Ah! I havz an ideaz taking zhee shapes in my headz!

(SFX Downward harp glissandos. HOOTIE OWL exits.)

ACT 1, SCENE 3: MR LEAR'S STUDY**'HELLO TUMBLY JUMBLIES'**

(Old Foss, Mr Lear & Jumblies)

MR LEAR

(Enters through door and hangs up coat etc.)

I'm home! It's me! Old Foss, where are you? I'm home!

OLD FOSS

(Enters flustered) Mr Lear, it's you, sir. You're home early!

MR LEAR

Yes, I got the earlier steamer home. It's a teeth-chatterer out there! And in here!

OLD FOSS

Yes, Mr Lear, it's been so cold these last few days. I'll lay the fire after I've put the kettle on for a nice cuppatea. *(OLD FOSS exits)*

MR LEAR

Make that a lapsang souchong please, Fossie. Lapsang souchong ... rhymes with ... Pooh-Pong! Such a poet!

MR C.

(MR C enters jingling bells, but unnoticed by MR LEAR)

Ho! Ho! Ho! Mind your language please, Mr Lear! There are adults in the audience, and you know how sensitive they can be! Ho! Ho! Ho!

(MR C exits jingling bells. MR LEAR settles at his desk)

MR LEAR

I can't write when my hands are cold. More logs for the fire please, Fossie.

JUMBLIES

(n.b JUMBLIES have noisy horn for entry and exits. Calling loudly from offstage)

Mr Lear, we're here.

MR LEAR

Aha, my tumbly Jumblies, I wondered when you'd try and make an appearance. But don't even think about coming out yet, it's too cold for you!

JUMBLIES

(Calling loudly from offstage) Yippee for Christmas!

MR LEAR

Yippee for Christmas! Fluffy slippers, silly jumpers, woolly socks and glitter, glitter, glitter and lots and lots of presents. Jumblies, you still want to come out to play?

JUMBLIES

(Calling loudly from offstage) It's nearly Christmas!

MR LEAR

Come out then, out from inside my head, my lovely tumbly Jumblies!

(n.b. MR LEAR goes strangely woozy/unwoozy at the start and end of a 'nonsensing'.

JUMBLIES enter as a tumble of bodies.)

No need to push, Jumblies!

JUMBLIES

(ad lib) Ouch, ooh! Watch those elbows! Out you come. Another 'nonsensing', hooray!

MR LEAR

Hello, old friends!

JUMBLIES

Happy holidays!

MR LEAR

I'm gonna have a 'nonsensing' – letting my imagination go mad! Great to see you again, Jumblies! How I love having mad little nonsensings' with my Jumblies.

JUMBLIES

It's just stuff and nonsense!

Music starts for #02 It's Just Stuff And Nonsense**MR LEAR**

Yes, yes, yes, Jumblies, It's just stuff and nonsense to me, too!

JUMBLIES

HIS NAME'S MR LEAR. HE OFTEN GOES 'QUEER',
FROM TOES TO THE END OF HIS NOSE.
HIS 'NONSENSINGS' GIVE HIM TIN-GLE-ING FEELINGS,
WHISPER 'COS NOBODY KNOWS.

MR LEAR

MY BEST FRIENDS, THE JUMBLIES, SO VERY 'TUMBLY',
WITH ME WHEREVER I GOES.
THEY'RE MOST IN MY MIND, BUT POP OUT SOMETIMES
DESERVING A SHOVE AND 'HEAVE-HO!'

MR LEAR

I'M NOT MAD!

JUMBLIES

HE'S NOT MAD!

MR LEAR

I'M NOT MAD!

JUMBLIES

HE'S NOT MAD!

ALL

IT'S JUST STUFF AND NONSENSE TO ME!

JUMBLIES

WHEN EDDIE'S EXCITED HIS TROUBLES UNITE,
WITH TROUBLES FROM NOSE TO HIS TOES.
HIS 'NONSENSINGS' GIVE HIM 'WHOOZYING' FEELINGS
WORRIES HE TRIES NOT TO SHOW.

MR LEAR

MY JUMBLIES MAY STUMBLE, NEVER WILL GRUMBLE,
THEY LOVE ME AND REALLY DO CARE.
IF I'M IN A BIND THEY HELP ME UNWIND
WITH KINDNESS THEY'RE HAPPY TO SHARE.

MR LEAR

I'M NOT MAD!

JUMBLIES

HE'S NOT MAD!

MR LEAR

I'M NOT MAD!

JUMBLIES

HE'S NOT MAD!

ALL

IT'S JUST STUFF AND NONSENSE TO ME!

