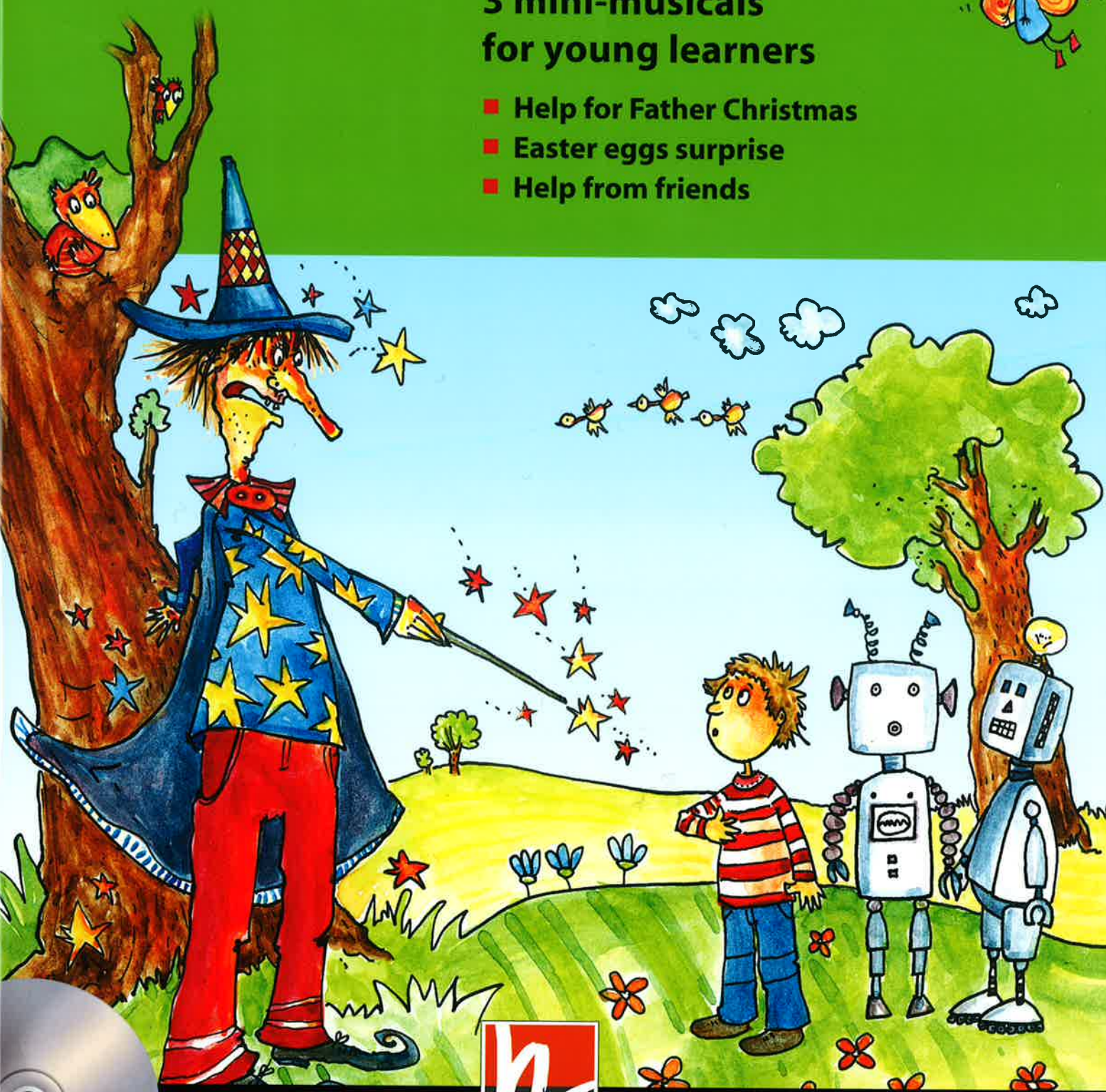
Günter Gerngross • Anette Claus • Uli Führe

