

THE SELFISH GIANT

The Selfish Giant is Jan Stroud's musical adaptation of Oscar Wilde's magical story. It has been performed to high acclaim by thousands of children all over the world, in large theatres, small village halls and once in The Royal Opera House. It has won the support of teachers, children, parents and celebrities because of the simple emotional, moral and spiritual guidance it offers to children and the opportunity to create 'magic' on stage.

The Selfish Giant has an illustrious history as one of our longest standing musicals. It began life in schools as a collection of narrative songs and was first published by The Daylight Company and sold to schools. Film and TV producers took an interest and the project was developed for broadcast, along with **The Happy Prince**. **Jan Stroud** worked with various film companies, met many music producers, artists, illustrators, animators and film makers and by the late 1990's we had built a production team that was second to none. It was this development of our Oscar Wilde projects for film and TV that enabled us to produce our exceptional resources. We work with the same highly professional team to develop our musicals today.

Over the years, Jan wrote some additional songs for The Selfish Giant and one, **Forever Friends**, was recorded with her pupil, **Jon Lee** who, as a 13 year old boy, had sung one of Jan's songs to win both his TV debut and his starring role in **Cameron Mackintosh's** production of **'Oliver'**. Jon later went on to find fame as a member of the hugely successful group **S Club 7** and, more recently has starred in **Les Miserables** and in **Jersey Boys** as Frankie Valli.

Further development of this musical included a recording of the original story narrated by the greatly loved television personality, **Johnny Morris**. School performances continued to take place using our original format and materials until a completely new, fully orchestrated arrangement of all the music and songs was recorded and produced to broadcast standards in professional studios with well-known TV composer, **Ed Welch**. In recent years a fully scripted play has been added and a separate version for younger children has also been created.

The Story

"The Selfish Giant is a very emotional story in many ways. It combines happiness and sadness, a land of plenty and cold famine. It is a simple story but the emotions are so skilfully blended".
Johnny Morris

In **The Giant's Garden** the children play happily amongst families of animals, flowers, insects, bees and butterflies. The giant returns from a long holiday with his friend, the Cornish ogre, and is furious to find his garden invaded. Selfishly, he decides to **Build a Wall** to keep the children out and erects a notice, 'Trespassers will be prosecuted'. The children have nowhere to play and are very sad. Nothing grows - flowers won't bloom because the giant is too selfish. It's always winter in the garden and the giant misses the **Changing Seasons**. Soon a raucous crowd of nasty characters arrive, Nip Vicious (frost), Hugh Gaol (hail), Baron Bluster (wind) and Lady Sleigh (snow). Day and night, they **Party Away**, dancing on the roof of the castle, breaking the slates.

The unhappy giant wonders why spring won't arrive. One day he looks out of the window and sees that children have crept into his garden. Trees break into blossom as children climb them but in one corner of the garden it's still winter. The giant notices a little boy who is crying because he's too small to climb the tree. The giant realises how selfish and unhappy he has been. He runs out into the garden and lifts the boy into the tree which breaks into blossom. The boy reaches down and hugs the giant, giving him ***The Gift of Love***. The children return and play with the giant who, seeing the high wall he built, takes a big axe to ***Knock It Down***. The giant and the children become ***Forever Friends*** but the little boy who he loves best of all is never seen again until, one day he reappears to take the giant to ***Paradise***.

The Music

Backing Tracks

We know that children respond brilliantly to our backing tracks. We feel that the broadcast quality of the recording helps you to present a very professional production and motivate the children to perform at the highest level. You can listen to all our music and songs on our website and also on **SoundCloud** and **Facebook**.

Piano/Vocal score

This is available for a live performance, rehearsal or musical director's score. If you would like to see more pages from this score than are available on our website please contact: info@firesticksandsong.com or telephone +44 (0) 1803 813977

Vocal guide tracks and CD recording

The vocal tracks help children to 'pick up' the songs, however difficult, after listening only a few times. For this musical, these tracks are performed by children, giving you the option of supplementing your singers. There is a recording of a complete performance with a narration of the story interspersed with the songs, followed by backing tracks alone for your performance. Some organisations may prefer a 'live' performance so we also include a full vocal/piano score with a moderately challenging accompaniment. As CDs may not be copied, many groups choose to purchase the vocal tracks for the cast and choir. Alternatively, a licence to copy can be purchased. This is particularly good value for *The Selfish Giant*, containing both songs and story.

