

The Greatest Show

Junior Script
by

Mike Horth and Jan Porter

Ideal Cast Size 43

Speaking Roles 30

Minimum Cast Size 33

Duration (minutes) 60

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CAST LIST

In the following list the bracketed number shows the number of spoken lines each character has.

The asterisk () before the character's name indicates that this character has solo or featured sung lines.*

The Pickle Family

*Herbert Pickle	(75)
Petunia Pickle	(20)
Lily Pickle	(44)
Branston Pickle	(46)
Professor Pickle	(25)
*Mrs Tickle	(33)

The Troupe

Buffalo Bill	(1)
Maximus Girder	(5)
Gladiator 1	(2)
Gladiator 2	(1)
Victor Chatterson	(5)
Vagabond Charlie	(9)
Harry Houdidit	(13)
Coco	(1)
Cookie	(1)
Scamp	(0)
Lady	(0)
*Cat 1	(0)
*Cat 2	(0)
*Cat 3	(0)
Dungo	(0)
Flea 1	(3)
Flea 2	(3)
Flea 3	(2)

The Baddies

*Dr Horace Heckle	(37)
*Mr Tyrus Snide	(32)
*Colonel Obadiah Blastpipe	(47)
*Ronnie Ratfink	(29)

Audience/Members of the Crowd

Ibis	(16)
Mercure	(16)

Inventors/ Members of the Crowd

*Donald Dufflecoat	(4)
*Mrs Longlegs	(3)

Others

*Flossie Dentures	(35)
Lord D'Enture	(7)
Policeman 1	(0)
Policeman 2	(0)
*Ragamuffin 1	(1)
*Ragamuffin 2	(0)
*Ragamuffin 3	(0)
*Ragamuffin 4	(0)
*Cog 1	(1)
*Cog 2	(0)
*Cog 3	(0)
*Cog 4	(0)

SPEAKING ROLES BY NUMBER OF LINES

N.B. In the following list, the number shows how many SPOKEN lines each role has. An asterisk (*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.

*Herbert Pickle.....	Showman	75
*Obadiah Blastpipe	Steampunk megalomaniac.....	47
Branston Pickle.....	Son, exhibits performing fleas	46
Lily Pickle.....	Daughter, exhibits singing cats.....	44
*Dr Horace Heckle.....	Disreputable 'quack' doctor	37
*Flossie Dentures	Aristocratic runaway	35
*Mrs Tickle.....	Housekeeper	33
*Tyrus Snide	Disreputable 'quack' doctor	32
*Ratfink.....	Obadiah's henchman.....	29
Professor Pickle.....	Inventor and exhibitor of scientific curiosities	25
Petunia Pickle.....	Wife and melodramatic artist	20
Ibis.....	Audience and member of the public	16
Mercure	Audience and member of the public	16
Harry Houdidit.....	Escapologist.....	13
Vagabond Charlie	Ventriloquist's dummy	9
Lord D'Enture	Flossie's father	7
Victor Chatterson.....	Ventriloquist.....	5
Maximus Girder	Strongman.....	5
*Donald Dufflecoat.....	Inventor and member of the public	4
*Mrs Longlegs.....	Inventor and member of the public	3
Flea 1.....	Member of the Flea Circus	3
Flea 2.....	As above	3
Flea 3.....	As above	2
Gladiator 1	Member of the troupe	2
Coco	Clown	1
Cookie	Clown	1
Buffalo Bill.....	Member of the troupe	1
Gladiator 2	Member of the troupe	1
*Ragamuffin 1	Heckle and Snide's helper.....	1
*Cog 1.....	Obadiah's minion.....	1

Non-speaking roles: *Cats 1-3 (who also play wild animals 1-3); Dungo (member of flea circus); *Ragamuffins 2-4; Policemen 1-2; *Cogs 2-4; Scamp and Lady (performing dogs).

SUGGESTED CAST LIST FOR 33 ACTORS

N.B. In the following list, the number shows how many spoken lines each role has. An asterisk (*) before the character's name indicates that this character ALSO has solo or featured sung lines.