1

Act & Sing

3 mini-musicals for young learners

- Help for Father Christmas
- Easter eggs surprise
- Help from friends



With CD-ROM

HELBLING LANGUAGES

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Introduction

Musical plays in primary schools

When children are involved in doing theatre, visual, auditory and also kinaesthetic/motor channels of perception are activated. The children see, hear and act. They learn to communicate with the involvement of gestures and mimes. This type of multisensory learning promotes the retention of content. It is also very motivating for them to perform in front of an audience. They are using the foreign language with a clear aim, so are particularly willing to learn sections of a script and repeatedly practise and correct the pronunciation of foreign words and sentences.

While working on *musical plays* children act as a group. They learn to work with each other, to be considerate and to listen to each other, in other words to develop and reinforce social skills. *Musical plays* offer, particularly to those children who are shy about learning a foreign language, an opportunity to present their own personality in a fictional character. In addition, the performance promotes not only the speaking skills of the children but it also allows them to acquire so-called *presentation skills*.

The combination of music, language and action makes children express and challenge themselves within a musical context.

General performance instructions

The three musical plays presented here can be used during primary school. It is important that all children are involved either as actors or in the chorus. You can use these materials in different ways during the English lesson:

- **to perform mini-musicals either in class or as a stage performance:** the musical items can be accompanied either by using the appropriate playbacks and instrumental interludes on the CD or by the teacher with a guitar or piano/keyboard;
- **for a cross-curricular project in English and music:** the children perform and play using their musical instruments (Orff instruments can be used.)

The suggestions for costumes and stage design plus the stage directions are to be taken as ideas that have proved successful in practice. Add to, vary and change the suggestions according to your own ideas and, also those of the children, and adjust it to the circumstances of the class.

For dramatic reasons some of the listening scripts vary slightly from the printed script. This makes the stories understandable even without visual support.

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Guidelines on method

Preliminary preparation of vocabulary

To start off, use the relevant *picture dictionary* with the words in and copy one page between two children. Read out a word, and have the children point to the relevant picture *(listen and point)*. In most cases, the meaning of the word or a phrase becomes clear through the picture. Reinforce the meaning with gestures and mimes. You may need to translate a word if its meaning is not absolutely clear from the picture, e.g. *wait* in the play *Help for Father Christmas*.

After the *listen and point*, ask the children to close their eyes and listen very carefully. *(Close your eyes and listen. See the pictures on your inner TV.)* Then say the words again and ask the children to present the words or phrases with the aid of gestures and mimes. That concludes the language assimilation phase.

Prepare an OH slide from the photocopiable master *picture dictionary* without the words. Project it onto the screen and ask the children for the words. If required, practise the pronunciation several times. Next, have the children work in pairs with their copy of the *picture dictionary* (plus words). Pupil A covers up a word and Pupil B names it. Then they swap. With this partner exercise the preliminary preparation of the vocabulary is concluded.

Vocabulary revision

Make enough copies of the *picture dictionary* without the words to go round the class. The children write the words under the corresponding pictures.

Getting acquainted with the *musical play*

First of all introduce the characters in the story, e.g.: *We are going to listen to a musical play. There are four children, Father Christmas, a dog, three thieves,...*
Now you have two options:

- Tell the story with the aid of gestures, mimes and the pictures in the *picture dictionary* (OH slide), e.g.: *Three Easter Bunnies are colouring their eggs. Then they go to hide the eggs. Suddenly they meet two dogs. The dogs are hungry. They ask for the eggs. The Easter Bunnies give them two eggs...* Now you can play the full recording/listening version of the musical from the CD.
- Play the full recording/listening version of the play so the children can enjoy the various sound effects and the voices of the *native speakers*. The listening version differs slightly from the printed script in a few places for a better understanding of the text. Support the audio play if required with gestures and mimes. Next, ask the children to say words, phrases or sentences that they have remembered and write them on the board. Correct incorrect statements in the following way: say it is a good try and then repeat the sentence in the correct form. Do not go any further into the error.