Songs

You can listen to samples of all songs on our website – (audio gallery, button icon and again at the bottom of the page for each musical) - as well as on Facebook and SoundCloud.

All songs can be sung by the whole chorus but if you want to use soloists, it could work in the following way:

The Giant's Garden: Verse one or two could be sung by **a child** playing in the garden

Build a Wall: Verse one – **everyone**. Verse two – **Giant**. Chorus can be sung by 2 groups or solo by Giant with children imitating the reply

Changing Seasons: **Everyone**

Party Away: First verse - **Wind, Frost, Hail, Snow. Everyone** joins the chorus

Gift of Love: Narrative song sung by **everyone**

Knock it Down: Verse – **Giant.** Everyone in chorus as for Build a Wall

Forever Friends: Your very best and most confident singer could take the verses and middle 8 and everyone sings the chorus or everyone could sing throughout – it's quite a challenging song.

Paradise: **Little Boy** sings verse (another good singer required) and everyone sings the repeat.

From a Choirmaster

"I have a Choir of 110 children. They all love singing your amazing songs. Self esteem and confidence shine through when they perform on stage to their parents. They are always so proud of what they do. So am I! The quality songs and thought provoking scripts captivate the children and they perform with such enthusiasm – it's quite emotional at times!"

Production

The Selfish Giant offers a great deal of flexibility in terms of presentation. The resources will enable you to choose different formats and add your own unique stamp to a production. The standard hire pack includes both a resource book with a narration of the story interspersed with a very short script **and** a fully scripted play. The resource book contains ideas and characters taken from the proposed television animation series that teachers have enjoyed weaving into a fuller script of their own devising and it now forms the basis of the version for younger pupils. More recently, the majority of productions have used the fully scripted play.

Over the years, we have seen:

- simple concert performances
- performances with 'live' music provided by piano, jazz bands or full orchestras
- a full dance/drama
- a choir of 400 perform with a celebrity narrator and a Giant played by a Drama advisor
- a most moving performance where the giant was played by a profoundly deaf boy
- and we've now seen many great productions of the full musical incorporating our relatively new script.

The Set

There is no need for complicated scenery. One of the most effective sets that we have seen made use of a few real bushes and shrubs, loaned from the local garden centre. You may like to construct one tree with a hollow centre into which you place a stool. The small boy will then be able to climb inside.

One of the considerations of Set design will be the need to represent the garden in winter as the seasons change outside the garden, especially necessary in the song 'Changing Seasons'. This can be done by making several small trees, decorated with blossom and fruit on one side and

frost or snow on the other, then simply turning the trees around to represent the appropriate season; alternatively, the action could be split between two distinct areas.

The Characters

The first decision will be the representation of the Giant. One solution could be to project an image of the Giant and use an amplified male voice to speak his part, together with a sound signal (e.g. a drum beat). Many schools recruit a teacher or the biggest child to play the part of the Giant. We've also seen one adult Giant dressed in boots he borrowed from the local pantomime society that elevated him by twelve inches!

The little boy (who is often played by a little girl) must look like the other children when he first appears in the garden but, when he reappears at the end, it is effective to alter his appearance slightly, indicating that he is now the Giant's 'vision'. This can be subtly achieved with lighting or by changing to a more ethereal, robe-like costume.

The potential Oscar winners will enjoy the roles of Wind (Baron Bluster), Frost (Nip Vicious) Hail (Hugh Gaol and Snow (Lady Sleigh). Hail could be a tap dancer. Frost and Snow require a degree of grace and 'glitz', but Wind needs only to be boisterous and loud. It might be useful to use a large group for 'winter' and a junk percussion band to accompany the 'Hail' characters. This section of the story could be introduced from a different arena, so that the percussion band processes to the stage through the audience, as winter erupts on the stage. This section culminates with the song 'Party Away!' which, in true 'show stopper' style, creates a natural break for your Interval if required.

