

Darwin Rocks!

Junior Script

by

Steve Titford

Ideal Cast Size 59

Speaking Roles 55

Minimum Cast Size 34

Duration (minutes) 50-60

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WRITER'S WELCOME

Thank you for coming to discover why 'Darwin Rocks!' Our team have worked hard to create a musical which I hope your company and audience will enjoy very much!

Fun is the biggest reason for creating this musical! We had lots of fun making it and we want everyone to be in on it. The snappy script crackles with comedy moments, a pacey plot and many lovable characters. The songs have been specifically produced to be appealing to all ages and are a breeze to teach.

Everyone can join in - be they a confident performer, a keen beginner or part of the backstage team. Plenty of singing, speaking and non-speaking parts form an adaptable cast list. The plot allows for your production to be as simple or as ambitious as you want it to be, whether you are performing in a state-of-the-art theatre or the most basic of school halls. A CD player and an enthusiastic team are the only minimum requirements!

Support is there to assist you. 'Darwin Rocks!' has been assembled by a group of knowledgeable and highly dedicated specialists in performing arts and education. In other words: we understand what you're going through! We've used our collective experience to make staging the show as simple and as enjoyable as possible. In addition to this, our helpful staff are available to answer any queries you may have.

Time-saving resources are included and extra resources are available for purchase to help you. We'll go through these next so you can see just how easily you can make your show spectacular!

So, on we go! Let's move on and start planning your super production! From one director to another, I wish you a successful show and a great time.

Kind regards,

Steve Titford

PRODUCTION NOTES

CASTING

A small or large cast can perform the show. It allows for:

- up to 56 speaking roles of varying sizes
- several solo singing roles
- an unlimited number of chorus parts
- an unlimited number of non speaking parts
- Merging roles to reduce the cast size to as few as 33 roles.

We've sorted the cast list in various helpful ways to assist you:

- roles sorted into character groups
- speaking roles by number of lines
- characters in each scene
- suggestions on how to reduce the cast size by merging roles

STAGING AND ACTING TIPS

Positions

To save time when blocking scenes (making sure that all the performers are in the right place), the stage directions in the script often refer to traditional stage positions. It will help if your cast and crew know these positions.

Backdrop		
Upstage Right	Upstage Centre	Upstage Left
Centre Right	Centre Stage	Centre Left
Downstage Right	Downstage Centre	Downstage Left
Audience		

Consider using tape to mark out the stage so your performers know where to stand. They should try and avoid standing in rows when acting to avoid a 'school assembly' look! Semi-circles are useful shapes to mark out on the stage to encourage more natural positioning.

Delivery

It is essential that all performers deliver their lines clearly so that the audience can enjoy the story and the comedy. Performers should be encouraged to 'relax', 'breathe', 'leave gaps' and use 'big voices' to project their lines to the back of the audience. They should also be reminded to wait for any audience laughter to quieten down before continuing the scene. Every performer should be encouraged to make the audience 'love' their character by giving an energetic and memorable performance!

Timing

Within the dialogue, there is a lot of punctuation along with many stage directions that will help with the timing of the lines. Some of the dialogue is performed to music in accordance with the stage directions. Most of this dialogue is performed on the Vocal tracks to provide examples of how it can be done.

Movement and Choreography

In the script, we have suggested actions in the songs where they may assist the plot. Where we haven't made specific references to actions, we still encourage the use of simple choreography to boost the energy of your cast's performance. For this, feel free to devise your own movement.

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

All the characters can be effectively costumed on a small budget.

Feel free to dress your characters as elaborately as you wish if you have the time and resources.

Here are some suggestions for dressing your cast on a modest budget with a bit of help from parents and assistants!

The Ambassadors are from a rock-style future.

Black leather-look coats, bright coloured plain T-shirts, black leather-look trousers.

London Citizens, Newspaper Vendors, Practical Joker.

Various Victorian style costumes with added props.

Emma and her friends are Victorian ladies.

Long dresses, gathered at the waist with a full skirt and optional shawl or cape. As an alternative idea, perhaps a long-sleeved blouse with a full-length skirt.