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Next play the *musical play* scene by scene. Stop after each scene and read the script out slowly. The children follow using the scripts you have previously copied and given out.

Practising the scripts

The most important thing with memorising a role play is anchoring the text in the long-term memory. Varied tasks help children assimilate and retain the script. In the following you will find some tried and tested anchoring techniques:

- **Individual work:** The children read out their part several times in a low voice to themselves and read the script at the same time. With increasing security, their dependence on the printed word decreases.
- **Individual work:** Ask the children to mark their sections of the script. Next they cover up the whole script. By slowly pushing away the covering sheet, the script comes back into view. The children read along with it in a low voice. As soon as the pupil sees the start of a marked section of the script, he covers it up again and tries to reconstruct it from memory. If he does not succeed, he has another brief look at the line and tries again.
- **Pair work:** The children read out the lines that they have to learn to each other in a low voice. Then one child covers the first word of his line and tries to say the whole sentence to his partner. The partner follows on his sheet and corrects when mistakes occur. Two words are covered up, then three, etc. Gradually the pupil says the whole sentence from memory. After that the children swap roles.
- **Individual work:** When the children have mastered their script, they say their part several times noiselessly just moving their lips.

Tips on musical reinforcement

- The children listen to the songs several times. Then they practise the tunes and lyrics separately.
- Hum a tune with the children or sing it in syllables.
- Hum/sing a short section, the children repeat it and react to signs that you give, e.g. loud, quiet, staccato, legato,…
- Start humming part of a song, the children continue the tune.
- Say the lyrics to the rhythm of the song. Sing/write as a memory aid the contents of the song on the board, e.g.: *Easter eggs:* Easter eggs, 1,2,3,1 egg in the grass, 2 eggs behind the tree,…
- Accompany the text, then the whole song by sound gestures, e.g. alternate between slapping the thigh and clapping.

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- Orff instrument sets are simply held and also playable with melody instruments. See if a music group in your school would like to take on this part.
- For a performance with playbacks, use the audio files on the CD. You can stop the playback and start it again with the pause button.

Tips for rehearsing and performing

- Before the rehearsal choose one child as prompter. Explain to the children that there will be no pauses during the rehearsal. Not even if mistakes are made.
- After each rehearsal it is a good idea to have a feedback session. The children talk in their mother tongue about what went well and what still needs improvement. Suggestions are made and checked for their practicability.
- Do not use the props and costumes until the children are confident about speaking.
- Before a performance, have a 'dress rehearsal' in front of another class. This will make students more confident about their speaking and acting and may encourage other classes to also do a play.

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Help for Father Christmas

Length of performance:
Approximately 15 minutes

Cast
- Speaking parts: Father Christmas, saleswoman, three thieves
- Speaking and singing parts: four children, parents
- Non-speaking part: a dog
- Chorus: all participants

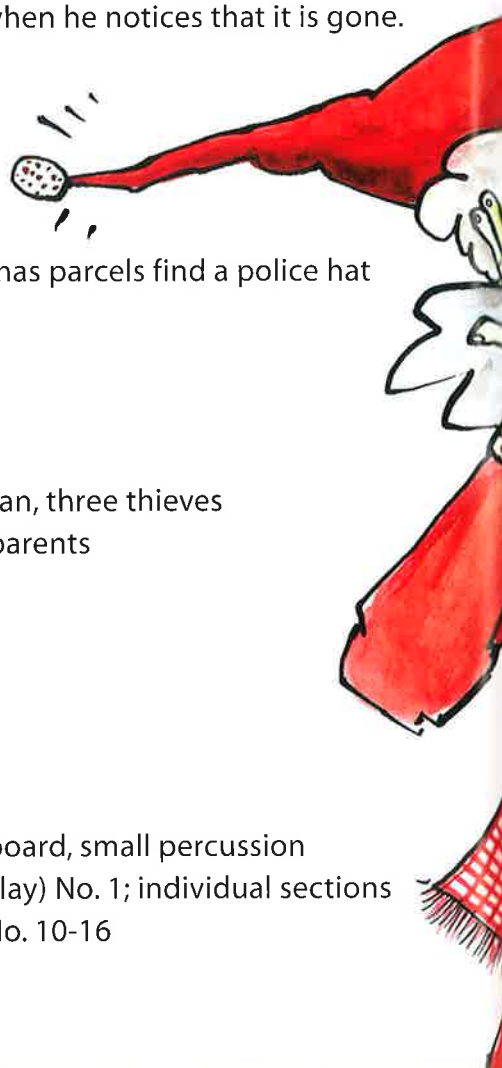
Instruments (as desired) mallet instruments, guitar or piano/keyboard, small percussion