It's useful to have a character that represents Spring (April Mae). She has a wand to touch the sleeping flowers and hibernating animals. You will need a group of wall builders; groups to play in the garden and a large collection of assorted animals; rabbits, ducks, frogs, mice, insects, bees, caterpillars, butterflies, snails, tortoises and flowers.

Script version for older children

Cast List

Soloist: Could be the boy who climbs into tree

Narrators: There are 36 pieces of narration that can be shared between as many or as few children as desired

Groups of children and dancers: You could use this group for the final scenes as well or add them to a different group.

Child 1 Child 2 Child 3 Child 4 Child 5 Child 6

April Mae - A rather rotund and inept fairy, sprite apprentice to Alan Titchmarsh
Bee 1 Bee 2 Butterfly 1 Butterfly 2 Butterfly 3 Butterfly 4
Rosa - Mother rabbit
Roberto - Father rabbit
Dipper - Mother duck with errant husband
Selfish Giant
Bob the Builder
Builder 1 Builder 2 Builder 3 Builder 4 Builder 5 Builder 6
Flower
Tilly - A very sleepy tortoise
Lady Slay - Snow queen with a chilly disposition
Nip Vicious - A frosty, illiterate oaf
Baron Bluster – A self-important loudmouth
Hugh Gaol - An aggressive punk
Passer By 1 Passer By 2 Passer By 3 Passer By 4 Passer By 5
Little Boy - The giant's vision

Script Sample for older children

The Overture: All groups of children are on the stage (in darkness). The giant is laid down. The lights come up to show the end scene. An image is projected onto the wall to create an impression of 'Heaven'.

Paradise: Little Boy sings the first verse on his own and then sprinkles blossoms onto the giant. All then sing the whole of Paradise.

(The stage returns to darkness and is cleared for the beginning.)

Narrator 1: Every afternoon, as they were coming home from school, the children used to go and play in the giant's garden. It was a large, lovely garden with soft green grass.

Narrator 2: Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach trees that in the spring time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them.

(Children enter the stage first as flowers and trees. Others come onto the stage in joyful spirit, playing and dancing with all the joys of Spring!)

Child 1: How happy we are here. Life just could not be better.

Child 2: I would have to agree. This garden is simply wonderful. Who would have thought we could ever find such a delightful place in which to play?

Child 3: This is terrific. The variety of flowers is incredible. If only the rest of **'Bristol in Bloom'** was up to this standard. *(Substitute your town name)*

Child 4: I know, **Bath** wins that award every year. You'd think **Bristol City Council** could use taxpayers' money a little more wisely! *(Substitute relevant place names)*

(Children freeze with lights still on. With a gleeful expression and delighted with her creations, April Mae wanders busily amongst the flowers, touching things here and there with her wand. She puts her wand down by a tree.)

April Mae: I really have done well here haven't I? It's becoming warmer again and all my little treasures seem to be thriving yet again in this garden. Oh where on earth have I put my wand?

(April Mae finds her wand and casts a spell on one of the flowers. The spell makes a bang as it backfires.)

April Mae: OOOpps a daisy. Wrong spell again. I must do some revision. Either that or buy a job lot of Miracle Grow.

(April Mae leaves the garden and the children continue)

Child 5: My word, all the flowers here seem to get bigger and brighter by the second!

Child 6: It really is the most superb array of colours you will see this side of Alan Titchmarsh's Geraniums.

In the Giant's Garden

(Whilst this song is being sung a group of children dance around the hall/audience as bees and butterflies. The children in the garden leave, skipping or walking off as the bees and butterflies enter from around the hall. In a whole school production, the next section was designed for a group of Year 3 bees and butterflies but could be omitted)

THE GIANT'S GARDEN

1. In the Giant's garden there's so much to do
So many games to play
We can be happy from the sunrise
'Till the end of the day

Chorus

And we can sing, we can shout, we can laugh
And it's fine if it rains
But we hope that the sun will shine
If you pass this way you are welcome too
This garden's a place created for me and you

2. In the Giant's garden there's so much to hear
Skylarks and buzzing bees
Smell the aroma of the peaches
Hanging ripe from the trees

Chorus And we can sing....etc

3. In the Giant's garden there's so much to see
Flowers and blossom bright
Watching the butterflies so dainty

Dancing in the sunlight

Chorus And we can sing.....etc

Bee 1: I say old chap, this is a rather splendid place

Bee 2: Most certainly. A wonderful place.