Charles Darwin is a Victorian gentleman.

Straw hat, white shirt, green tie, black waistcoat, black frock coat, black trousers, brown boots.

Charles's Chums, John Murray's Staff, Sir Brodie and The Resistance are Victorian gentlemen.

White long-sleeved shirts, cravats, matching waistcoats, jackets and trousers, boots.

Mary-Ann is a Victorian Maid and **Gene** is a Victorian Butler.

Typical Victorian servant attire.

Jo is a Victorian gentleman with a hint of a soul singer about him!

White long-sleeved shirt, bright cravat, white suit jacket and trousers, Cuban heels!

Painter.

White painter's smock, long trousers, optional beret.

The Fuegians are native islanders.

Tan coloured tunics decorated with beads and shells, face-painted tribal markings. **Chief Chris** could have a more elaborate costume to indicate her/his leadership.

The officers of the HMS Beagle – Fitzroy, Martens and McCormick.

White shirts, black jackets with brass buttons, black trousers, black shoes, optional Bicorné hats.

The sailors of the HMS Beagle.

White shirt, red jackets with brass buttons, white trousers, black boots, black berets.

The Scientists.

White shirts, white lab coats, long trousers.

The Ancestors:

Ancestor 1 is reminiscent of a chimpanzee.

Long-sleeved T-shirt with animal fur markings painted on, matching leggings, sash reading 'Sahelanthropus Tchadensis', face paint or monkey mask.

Ancestor 2 is slightly reminiscent of an orangutan.

Long-sleeved T-shirt with long animal fur markings painted on, matching leggings, sash reading 'Australopithecus Anamensis', long wig, face paint or monkey mask, over-sized comb.]

Ancestor 3.

'Caveman' tunic with animal fur markings painted on, sash reading 'Homo Ergaster', stick with a fake flame.

Ancestor 4.

'Caveman' tunic with animal fur markings painted on, sash reading 'Homo Neanderthalensis', long wooden spear.

Homo Sapiens.

Toga, sandals, cardboard piece of 'rock' with some 'charcoaled-in' emojis, stick of charcoal.

Future Human.

Jeans, T-shirt, trainers, mobile phone or tablet device, large headphones.

The Travelling Fuegians (Fuegia, Jemmy and York) plus Etty and Francis.

Short jacket, white shirt, three-quarter length trousers/dress, black shoes.

Old Charles Darwin.

White shirt, black gown, matching waistcoat and trousers, black shoes, fedora hat.

PERFORMING SONGS

All the music required to stage this production, including sound effects, is found on the Vocal and Backing Track CDs. The vocal recording is provided as a guide and to enable the swift learning of songs. The backing tracks without vocals are ideal to use in rehearsals and performances, and the two scores give vast flexibility if you have the luxury of a live pianist.

The songs (except for a few solos) are designed to be performed with simple actions by the entire cast. The help of a separate choir is highly recommended. A good technique is to use any cast members who are not in the current scene to boost the number of singers in the choir. The choir should also be part of the show - performing the 'actions' and any spoken dialogue marked 'ALL:'. The choir could also perform the solo lines if suitable soloists aren't available.

A great product called **Sing it!** is also available. This CD-ROM or download can teach all the songs to the children without any teacher input. Children can use it at school or at home - think of the time it will save you! Most schools use it in class on an interactive white board or in the school hall on the overhead projector to allow full cast practice.

SOUND

The show can be performed with nothing more than a CD player. However, a good sound system along with confident performances will really help make an engaging atmosphere. Ideally, performers should be trained to speak and sing loud enough for the audience to hear them without microphones. This way, if you have the luxury of microphones, they will simply enhance the show rather than prop it up.

If solo microphones are available, they should be used by the Ambassadors as they tell the story along with any solo singers. If you have a limited number of headset or lapel microphones, these should be allocated to the main speaking characters first.

A powerful set of speakers with a good bass response will allow the performers and audience to get into the show. The volume of the backing tracks and music should be as loud as possible without overpowering the voices of the performers.

For playing back the tracks, it is best to use reliable media player software which automatically pauses playback between tracks. We recommend iTunes, which works on PC and Mac. It can be downloaded for free from <https://www.apple.com/itunes/>.