Materials
- Photocopiable masters: Picture Dictionary (p. 15/16), Music (p. 17-19), Script (p. 20-21), cut-out sheet for dog mask (p. 56) and assembly instructions for policeman's hat (p. 62)
- CD: Full recording (listening version of the play) No. 1, individual sections No. 2-9, instrumental items/playbacks No. 10-16

Required craft materials
white and grey coloured card; grey and green coloured paper; crepe paper, gold cord, glue, etc.

Story

Three thieves steal Father Christmas's sack as he is warming himself up at a snack kiosk with a hot drink. He is horrified when he notices that it is gone. Four children come to his aid.
Their dog sniffs out the thieves and by a ruse the children succeed in chasing them away and saving the presents.
Together with their parents the children celebrate Christmas and among their Christmas parcels find a police hat for the dog as a thank you.



Participants

Speaking parts: Father Christmas, saleswoman, three thieves
Speaking and Singing parts: four children, parents
Non-speaking part: a dog
Chorus: all participants

Music

Playbacks or/and live instruments:
Mallet instruments, guitar or piano/keyboard, small percussion
CD: Full recording (listening version of the play) No. 1; individual sections No. 2-9; instrumental items/playbacks No. 10-16

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Acting area and stage set

Scene A and B The chorus is standing in a semi-circle, at first at the front, and then at the rear of the stage. At the side in front of them is the kiosk: a table with jugs, mugs and sweets. On the opposite side of the stage are three chairs or a garden bench. The stage can also have Christmas decorations.

Scene C The chairs/bench are converted with the aid of a cover into a living room sofa, the kiosk into a table decorated for Christmas.

Tips for the display of the Christmas tree

- a small tree in a plant pot with Christmas decorations on it
- a child with a green cloth round his/her shoulders and Christmas tree baubles in their hands
- a picture of a Christmas tree drawn by one of the pupils

Props

- 1 table with jugs, mugs, sweets (kiosk)
- 3 tables or 1 bench
- 1 large sack full of wrapped presents
- 1 cover as a sofa throw
- Christmas table decoration
- Christmas tree (see suggestions above)
- 1 police hat packed as a present



Masks and Costumes

- hat, gloves, scarves for the actors
- sunglasses for the thieves
- long beard and a red hat for Father Christmas, if available, also a costume
- photocopiable master or instructions for making the dog mask and police cap (p. 56, 62)
- Further tip: star headbands for the chorus made of golden corrugated cardboard decorated with a big yellow star at the front

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The play

1: Full recording (listening version of the play)

Introduction

All the participants are standing together with the chorus in a semi-circle at the front of the stage singing the Greeting song.

Chorus: Greeting song

2
10 (Playback)

Hello, hello,
good to see you.
Thanks for coming here today.
Hello, hello,
good to see you.
Here is our musical play.



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The chorus step back a few paces and form a semi-circle at the rear of the stage. The thieves, the children, Father Christmas and the dog leave the stage by the side. The saleswoman takes her place behind the kiosk on one side of the stage. Father Christmas appears with his heavy sack that has been left ready at one side of the stage. He goes to the kiosk and puts his load down behind him. During the following dialogue with the saleswoman the thieves sneak up, steal the sack and sit down on the other side of the stage on the chairs or the bench.