Butterfly 1: I have never been anywhere like it!

Butterfly 2: It's lovely

Butterfly 3: It's the most amazing place I have ever been to

Butterfly 3: Not even the Queen has a garden like this!

Rosa (Rabbit): Where is my darling honey bunny. Ah gorgeous, there you are! I can spot your cute little ears a mile off!

Roberto (Rabbit): Just looking for some food. This is such a fabulous garden. I love our life here; it's wonderful!

Dipper (Mother Duck): Oh where are those pesky kids? I can't believe they've gone off without me again. My husband's sinking a few pints at the 'Frog and Newt' and I'm supposed to pick up the pieces! Oh dear, I don't know!

Rosa: Don't worry Dipper!

Dipper: What do you mean, don't worry? How can I do owt but worry? The kids have got to do their homework and it's time Donald got to grips with doing up the pond.

Roberto: I'm sure he's just having a few social pints with friends.

Dipper: Social pints my beak! Bet he's chatting to Daisy Duck again. I'll give him some beak when he gets home!

Rosa: Well. Don't go too hard on him. You need to chill a little Dipper. Maybe a holiday would do you good.

Bees and Butterflies Dance

(Bees and Butterflies exit calmly)

Narrator 1: One day, the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend, the Cornish Ogre and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over, he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle.

Narrator 2: When he arrived home he saw the children playing in his garden.

Selfish Giant: *(stretching and walking very slowly with big strides)* Ahhh, my beloved garden, how I have missed you! Wait a minute, someone has been here. I'll call the police. Oh actually, on second thoughts those call centres are a waste of time.

Child 1: Oh look, the Giant is back, I hope he is happy with us using his garden.

Child 2: I'm sure he is kind hearted and won't mind.

Child 3: What if he becomes angry?

Selfish Giant: Well, I can't shout at little children, I shall have to phone the police.

(Picks up phone, which rings. Giant then speaks but realises it is a recorded message).

Yes, hello, I wish to report ahello.....I.....Oh, you are joking, it's a recorded message!!

Recorded message plays through - change name to suit your area:

This is (Avon and Somerset) Constabulary. We are working hard to fight crime and make the streets a better place to live in. Press 1 if you want to report a vehicle related crime. Press 2 if you want to report a street light out. Press 3 if you want to report a Cornish Ogre. Press 4 to let us know about children playing in your garden. Press 5 to listen to all 4 options again.

Selfish Giant: Complete waste of time! I shall just have to bellow at them instead. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

Child 4: Just playing. We really do like your garden.

Child 5: It's magnificent.

Child 6: Gorgeous.

Selfish Giant: *(shouting)* My own garden is my own garden, anyone can understand that and I will allow NOBODY to play in it but myself. Now get out all of you!

(Children panic and run off crying)

Selfish Giant: Now that's much better, some peace and quiet at last. Where's April Mae? She's done a great job of taking care of the garden.

April Mae: *(Skips on and dances around the flowers)*

At last you are back my large friend. It's lovely to see you. You know, I really have missed you.
(Flashes her eye lids etc)

Selfish Giant: *(Bashful)* Well...uummm...it's nice to see you too.

April Mae: Give us a hug then!

Selfish Giant: Oh no I don't think so.

April Mae: Oh go on you great big softy.

Selfish Giant: No....no I can't. I'm busy. I've got to phone that builder, what's his name? Bob, that's it!

April Mae: Do you mean Bob the Builder?

Selfish Giant: That's him. When it comes to building things, he's the man.

(Group of builders enter from the back of the hall, wearing tool belts and helmets. When on the stage they do a short dance)

Selfish Giant: Now, where's Bob?

Bob: Here I am. I'm the best. Handy Andy's got nothing on me. I don't just play around with MDF and chipboard. I build solid structures that will last forever.

Selfish Giant: Fantastic! Can you build me a solid brick wall around my garden to keep children out?

Bob: *(Measuring up)* OOOhhh....A brick wall? It'll cost ya.....It'll cost ya. Materials... Labour...VAT. This won't come cheap.

