

THE BIG BAD WOLF

(And How He Got That Way)

Book and Lyrics by Greg Palmer

Music by John Engerman

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's a rousing musical defense of the wolf, presented in English Panto style. Panto employs hybridized fairy tales, puns, cross-dressed characters, big-head characters, magical transformations and silliness to the max. With plot aspects from "The Three Little Pigs," "Red Riding Hood," "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," and even "Frankenstein," the pigs are shown to be the real culprits -- clever media manipulators with strictly their own swinish interests at heart. The two-member orchestra also becomes a hilarious part of the performance as they interact with the actors and audience. This script was commissioned by the Empty Space Theatre of Seattle. About 2 hours.

"Palmer makes the point--humans are only animals that try to beat nature instead of living with it--but he also makes a lot of fun. The script and lyrics were confected engagingly...bouncy ,show-bizzy music..."

-- Wayne Johnson , *Seattle Times*

"Fizzy dizzy material...songs are a pleasing pastiche of showbiz genres."

-- Joe Adcock, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

(Approx. 11 characters + townspeople)

MRS. WATKINS: A pianist and mother.

FRED WATKINS: A percussionist and son.

RAMONA: A singing, dancing expository shortcut.

LITTLE BO PEEP: A bored German shepherd.

PIG #3: A noted ham.

MAYOR: Leader of the mob.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD: a.k.a. Louise. A sweet young thing.

PIG #2: a.k.a. Jacob. A minion, tri-polar.

PIG #1: a.k.a. Wilhelm. Another minion, challenged in practically every way.

THE WOLF: Not so big, not so bad.

GRANNY: Red's, and a woman of some reputation (The Pantomime Dame.)

TALKING ANIMAL FAIRY: (The Pants Character.)

ASSORTED TOWNSPEOPLE

Double casting is possible as follows:

Ramona/Talking Animal Fairy

Little Bo Peep/Pig 1

Mayor/Pig 2

And everyone except Wolf plays a Townsperson

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

This show is in the style of English Pantomime, a 350-year-old theatrical tradition in which a known children's story is presented on two levels. The fairy tale appeals to children, while the sometimes bawdy nature of its presentation appeals to adults. This duality is most obvious in Panto traditions like the Pantomime Dame (Granny), a randy old woman always played by a man. Adults find humor in both the drag act and the character's lascivious nature, while smaller children don't get her double entendres and believe the Dame is a real woman (Which is why a true Dame never does I'm really a man jokes.)

Other Panto traditions present include: a magical person (*The Talking Animal Fairy*) who speaks in rhymed couplets and solves all conflicts by affecting some kind of transformation; people in animal costumes (*Wolf, Pigs*); a character with a very large head (*The Giant Pig of Sumatra*); horrendous puns; a female in tights playing a male, called a Pants Character (*again the Talking Animal Fairy*); and extensive interaction with the audience. Properly done, in fact, the audience is as much a player as any character on stage.

Finally, most Panto productions take advantage of cast members' special skills, something impossible to include in the script. In the premiere production, for instance, the woman playing Red was an accomplished tap dancer, so she opened Act II, Scene 4 doing an elaborate tap solo. One production's Bo Peep was an amateur magician, so she did a Peep-appropriate mediocre magic act at the start of Act II, Scene 3. With the addition of lines to explain the digression, presentations should include similar olio moments for any character except the Wolf, who should always be mysteriously wolfy.

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SONGS

ACT I

1. WELCOME...*Fred and Mrs. Watkins*
2. SCENE INTRODUCTION...*Ramona*
3. NASTY AS A WOLF...*Third Little Pig, Townspeople*
- 3a. SCENE INTRODUCTION...*Ramona*
4. BLAME IT ON THE WOLF...*Pigs*
- 4a. SCENE INTRODUCTION...*Ramona*
5. LAUNDRY...*Granny*
- 5a. SCENE INTRODUCTION...*Ramona*
6. OUTSIDER...*Wolf*
- 6a. SCENE INTRODUCTION...*Ramona*
7. THE FIFTH DEADLY SIN BALLET...*Pigs*
- 7a. SCENE INTRODUCTION...*Ramona*
- 7b. INTERMISSION...*Ramona*
8. GRAND MARCH OF THE SWINE...*All but Wolf*

ACT II

9. ANOTHER INTERMISSION (and ALTERNATIVE)
...*Fred Watkins and Ramona*
10. THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A MOB...*Townspeople*
- 10a. SCENE INTRODUCTION...*Ramona*
11. LITTLE BO PEEP...*Wolf*
12. DO I DARE TO DREAM OF YOU...*Red and Wolf*
- 12a. SCENE INTRODUCTION...*Ramona*
13. FAIRY TALES...*Red*
- 13a. THE BRICK TAP...*Red and Pigs*
14. IN A PANTOMIME...*Talking Animal Fairy, Company*

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Prologue

(With house lights up, FRED and MRS. WATKINS enter and move to the piano area, where they arrange their instruments, playing and singing when ready.)

Song #1 WELCOME

MRS. WATKINS:

WELCOME TO OUR LITTLE SHOW,
WE HOPE YOU LIKE OUR PLAY.
IF YOU DO, PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS.

FRED:

IF YOU DON'T, JUST GO AWAY.

MRS. WATKINS:

FRED AND I HAVE SEEN IT ALL
AS PART OF OUR EMPLOY.
AND THOUGH WE'VE WATCHED A HUNDRED TIMES,
THIS PLAY WE STILL ENJOY.

FRED:

THERE ARE PARTS WE STILL ENJOY.
BEFORE WE START, YOU HAVE TO KNOW
THAT PHOTOS ARE FORBIDDEN.
THE REST ROOMS ARE OUTSIDE THE DOORS,
TO THE SIDE AND SLIGHTLY HIDDEN.
THE USHERS DON'T HAVE MUCH TO DO,
THEY'D BE HAPPY TO ASSIST.
SO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE TO GO,
THEY'LL HELP YOU TAKE A...

MRS. WATKINS:

...TRIP TO THE REST ROOMS!

MRS. WATKINS and FRED:

AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME AT LAST;
WE'RE GOING TO START THE PLAY.

MRS. WATKINS:

THE PLAYERS, FRED AND I PRESENT!

MRS. WATKINS and FRED:

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