Father Christmas: *(rubs his hands)*
Ahhh, it's cold. A glass of hot chocolate, please. 3
Saleswoman: Here you are, Father Christmas. Two pounds, please.
Father Christmas: *(pays and has a sip of his drink)*
Ahh, that's great. *(He drinks up.)*
Father Christmas: Bye-bye. Happy Christmas!
Saleswoman: Happy Christmas!



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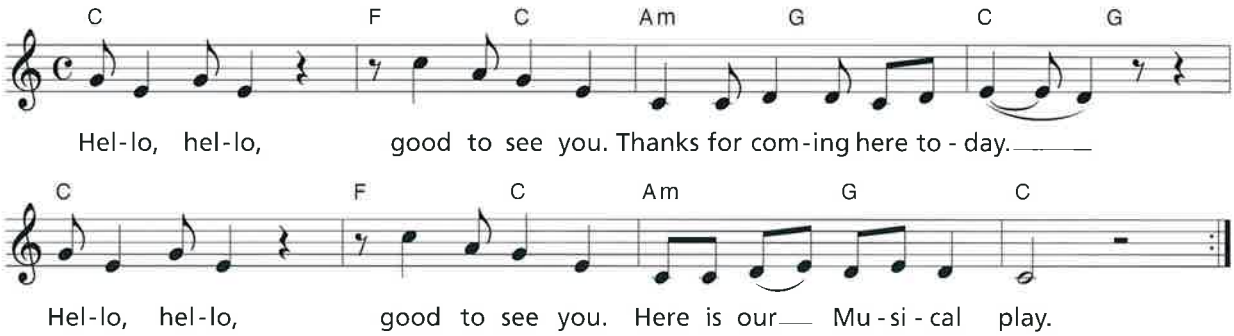
Music

Hello, hello (Greeting song)

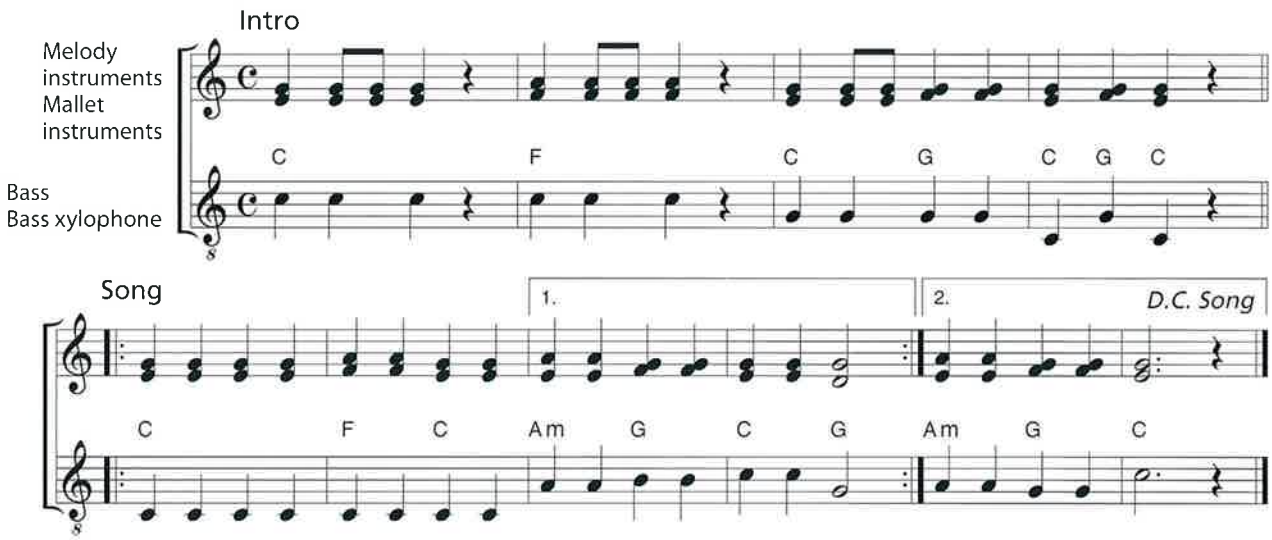
Lyrics: Günter Gerngross
Music and Arrangement: Uli Führe
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2
10 (Playback)