Selfish Giant: Can you do a sign too, telling the kids to keep out?

Bob: Ooohhh...A sign?....It'll cost ya.....It'll cost ya..... That's gonna make it more expensive.

Selfish Giant: I don't care what the cost is, just do it!

(Builders bring on large boxes, painted as bricks and build part of a wall either side of stage, with the sign 'Trespassers will be prosecuted'. They do this during the next song.)

BUILD A WALL

1. That old Giant he wasn't all bad
But he had a filthy temper and he got so mad
When he came back home, what a sight met his eyes
He'd returned from his Cornish mate
And he'd outstayed his welcome he was seven years late
When he opened his garden gate
The Giant bellowed out in surprise

Chorus

Gonna build a wall (Gonna build a wall)
Gonna build it high (Gonna build it high)
Gonna build my wall up tall 'till it meets the sky
(Meets the sky)

You must learn (We must learn)
Not to stray (Not to stray) Or I will call the cops and they will lock you away

Story version for younger children

To add further flexibility, there are two versions of this musical, one for ages 3-7 and one for ages 7-10.

Younger children that have participated in a full production, where older children have taken the major responsibilities, have loved the story and songs so we created a special adaptation for nursery and KS1 children, which is also used by younger groups in dance and theatre schools.

The main difference between this version and the original is that the story finishes before the Giant dies. He learns the error of his ways and turns his garden into a children's playground. We have removed two difficult songs, PARADISE and FOREVER FRIENDS.

The hire pack contains a CD with a complete recording of the whole work, beginning with the Overture, moving on to Johnny Morris' narration of the story with songs and sound effects interspersed at appropriate points and ending with a repeat of the Overture to allow the cast to reassemble. The simplest productions allow you to switch on the CD player at Track 1 and let it run until Track 18. Your children would be free to sing, dance or mime with the benefit of an extra 'choir' on the vocal guide tracks and a storyteller to direct the action. The Overture is placed at the beginning and the end, providing music for dance and a structure for your curtain call. Winter sound effects are placed in the appropriate section of the story.

Younger Cast

A very short script is provided if you want to develop the production. The cast includes:

22 Narrators

The Giant

Frost – Nip Vicious, a punk

Snow – Lady Slay, a snow queen

Wind – Baron Bluster, a pompous wind-bag

Little boy who wants to climb a tree

Large groups of children who play in garden.
Large groups of animals and flowers
Gnomes and pixies – Bob the builder’s workforce
Spring (non-speaking)

Some younger groups have used the whole play. We can discuss your needs and create a package specifically for your group. Please contact us.

SCRIPT SAMPLE for younger children

FROM RESOURCE BOOK NOT THE FULL SCRIPT.

[Exit- all children. Snow and Frost, in sparkly costumes, enter the Giant's winter garden.]

NARRATOR

The only people who were pleased were the Snow and Frost.

FROST

Spring has forgotten this garden.

SNOW

So we will live here all the year round.

[They dance around the garden. Use creative music or sound effects. A spectacular costume, rather like a Chinese dragon, can be created from several yards of white material stretched over small hoops and attached to the shoulders of a 'Snow Queen'. 'Snowflakes', hidden in the tunnel and holding the hoops, can support the 'cloak' and weave the snow dragon through the garden before creeping out, laying the hoops flat as they spread the material over the ground.]

NARRATOR

The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them and he came. He was wrapped in furs and he roared all day about the garden and blew the chimney pots down. [Enter North Wind who joins the dance]

WIND

This is a delightful spot. We must ask the Hail on a visit. [All shout] HAIL! HAIL

[Enter Hail who joins the dance. There are weather effects on the CD but you could also use broom handles, drums, dustbin lids or other pieces of junk percussion and work to create a 'rhythm rondo', using natural word rhythms such as 'Have a ba-na-na, have a cup of tea' or 'Hot chilli, hot chilli' etc. The characters can then enter from the back or sides of the auditorium, making as much (structured) noise as possible!

NARRATOR

So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey and his breath was like ice.

[The Giant is sitting by the window looking out at his cold, white garden.]

GIANT

I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming. I hope there will be a change in the weather.

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