*Herbert Pickle.....	75
*Obadiah Blastpipe.....	47
Branston Pickle.....	46
Lily Pickle.....	44
*Dr Horace Heckle.....	37
*Flossie Dentures.....	35
*Mrs Tickle.....	33
*Tyrus Snide.....	32
*Ratfink.....	29
Professor Pickle.....	25
Petunia Pickle.....	20
Ibis.....	16
Mercure.....	16
Harry Houdidit..... Also plays Policeman 1.....	13
Victor..... Also plays Lord D'Enture.....	12
Vagabond Charlie..... Also plays Policeman 2.....	9
Gladiator 1..... Also plays Flea 1.....	5
Gladiator 2..... Also plays Flea 2.....	4
Maximus Girder.....	4
*Donald Dufflecoat.....	4
*Mrs Longlegs.....	3
Flea 2..... Also plays Lady.....	3
*Ragamuffin 1..... Also plays *Cog 1.....	2
Coco.....	1
Cookie.....	1
Buffalo Bill.....	1

Non-speaking roles: *Ragamuffins 2-4 (who also play *Cogs 2-3); Scamp (who also plays Dungo); *Cats 1-3 (who also play wild animals).

CHARACTERS IN EACH SCENE**Scene One**

Herbert
Lily
Vagabond
Branston
Prof
Victor
Buffalo Bill
Maximus
Harry
Cats 1-3
Scamp
Lady
Cookie
Coco
Mrs Tickle
Petunia
Ratfink

Scene Two

Heckle
Snide
Ragamuffins 1-4
Ibis
Mercure
Mrs Longlegs
Donald
Ratfink

Scene Three

Mrs Tickle
Lily
Herbert
Petunia
Branston
Ibis
Mercure
Flossie
Cats 1-3
Scamp
Lady
Cookie
Coco
Gladiators 1-2
Maximus
Prof

Scene Four

Cogs 1-4
Heckle
Snide
Ratfink
Obadiah

Scene Five

Cookie
Coco
Ibis
Mercure
Herbert
Branston
Fleas 1-3
Dungo
Harry
Petunia
Lily
Victor
Mrs Tickle
Buffalo Bill
Maximus
Vagabond
Prof

Scene Six

Heckle
Snide
Flossie
Mrs Longlegs
Donald
Ibis
Mercure
Ragamuffins 1-4
Branston
Lily

Scene Seven

Donald
Mrs Longlegs
Mrs Tickle
Cogs 1-4
Ratfink
Obadiah
Heckle
Snide
Lily
Branston
Flossie

Scene Eight

Cog 1 (If no backdrop)
Prof
Petunia
Ratfink
Heckle
Snide
Obadiah
Lily
Branston
Flossie
Lord D'Enture
Policemen 1-2
Ibis
Mercure

Scene Nine

Prof
Petunia
Branston
Herbert
Lily
Mrs Tickle
Flossie
Lord D'Enture

PRODUCTION NOTES

Welcome to ***The Greatest Show*** – our tale of steampunk skulduggery, wacky inventions, disreputable quack doctors and a travelling show. To help you get started, we have enclosed notes and suggestions for the production below.

CASTING

The script is written for **44 characters**:

Principal roles	6	35-75 lines
Mid-range roles	7	16-33 lines
Smaller roles	17	1-13 lines
Non-speaking roles	14	

Please note that many of the **14 non-speaking** characters have substantial acting or singing roles.

The cast can be condensed to **33 characters** if some characters are given double roles with minimum costume changes:

Principal roles	6	35-75 lines
Mid-range roles	7	16-33 lines
Smaller roles	13	1-9 lines
Non-speaking roles	7	

CHORUS

The chorus parts are flexible. Specific singers are indicated in the script although the numbers could be increased with an additional chorus if preferable.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERS

The show is set at the end of the Victorian era, so generic long dresses/skirts, shawls, trousers, waistcoats, flat caps etc. would work well.

See the chart on the next page for more details of costumes with suggestions for their character type.

Character	Costume	Notes
Herbert Pickle	Top hat, bright waistcoat, coat tails, bowtie	Showman: confident, outgoing leader
Branston Pickle	Victorian boy costume with neckerchief	Hardworking but fun
Lily Pickle	Victorian girl costume	Hardworking, sensible
Petunia Pickle	Silky glamorous dress	Very melodramatic - needs to 'ham up' performance
Professor Pickle	Glasses, white coat	Distracted, 'nutty' professor-type
Mrs Tickle	Victorian dress, apron	Busy, very motherly
Ibis and Mercure	Old men's everyday suits	Think Statler and Waldorf from The Muppets