Chorus



Accompaniment



We are clever

Lyrics: Günter Gerngross
Music and Arrangement: Uli Führe
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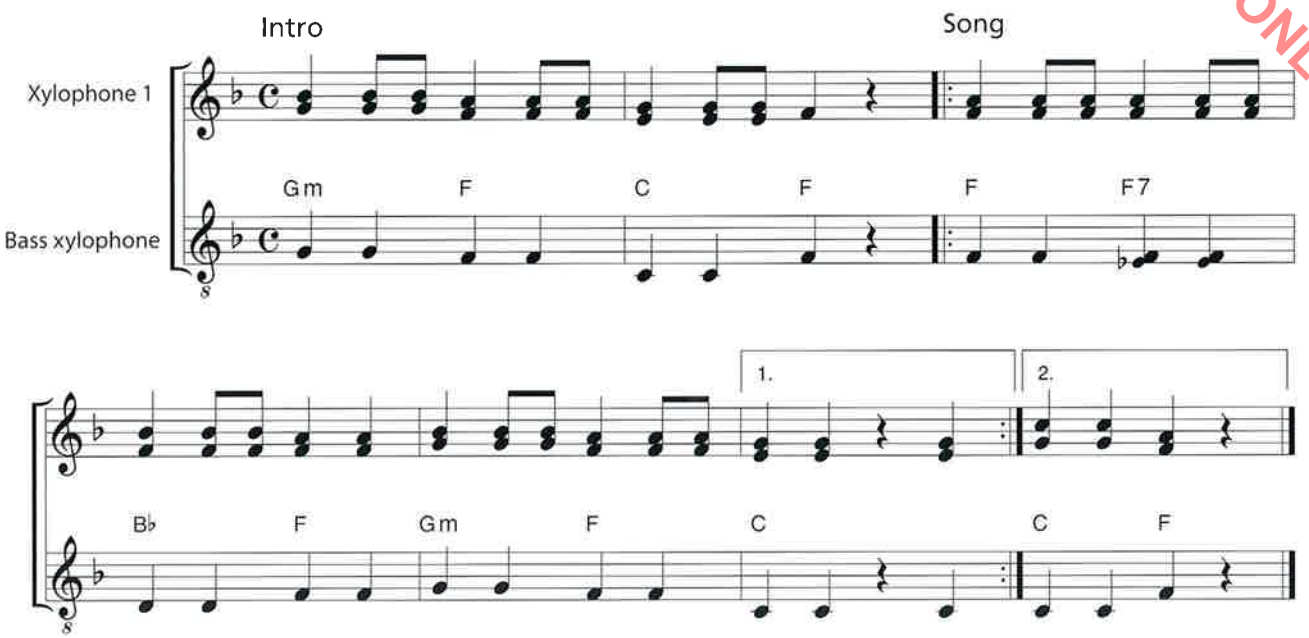
5
11 (Playback)

