

DANNY, THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD

Script and Music by JOHN MILLS

A Musical inspired by ROALD DAHL'S much-loved story

Script Consultancy from ADAM ELMS

ACT 1

Act 1 SCENE 1: HAZELL'S WOOD: 'Pheasants and Rabbetts' (Chief, Chuckles, Stompey, Jeremy & Rabbetts)

Music Extract starts for #01 First Into Action!

(A scary woodland at dusk. A pheasant kwarks. CHIEF enters marching smartly, followed by less-smart CHUCKLES and STOMPEY. They wear ear-protectors, a starched 'backward-flying' scarf, goggles and 'Biggles' flying hat.)

CHIEF

Hup! Two! Three! Four! Kwa-ka-kark! Pheasants haaaalt! (*CHUCKLES and STOMPEY bundle into each other.*) Look at yourselves! What a sight! Ready for Reconnaissance Training? I don't think so! What have you got to say for yourself, Chuckles?

CHUCKLES

(Laughing loudly) I'm ready, Chief, but ... Kwa-ka-kark. You've gotta laugh haven't you! I mean, just look at us, what do you expect with all these feathers!

STOMPEY

Kwa-ka-kark. (*STOMPEY stomps to attention several times, then salutes*) Chief! I do try to look my best but ... what is Reconnaissance Training, Chief?

CHIEF

(Whisper) Secretly spy on the enemy and report back to HQ. Very important work.

STOMPEY

Wow! Look at those trees!

CHIEF

What about them? They're tall, and very straight and super strong! Just like my 'boys'!

(Looks them up and down.) Hmm, perhaps not!

STOMPEY

It's such a long way up.

CHIEF

Of course it's a long way up. It's a tree! Trees are tall.

STOMPEY

I'm scared of hnines!

CHIEF

Kwa-ka-kark. What sort of reconnaissance-pheasant are you gonna be if you're scared of hnines? You'll be fine once you're up there roosting.

STOMPEY

But Chief, I like to keep my feet firmly on the ground.

CHIEF

You'd better smarten up your ideas, Stompey, if you intend to complete the training and earn your 'wings'.

STOMPEY

Kwa-ka-kark. Yes, Chief! (*Salutes. JEREMY enters noisily wearing a tutu and performing balletic moves then moves very close to CHIEF*)

CHIEF

Who are you?

JEREMY

Me? Oh, I'm your newest recruit. I'm Jeremy, and I've been transferred! (*Does another balletic move and ends up face to face with CHIEF then slowly backs off.*) And you are?

CHIEF

Kwa-ka-kark! I'm Wing-Commander Chuff but everyone calls me Chief, understand?

JEREMY

Yes, Chief Understand!

CHIEF

(*Shaking his head in despair*) Squadreeeen. Faaaaaall in! (*ALL pheasants, including CHIEF, race around and bumping in to each other.*) Squadreeeen attention! (*ALL out of time with each other and facing in different directions*) Squadreeeen, right dress! (*ALL shuffle into proper positions a wing length apart*) Squadreeeen, eyes front! (*ALL stare to the front, motionless and holding breath until nearly bursting*) Squadreeeen, at ease! (*ALL take deep breaths and relax, wings on each other's shoulders*) Kwa-ka-kark!. We are to be the advance company for a secret mission. It's so secret that even I don't know how, when or where it will take place. (*Whisper*) But a little birdie tells me ... (*overblown whispering and secret gestures.*)

CHUCKLES, STOMPEY & JEREMY

No!

CHIEF

Oh yes! And we will have the honour of being the 'First Into Action!'

JEREMY

(*Flapping around excitedly*) Such an honour!

CHUCKLES

Um, excuse me, Chief, but why is being 'First into Action' such an honour?

CHIEF

(*To STOMPEY and CHUCKLES*) Tell him, Stompey! (*STOMPEY shrugs*) Tell him Jeremy! (*JEREMY shrugs*) For pheasant's sake! We have the honour of being First Into Action because ... because ... listen! Shape Up! (*ALL get into a v-shape formation*)

Music starts for #01 First Into Action!

CHIEF

ARE YOU READY? PAY CLOSE ATTENTION!
HERE'S A MESSAGE, I GIVE IT FOR FREE.
THERE'S NO HONOUR IN COMING IN SECOND,

IT'S FIRST PLACE FOR ME! IT'S THE ONE PLACE TO BE!
 WHEN YOU'RE OUT THERE, THERE'S SUCH A FEELING SO JOYFUL, SO FREE.
 THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT, 'FIRST INTO ACTION'! THE BEST PLACE TO BE!
 YOU CAN TAKE IT FROM ME!

STOMPEY

I'm not convinced!

CHUCKLES

Me neither!