If possible, enlist the help of an experienced sound engineer.

SCENERY AND LIGHTING

Suggestions for scenery are given at the beginning of each scene. Backdrops can be as simple or elaborate as you wish. However, for a really easy solution and fuss free performance, instant scenery is now available with our **digital** backdrops: **Project It!** provides a different backdrop for EVERY scene change and is supplied in both a PowerPoint presentation and as individual JPG files.

The show can be performed in daylight with no lighting if necessary! If you have access to some lighting, here are a few hints:

For non-technical people!

- Blackouts (switching off the lights) are very effective where denoted in the script. However, arm your crew with torches so that they can see what they are doing and can assist cast members safely around the stage area! - Try and ensure that the whole of the stage area is lit, including the choir section. - If possible, switch off any lighting in the auditorium during the performance to keep the audience's attention focused on the stage.
- If possible, enlist the help of an experienced lighting engineer.

For lighting engineers.

-On the following page, we have provided a list of lighting 'scenes' which appear in the script.

LIGHTING SCENES: DARWIN ROCKS!

- BLACKOUT
- HOUSE LIGHTS
- DAY, INDOORS
- DAWN, OUTDOORS
- FLASHES AND COLOUR
- DUSK, OUTDOORS

- In addition to the above, and if you have the resources, lighting could be used in Scene Three to give the effect of bonfires glowing in the distance, for the beach scene.

LIST OF PROPERTIES

All the props can be made or obtained from fancy dress shops. Most of the items will benefit the comedy aspect of the show by having a cartoon look and larger-than-life size. We suggest making most props as brightly-painted cut-outs from stiff and durable card.

Scene One

Inflatable guitars Ambassadors
 False arm..... Practical Joker
 Bags containing newspapers..... Newspaper Vendors

Scene Two

Tea cups and saucers Marketers, Marion, John & Mason
 Newspaper displaying a picture of Darwin Marketer 2

Scene Three

Bonfire Stage Prop
 Chef's hat and rolling pin Fuegian 5
 Drawing pad & pencil..... Martens
 Shabby suitcase McCormick
 Chocolate Within Suitcase
 Tin of tea..... Within Suitcase
 Yellow tin Within Suitcase
 Pears soap Within Suitcase
 Apple sauce..... Within Suitcase
 Wicker basket..... Fuegian Merchant
 Loincloth Within Basket
 Large 'rock' stick..... Within Basket
 Oversized fur wallet with 'I Love Tierra Del Fuego' Logo Within Basket
 Sombrero made of twigs and leaves Within Basket
 Sea shell..... Within Basket

Scene Four

No Properties required

Scene Five

Sash reading 'Sahelanthropus Tchadensis'	Ancestor 1
Sash reading 'Australopithecus Anamensis'	Ancestor 2
'Stone' tool for combing hair	Ancestor 2
Sash reading 'Homo Ergaster'	Ancestor 3
Large stick with a fake flame at the end	Ancestor 3
Sash reading 'Homo Neanderthalensis'	Ancestor 4
Long wooden spear	Ancestor 4
Stone tablet depicting various emojis	Homo Sapiens
Stick of charcoal	Homo Sapiens
Mobile phone	Future Human
Rose	Jo

Scene Six

Large list with 2 columns headed 'Marry' and 'Not Marry'	Stage Prop
Tablet device	Chan
Tray and large napkin	Gene
Stiff-looking pigeon	Chum 3
Mop	Mary-Ann
Pigeon's leg ring	Charles
Paper and pencil	Emma

Scene Seven

Magazine displaying a caricature of Charles as an ape (See next page)	Lu
Black felt fedora hat	Old Charles
Easel & portrait canvas	Painter
3 Beetles	Stage Props
Tortoise wearing a sombrero and sunglasses	Charles
Tortoise wearing a raincoat and an umbrella hat	Charles

Scene Eight

'Lit' bonfire	Stage Prop
Ten pound note	Chan
Tribal clothes	Fuegia, Jemmy and York

CARICATURE OF CHARLES AS AN APE