THERE'S SINGALONG SONGS AND 'TAP-YOUR-FEET' SONGS
OUR HAPPIFUL EAR-WORMS ARE FREE,
WE'VE POBBLE AND QUANGLE, OLD FOSS, HOOTIE OWL,
DR CALICO SCHEMING WITH GLEE.
WE'VE PRANCING AND DANCING ... LOVE AND ROMANCING,
MOMENTS TO MAKE US SO SAD ... (Boo Hoo!)
BUT MOSTLY WE'RE HAPPY, SO VERY LUCKY,
WE'RE STRONG AND DELIGHTFULLY GLAD!

MR LEAR

I'M NOT MAD!

JUMBLIES

HE'S NOT MAD!

MR LEAR
I'M NOT MAD!

JUMBLIES
HE'S NOT MAD!

ALL
IT'S JUST STUFF AND NONSENSE TO ME!

MR LEAR
I'M NOT MAD!

JUMBLIES
HE'S NOT MAD!

MR LEAR
I'M NOT MAD!

JUMBLIES
HE'S NOT MAD!

ALL
IT'S JUST STUFF AND NONSENSE TO ME!
JUST STUFF AND NONSENSE TO ... ME!
(*Applause and JUMBLIES excitement*)

OLD FOSS
(*Enters in a rush*) Mee-ow, what's all that caffuffle. Hsss. Oh, it's you, Jumblies!

JUMBLIES
Hellooooo, Old Foss. We're baaaaack!

OLD FOSS
Mee-ow, yes, I can see. All that blue and green frizzy-dizzy stuff everywhere!

JUMBLIES
(*Singing*) Our heads are green and our hands are blue.

OLD FOSS
Mee-ow, now listen to me, Jumblies. You're not to get Mr Lear over-excited. He's excited enough about Christmas without you all adding to it!

JUMBLIES
(*Singing*) Far and few, far and few are the lands where the Jumblies live.

OLD FOSS
Hsss, Jumblies, it's time you went back there!

JUMBLIES
Noooo!

OLD FOSS
For some new adventures?

JUMBLIES
Noooooo!

MR LEAR
Noooo! They'll have all the adventures they need with me over Christmas. Such fun we're going to have!

OLD FOSS
Mee-ow, you and your adventures!

JUMBLIES
(*Singing*) We're walking in a

OLD FOSS
Stop it Jumblies! Mr Lear, you'll get over-excited, the Jumblies are getting over-excited, and I'm getting ... Mee-ow, I'm getting ... a headache!

MR LEAR
Shall I call a doctor?

OLD FOSS
No, no, thankyou. I think I'll have a quiet cuppatea and curl up by the fire.

JUMBLIES

A quiet cuppateeeeeee! Yes pleeeeeease!

OLD FOSS

Hssss. Please deal with them, Mr Lear, I can't stand it any more! Cuppatea, where are you?

(OLD FOSS exits)

MR C.

(MR C enters jingling bells and carrying an Elf-doll. He is unnoticed by MR LEAR but can be seen by the JUMBLIES)

Ho! Ho! Ho! I'm watching you, Jumblied, and I don't want to see anyone being sick with excitement. Calm down and take a deep breath. Are you behaving yourselves and helping Old Foss around the house where you can? Are you?

(To AUDIENCE) How about you, children? Being helpful? I do hope so, 'cos the Elves and me ... we're watching you! Ho! Ho! Ho!

(MR C exits jingling bells, and talking to the Elf-toy)

MR LEAR

Jumblied, better get back inside my head.

JUMBLIES

(JUMBLIES exit) Oof, ouch, tight squeeze, bony elbows etc

Scene Change Music – extract from #03 The Jumblied

ACT 1, SCENE 4: MR LEAR'S STUDY**'MR LEAR'S SNEEZES RETURN'**

(Mr Lear & Old Foss)

MR LEAR

I love a roaring, roasty-toasty fire, I do. Time to write. Something jolly for Christmas. But I need some inspiration!

OLD FOSS

(OLD FOSS enters in a rush) Meeow, Mr Lear, how about a nice cuppatea?

MR LEAR

Thankyou, yes, ple ... Achoo! Phoo, oh no! Achooooo! They're back! My sneezes have come back!

(n.b MR LEAR sneezes loudly and frequently through this scene and until end of Act 1, Scene 14)

MR LEAR

Achoooo! *(Singing he's writing)* They went to sea in a sieve they did ...

OLD FOSS

Mee-ow! What? They went to sea in a sieve? Nonsense!

MR LEAR

Ssh! Fossie! You're making me lose the thread in my head.

(Singing) Far and few, far and few are the lands where the Jumblied live. Achooo!

OLD FOSS

Mee-ow, let me get you a cuppatea?

MR LEAR

Ssssh! Fossie! Sssssh, I can't concentrate.

OLD FOSS

Hssss. Mr Lear! Oh, you can be so ... so ... impatient! Get your own tea.

(OLD FOSS exits in a rush)