STOMPEY & CHUCKLES

IT'S WE WHO'LL TAKE THE FLACK. YOU'D BETTER WATCH YOUR BACK!
 IT'S WE WHO'LL MAKE THE SACRIFICE. WE'LL GIVE OUR LIVES!

STOMPEY

I'M NOT SO SURE THAT COMING GOING SECOND
 IS AS BAD AS CHIEF IS SAYING IT WILL BE.

CHUCKLES

I'M NOT SO SURE 'FIRST INTO ACTION'
 IS SO HEALTHY FOR THE LIKES OF YOU AND ME!

STOMPEY & CHUCKLES

THAT, WE ALL CAN AGREE!

JEREMY

I can't wait! I'll be first into action!
 FLYING SO HIGH, UP IN THE SKY IT'S 'FIRST INTO ACTION' FOR ME!
 FLYING SO HIGH, UP IN THE SKY, DUCKING AND DIVING'S FOR ME!
 DAINTY STEP, A GRAND PIROUETTE WITH EVERYONE LOOKING TO SEE.
 SWOOPING AND SWIRLING. SPINNING AND TWIRLING, THIS IS THE LIFE FOR
 ME!
 DODGING THE FLACK, WE'LL ALL MAKE IT BACK.
 IT'S 'FIRST INTO ACTION!' FOR ME!
 DODGING THE FLACK, WE'LL ALL MAKE IT BACK.
 IT'S 'FIRST INTO ACTION!' FOR ME!
 YOU CAN TAKE IT FROM ME!

CHIEF

Right then boys, let's show them how we do it! (N.B. **ALL THREE PARTS TOGETHER**)

ALL

IT'S FIRST INTO ACTION
 IT'S THE ONLY PLACE TO BE!

CHIEF

Attention! Right Dress! Eyes front! Salute! (*SFX Breaking twig*) What was that? Enemy
 approaching. Into the trees, double-quick!

STOMPEY

But they're so tall, I'll never make it! (*CHUCKLES and JEREMY throw STOMPEY into
 the branches*) Aaaargh! Ouch! I've hurt my wing! Ooh, it's very sore. But don't worry about
 me, I'm safely roosted in the trees! (*STOMPEY exits unseen*)

CHIEF

Chuckles, Jeremy, up you go too and keep a lookout for any strange goings-on. (*CHUCKLES and JEREMY flap wildly and exit noisily. To AUDIENCE*) Time to make myself scarce! (*CHIEF exits.*)

RABBETTS

(*RABBETTS enters wearing very dark clothes surveying the scene and occasionally raising an oversize shotgun and pointing it around. SFX Breaking twig.*) ‘Ooo be there? (*Silence. SFX Breaking twig.*) ‘Ooo be there!?’ (*RABBETTS fires off a very loud shot.*) Blast it, missed the darn poacher! But, I’ll get yer next time! Don’t no-one try stealing them pheasants whilst I’m on guard. (*Looks around*) I guess them birds is all safely roosting. (*Breaking his shotgun.*) Safety catch on. Time to gets me home for some soup! Cabbage and sprouts! Lovely! (*Exits*)

Scene Change Music Extract from #01 First Into Action!

**Act 1 SCENE 2: THE FILLING STATION FORECOURT: ‘A Fine Mechanic’
(Dad & Danny)**

(*A colourful, old gypsy caravan with rotting wooden spokes held underneath with bricks. Petrol pumps suggest a filling station set in open countryside. DANNY enters brightly, holding an oily rag and engine parts. Wears a cap and oily overalls.*)

DANNY

(*To AUDIENCE*) Do you like our old gypsy caravan? I love it ... especially in the evenings, tucked up in my bunk, with Dad telling me stories. (*DANNY oils and cleans the engine parts with care*) Dad’s a mechanic. He just loves engines. And I love engines too. Even before I could walk, that workshop was my play-room ... where else could Dad keep an eye on me all day long? (*DAD whistling his ‘Happy-Tune’ from end of Song #08.*) Ha! Dad’s in a good mood, always whistles when things are going well.

DAD

(*Enters holding oily rag and engine part. Wears a cap and oily overalls. A mirror of Danny’s clothing.*) You know something, Danny? You must easily be the best nine-year-old mechanic in the world. One day you’ll make a great mechanic!

DANNY

(*To AUDIENCE*) I can already take an engine to pieces ...

DAD

... and put it back together again. (*DAD exits to the workshop still whistling*)

DANNY

(*To AUDIENCE*) I mean properly to pieces, pistons and crankshaft and all. You know, all the tiny, fiddly bits that a real mechanic would know.

DAD

(*Calling from offstage*) Danny, quick. I have a surprise for you! (*DAD brings on the ‘Go-Cart Whizzer made from soap boxes and four large wheels.’*)