Chorus



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Accompaniment



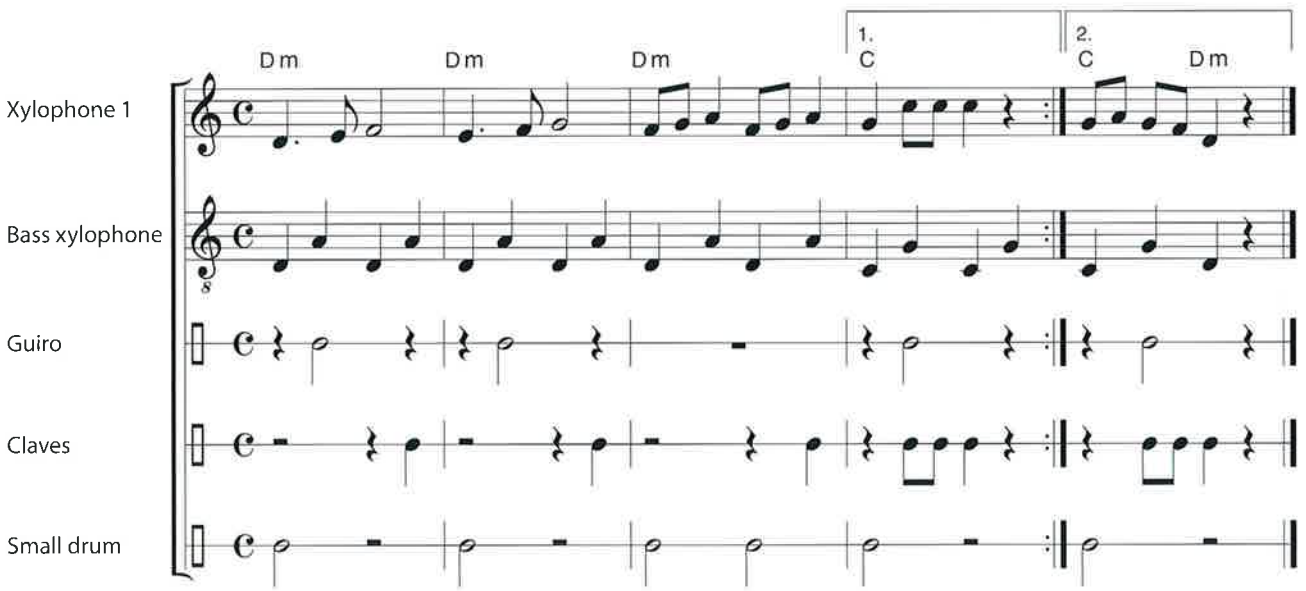




Instrumental piece: Creeping-up music

Music and Arrangement: Uli Führe
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Play script





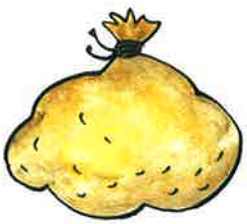
Introduction

Chorus: Hello, hello,
good to see you.
Thanks for coming here today.
Hello, hello,
good to see you.
Here is our musical play.

Scene A

Father Christmas: Ahhh, it's cold. A glass of hot chocolate, please.
Saleswoman: Here you are, Father Christmas. Two pounds, please.
Father Christmas: Ahh, that's great.
Father Christmas: Bye-bye. Happy Christmas!
Saleswoman: Happy Christmas!

Father Christmas: Thieves! My sack!
Child 1: What's the matter, Father Christmas?
Father Christmas: My sack!
Child 2: What about it?
Father Christmas: My sack was right here.
Child 3: Thieves?
Father Christmas: Yes.
Child 3: They stole your sack?
Father Christmas: Yes. What shall I do now?
Child 4: We can help you.
Father Christmas: How?
Child 1: Our dog will find the thieves.
All children: Let's go.





Chorus: We are clever,
we are smart,
let's not wait,
let us start!
Thieves, thieves,
run, run, run!
Here we come,
(we come!)*

* On the repetition

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Scene B

Child 1: Over there. Look! The thieves!
Child 2: Where?
Child 3: On the park bench.
Child 4: What are we going to do?
Child 1: I've got an idea.
Child 2: Let's get closer.
Children 3/4: OK.
Thief 1: Oh no! Police!
Thief 2: Let's run.
Thief 3: Wait for me.



Child 1: Here is your sack, Father Christmas.
Father Christmas: Thank you very much.
All children: You're welcome.
Father Christmas: Bye-bye and Merry Christmas!
Children: Thank you, Father Christmas. Bye-bye.

Scene C

Parents: We wish you a Merry Christmas,
we wish you a Merry Christmas,
we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Children: We wish you a Merry Christmas,
we wish you a Merry Christmas,
we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

All children: Cool!
Parents: Hello officer.



Finale





All: We wish you a Merry Christmas,
we wish you a Merry Christmas,
we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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