

STUFF AND NONSENSE THE MUSICAL

INSPIRED BY THE NONSENSE OF EDWARD LEAR

Words and Music by JOHN MILLS

1) What is ‘Stuff And Nonsense The Musical’ All About?

A celebration of the nonsense writings of Edward Lear as musical entertainment in 2 Acts for all the family.

Meet Edward Lear – a writer, poet, illustrator, musician and traveller. Author of favourite stories and nonsense-poems for young people, including *The Owl and the Pussycat*, *The Dong With A Luminous Nose*, *The Jumblies* and *The Quangle Wangle’s Hat*.

Meet the Jumblies – dancing, tumbling characters from Lear’s furtive imagination. Cheerful, smiley, usually-happy, they ferment in Lear’s head, ready for ‘*another nonsensing*’ so they can burst into life. A world of fun and ditzyness!

‘*Stuff And Nonsense The Musical*’ explores Lear’s sometimes-troublesome events with his tumbly Jumblies who sing their nonsense stories to illustrate key moments in the narrative.

In Lear’s ‘squirly-whirly’ world we meet his housekeeper – Old Foss (a talking cat), and his physician, Dr Calico who is Hootie Owl in disguise - the plot thickens. In Lear’s imagination we have *The Dong* and his beloved Jewelly Jumbly, King and Queen Pelican with their shy daughter Dell and her beau - King Crane who, sssh!, has no webs between his toes. Come and meet Jolly Pobble (who has no toes!), ‘hard-of-hearing’ Aunt Jobiska and the ‘groovy’ Quangle Wangle Quee. All of whom perform with a Jumblies whose ‘*heads are green and hands are blue*’.

‘*Stuff And Nonsense The Musical*’ is an entertaining experience for the whole family, with its engaging characters, tuneful songs, and happy ending.

2) Author’s Note

In enabling Lear’s writing to be brought to the stage I made many decisions with both text and characters. His characters are now brought to life under the collective term of ‘Jumblies’. Verses of the poems have been combined or removed where they didn’t move the narrative forward quickly enough. I have frequently changed Lear’s words from third to first person. I have also updated behaviours that were acceptable to previous generations but less so to modern audiences. In short, I have taken liberties with Lear’s original writing, but I hope that in so doing I have breathed new life into these wonderful characters.

3) **Lear’s much-loved poems** which have been set to music are:

The Jumblies
Calico Pie
The Dong With A Luminous Nose
The Pelican Chorus
The Pobble Who Has No Toes
The Owl And The Pussycat
The Quangle Wangle’s Hat
How Pleasant To Know Mr Lear

4) **Note To The Director**

Have fun! It should be very upbeat and fast-paced, with plenty of opportunities for engaging with the audience. Every song lends itself to fantastic staging and dance. Let your imagination go wild to set your audience up for a fabulous, uplifting theatre experience.

You can have as many Jumblies as you like ... there are several individual spoken lines and opportunities for groups of Jumblies. I suggest no more than three groups. When not on stage with a named part, everyone has the opportunity to become a Jumbly. Thus you could have a very large cast.

5) **Characters**

‘*Stuff And Nonsense The Musical*’ has 13 named characters. The majority of roles can easily become non-gender specific with minor script changes.

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| 1) MR LEAR | Nonsense Poet, a touch eccentric. Main character |
| 2) OLD FOSS | ‘Put-upon’ talking cat. Mr Lear’s housekeeper cat |
| 3) *HOOTIE OWL | Falls in love with Old Foss. Disguises himself as scheming Dr Calico. Plays ‘easy’ guitar |
| 4) *DR CALICO | Same performer as Hootie Owl. Quack Doctor with vaguely Eastern European accent |
| 5) THE DONG | Sorrowful character who has lost his love |
| 6) JEWELLY JUMBLY | Ditzy, fickle Jumbly who abandoned the Dong |
| 7) PELICAN DELL | Shy pelican |
| 8) KING CRANE | Haughty Crane with a dreadful secret |
| 9) QUEEN PELICAN | Long-suffering wife of King. |
| 10) KING PELICAN | Boisterous, guffawing, yokelly Pelican |
| 11) JOLLY POBBLE | Jolly, bouncy Jumbly who has lost his toes |
| 12) AUNT JOBISKA | Older, hard-of-hearing Jumbly with an ear-trumpet |
| 13) QUANGLE WANGLE | Hippie-ish, ‘love-bucket’ Jumbly. Becomes Mr Lear’s love-interest. Will there be a ‘happy-ever-after?’ |

*HOOTIE OWL and DR CALICO are the same actor. All performers should have green hair and blue hands.