Obadiah Blastpipe	<p>Steampunk goggles or round, dark glasses and tall top hat. Long black coat with metal buttons and shiny metal epaulettes.</p> <p>The coat should have about 12 pieces of Velcro sewn onto it ready to have various steam punk 'metal' accessories attached (e.g. cogs, clocks, valves, rockets, pipes , cylinders, chains, keys) plus some ridiculous bits (rubber duck, coat hanger etc.) At each appearance, Obadiah has more items attached. To add more ridiculous detail – a cardboard tube with cotton wool sticking out of the top of his hat to represent a chimney.</p>	Wacky steampunk megalomaniac
Ronnie Ratfink	Top hat, black cloak	Classic Victorian villain
Horace Heckle	Bowler hat, checked waistcoat, white shirt, bowtie, short jacket	Disreputable quack doctor
Tyrus Snide	Bowler hat, checked waistcoat, white shirt, bowtie, short jacket	Disreputable quack doctor
Flossie	Posh Victorian clothing	Aristocratic runaway

Vagabond Charlie	Patched jacket and trousers	Ventriloquist's dummy
Victor Chatterson	Smart suit	Ventriloquist
Harry Houdidit	White vest and trousers, Straitjacket*, Slicked hair and painted-on thin, curly moustache	Escapologist
Donald Dufflecoat	Victorian suit	Inventor: member of the crowd
Mrs Longlegs	Victorian dress Fair or grey hair	Inventor, member of the crowd
Lord D'Enture	Posh Victorian gentleman costume with top hat	Flossie's aristocratic father
Maximus Girder	Sc 1: Leopard skin single shoulder suit and dumbbells Sc 3: Gladiator costume	Strongman
Gladiator 1 and 2	Simple gladiator costume with a net for the weapon	
Fleas x3	Simple Egyptian 'skirts'	

Dungo	Scarab beetle costume	
Buffalo Bill	Cowboy costume	Lasso to be made as stick with a fixed hoop on it or he could just carry a circle of rope
Cookie and Coco	Clown costumes	
Ragamuffins x4	Victorian urchin costumes	They also wear a sandwich board in Scene Two and moustache in Scene Six - see list of properties
Cogs x4	Urchin costumes with steam punk goggles on the head	
Lady and Scamp	Animal-coloured tops and bottoms with dog mask/ headdress, tail and frill around the neck for each	Performing dogs
Cats x3	Animal coloured top and bottom with tail and cat masks	The cats wear the same costumes when they appear as wild animals but will also carry a soft toy to represent another wild animal – see list of properties
Policeman x2	Standard policeman costumes	

STAGING**SCENERY**

The show has five locations:

1. The showground from the outside with painted show trailers and tents.
2. Outside Heckle and Snide’s wagon.
3. Inside the show tent – a midnight blue background with little silver stars as the backdrop.
4. Obadiah’s engine sheds – an industrial steampunk backdrop.
5. Inside the Professor’s trailer – a wooden hut with shelving and scientific objects.

This scene also has eight silent movie title cards if using **Project It!**

Our digital backdrops **Project It!** can be used as scenery to represent the locations. Alternatively, if not using the digital projections, a painted trailers backdrop would serve for the whole show with a portable steampunk backdrop screen to be brought on to signify Obadiah’s engine sheds. During the silent movie sequence, the Cogs could walk on with large title cards – one Cog holding up the cards in turn according to the timing sequences.

CHOREOGRAPHY

Each song lends itself to movement of some sort. The chart below lists the context of each song and gives some ideas you may wish to consider.

Song	Purpose	Details
Get This Show On The Road	The show advertises its arrival in town with a procession.	This number opens with the show’s final preparations before setting off. The middle and end of the number advertise the show to the public and introduce the troupe.
We’ve got the Cure	The Quack Doctors capitalise on the crowds attracted to the show.	Outrageous comic number full of over exaggeration and dubious claims, typical of the period.
Obadiah	Obadiah reveals his sinister character.	The industrial feel to this song would work well with robotic movement.

The Show Goes On	The Pickles react to the sabotage of their show.	Emotional but determined; the main dilemma in the show.
Artificial Teeth	Another opportunity to sample the ridiculous antics of Heckle and Snide selling their wares.	Flossie sings a sweet melodramatic song designed to actually advertise false teeth.
What An Invention	A rousing music hall style song about inventions.	This song would really lend itself to dancing about 'Knees Up Mother Brown' style in the chorus .
The Greatest Show	Big Finale for the whole cast.	Gospel rock style – swaying and clapping.