6) **A Performance for 5 Actors**

'*Stuff And Nonsense On Tour*' has been adapted for performance by a reduced cast of 5 taking the following roles:

Performer 1: Mr Lear

Performer 2: Old Foss, Pelican Dell, Jolly Pobble

Performer 3: Hootie Owl, Dr Calico, King Pelican

Performer 4: Jewelly Jumbly, Queen Pelican, Aunt Jobiska

Performer 5: King Crane, Aunt Jobiska, Quangle Wangle

When not playing a specific role, the performers should be Jumblies.

7) **Synopsis**

The busking Hootie Owl serenades Old Foss, housekeeper cat to Mr Lear. Hootie Owl has fallen in love with Old Foss and sets about scheming a way to turn her head from Mr Lear.

Mr Lear returns from his exhilarating holiday and we meet the tumbly Jumblies from inside his head. Mr Lear's annoying sneezes return. Dr Calico calls and prescribes 'bluez' and 'greenz' jellybeans for Mr Lear's sneezes. Dr Calico calls again, with flowers for Old Foss who becomes increasingly irritated with Mr Lear.

Dr Calico declares Mr Lear to have the dreaded Jumblies Disease! The Jumblies go into hiding. Old Foss, angry with the way she is being treated, decides to leave Mr Lear! He is all alone. What's to become of him?

Dr Calico returns and is horrified to find that Old Foss is no longer at Mr Lear's. Dr Calico is determined to find her.

Mr Lear has slept well for the first time in ages. And his sneezing has stopped. Hooray! Mr Lear writes a letter of love to Old Foss but is interrupted by Old Foss who has returned. She declares she has met Hootie Owl and they are to be married! Mr Lear is dumbfounded later, when they ask if he can host their wedding party at his home. What will he do?

Mr Lear finds help from next door where the Quangle Wangle lives. She is an expert party-planner. Half-way through the party it is revealed that Hootie Owl and Dr Calico are one and the same, and that enticing Old Foss away from Mr Lear was all part of Hootie Owl's elaborate plan. An angry exchange between Mr Lear and Dr Calico is calmed by the Quangle Wangle. Mr Lear happily sings his way through his own song and declares 'It's Just Stuff And Nonsense To Us'!

8) Scenes and Songs

Act 1, Scene 1	Outside Mr Lear’s House	‘Hello Hootie, Fossie and Mr Lear’
Act 1, Scene 2	Mr Lear’s Study	‘Hello Tumbly Jumblies’
	#01 It’s Just Stuff And Nonsense 2’03”	
Act 1, Scene 3	Mr Lear’s Study	‘Going To Sea In A Sieve’
	#02 The Jumblies 5’02”	
Act 1, Scene 4	Mr Lear’s Study	‘Hello Dr Calico’
Act 1, Scene 5	Mr Lear’s Study	‘Dr Calico’s True Colours!’
	#03 Calico Pie 1’48”	
Act 1, Scene 6	Mr Lear’s Study	‘Shifting Loyalties’
Act 1, Scene 7	Three Beds	‘Sweet Dreams’
	# 04 Music Box ‘Far And Few’ (Underscore)	
	# 05 The Dong With A Luminous Nose	
Act 1, Scene 8	Mr Lear’s Study	‘Evicted Using Force!’
	#06 Vanish And Leave Us For Good 2’10”	
Act 1, Scene 9	Mr Lear’s Study	‘Jumblies Disease!’
Act 1, Scene 10	Mr Lear’s Study	‘My Whole Life Is A Mess!’
	#07 The Pelican Chorus 3’30”	
	#08 What’s To Become Of Me? 0’51”	

ACT 2

Act 2, Scene 1	Mr Lear’s Study	‘Leave Me Alone!’
Act 2, Scene 2	Mr Lear’s Study	‘A Visit From Jolly Pobble’
	#09 The Pobble Who Has No Toes 3’48”	
Act 2, Scene 3	Mr Lear’s Parlour	‘A Visit From Aunt Jobiska’
Act 2, Scene 4	Mr Lear’s Study	‘An Unexpected Engagement’
Act 2, Scene 5	Mr Lear’s Study	‘At Sea In A Pea-Green Boat’
	#10 The Owl And The Pussycat 4’25”	
Act 2, Scene 6	Mr Lear’s Study	‘An Impossible Ask’
Act 2, Scene 7	Outside Mr Lear’s House	‘Hiya, Eddie! Groovy!’
Act 2, Scene 8	Mr Lear’s Parlour	‘Jumbly To The Rescue!’
	#11 The Quangle Wangle’s Hat 2’16”	
Act 2, Scene 9	Mr Lear’s Front Door	‘Jumbly Checklist’
Act 2, Scene 10	Mr Lear’s Parlour	‘Will You Ma ...?’
	#12 How Pleasant To Know Mr Lear (With Tap Dance)	
	#13 It’s Just Stuff And Nonsense To Us 0’10”	

9) Music

A compilation of songs from ‘*Stuff And Nonsense The Musical*’ can be heard on the website <https://stuffandnonsensethemusical.com> MP3 backing tracks are available for all music.

For more information including performing rights please email:

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