MUSIC

A high-quality recording of the vocal tracks (either in CD or mp3 download format) and an Easy Play Score are available to purchase (see our website). These not only act as a guide but can assist with the teaching of the songs too. A Performance Score (Grade 5/6 standard) is also available if you have the luxury of a live pianist.

All the music required to stage this production, including sound effects and play on/play offs, can be found on the Backing Track CD or mp3 download.

Many of the incidental cues are underscored, i.e. dialogue is spoken over them. This dialogue is indicated by underlining in the script. We strongly advise that you listen to the vocal tracks (on the Vocal Track CD or mp3 download) before rehearsals start and use these during rehearsals for timing purposes.

In addition, a CD-ROM or download of all the songs called **Sing It!** is also available. This CD-ROM or download can teach the songs to the children without any teacher input. Children can use it at school or 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.

DANCERS AND JUGGLERS

Cookie and Coco the clowns juggle in Scenes One and Five, and Scamp and Lady dance with ribbons in Scene 1 to add a sense of spectacle and circus atmosphere

There are some suggestions for simple effects below:

- Ribbon wands or flashing light sticks are easy to use whilst dancing freely.
- Juggling with 3 coloured scarves can be learned quite quickly from online tutorials. (We have tested this ourselves!) Packs of coloured juggling scarves are cheap and easily available online.

Whatever you choose to use and perform, it is included in the properties list as ‘Juggling props’.

A FURTHER NOTE ON COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES

Scene One

Clowns, Cats, Dogs: juggling props

See ‘Dancers and Jugglers’ section above.

Branston: Flea circus tin

Any biscuit tin or box with a large label saying ‘Flea Circus’

Scene Two

All Ragamuffins: Sandwich board adverts

Ragamuffin 4: Tray containing packets of potions

The sandwich boards can be made with two pieces of strong card attached across the shoulders with some fabric. There is a set of labels in the free photocopiable resources section to enlarge or copy onto the sandwich boards.

We suggest using a selection of different sized empty boxes and plastic bottles for the potions. Again, the photocopiable labels can be printed and stuck onto the packaging.

Scene Three

Cats: Toy wild animals

In this scene the circus cats become ‘wild cats’ in the gladiator show. They do not change costume in any way, but should hold a soft toy of some description e.g. a snake, shark, tiger, lion which the gladiators wrestle with.

Scene Four

Cogs 2-4: Boxes with metallic pipework designs

Large boxes that can be seen by the audience should be painted with silver pipework/valves/pressure gauges (think steampunk) so it looks like the pipes on one box can connect with pipes on the other boxes. Cogs and pressure gauges could be made from paper plates and stuck onto the boxes. The boxes are lifted robotically by the Cogs actors and rearranged at the back of the stage to suggest that the cogs are working in the factory.

Scene Five

Harry Houdidit: Straitjacket

For the straitjacket a pale jacket put on back-to-front, with a buckle or piece of silver foil on the back to represent the clasp, would make an easy option. Harry should just fold his arms in front of him as if they have been confined.

For Harry's chains, paper chains or a piece of white plastic chain available in garden centres and DIY stores would work well.

The ropes for Harry's feet should be a strip of fabric with a Velcro end just to secure the strip around his legs. **PLEASE NOTE – the strip should easily come off with a small amount of pressure from the legs so that there is no trip hazard.** Alternatively, Petunia could just mime tying Harry's legs together.

The belt can be any dark-coloured belt strapped across Harry's upper arms for effect, although it should not confine him in any way.

Scene Six

Flossie: Tray of moustache, false teeth and potion boxes

The pimple poultice packet from Scene Two should be used along with boxes showing pictures of false teeth and moustaches. See photocopiable resources for labels.

Ragamuffins: Moustaches

See the diagrams in the resources section for the styles needed.

Flossie and Snide: Masks

These would work as a half-mask on a stick. See photocopiable resources.

Scene Seven

Donald Dufflecoat: Miracle button fastener

This needs to be a stick with a small hook on the end. It can be decorated or named if you have the time!

Mrs Longlegs: Patented spider trap

Let your imagination run riot! It could just be a labelled box, a fishing net, or a contraption of your own design.

Scene Eight**Professor: Table with mechanical Instruments**

Any unusual looking gadgets – clocks, giant springs, plastic tool kit etc.

Cogs: Silent movie placards (if not using backdrop)

See photocopiable resources for style and lettering ideas.

Photocopiable resources (See the section at the back of the script)

Potion labels – also use as sandwich board adverts

Moustache images

False teeth images

Silent movie placards

Masks of good and bad teeth