



by Stephen Kingsbury

Production Notes

Kingsbury
Creations

music production & publishing

Introduction

'Treasure Island!' is an attempt to retell the well-known, classic tale with appealing songs and a few twists to the original characters and events. I have tried to capture the exhilarating mood of the book whilst adding a few irreverent touches here and there! Having said this, I don't think it could be classed as a spoof. I would prefer it to be thought of as a reworking of a great story where the situations and protagonists are hammed-up (maybe even camped-up!) a bit!

Beneath the surface (and not very far beneath at that!) lurk many an innuendo which are inexplicit enough not to offend younger or more sensitive natures. Due to this and the fact that the songs and dialogue both have a certain post-modern, tongue-in-cheek, ironic quality, I believe that the show works well for all ages; a bit like the way Joseph is effective on many levels. Of course, the tunes are twice as catchy in Treasure Island!

The show was written from the summer of 2002 to the Easter of 2003, just in time for the premiere performance! This was given by the children of Tendring Technology College, Lower School in July 2003 where it was an overwhelming success! I am greatly indebted to these children and to the drama and music departments for their enthusiastic support of the show.

Gender roles

'You can't do Treasure Island! There's no girls in it!' was the oft-heard cry from friends and colleagues as I was writing the show. Agreed, the book is a bit lacking females. However, the girls at Tendring loved playing swarthy, rough pirates! After all...if they dresses like pirates and they acts like pirates then, shiver me timbers, the audience will have not the slightest problem in being totally convinced that they be pirates! In fact, in the premiere, Jim Hawkins was played very well by a girl, giving the role an air of 'principal boy in a pantomime'. I have introduced a genuine female ensemble in the shape of Ben Gunn's Bevy of Island Beauties! Although, non-essential to the plot, they add a touch of feminine glamour to an otherwise masculine character list!

The Set

I do not like to be too specific concerning sets (cf. Shakespeare's - 'In some woods', 'At Court' etc...!). I believe that, on a careful reading of the script, ideas will present themselves anyway. In my experience, each production team, knowing exactly what materials, space and facilities they have at their disposal, are going to create the best set they can, regardless of how much detail the writer gives them. Therefore, the exact mechanics of the set and what is to be painted onto flats or backdrops and precisely how much construction is undertaken I will leave to the production team. I have given a

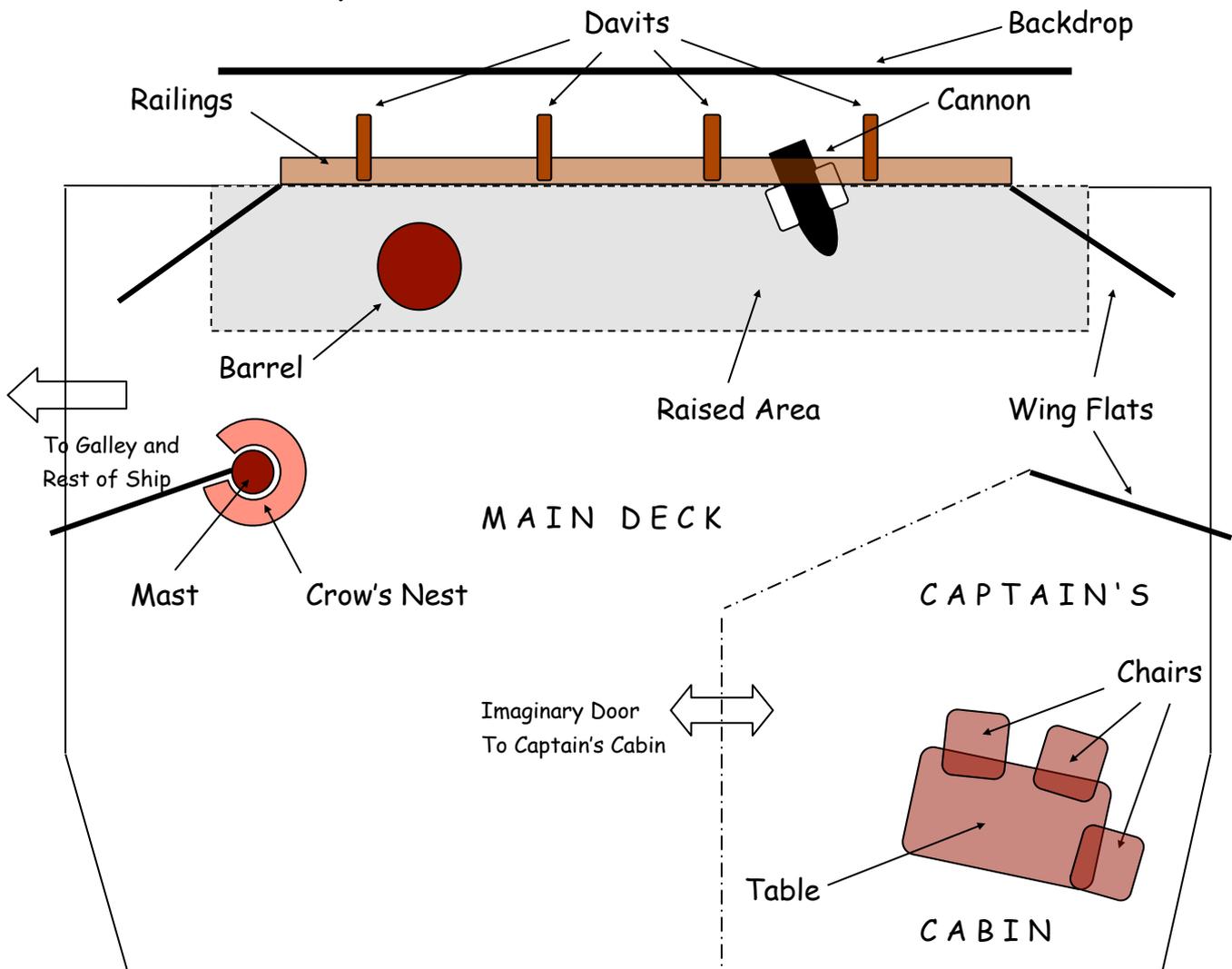
fair amount of detail in the script. Here, I will endeavour to outline the basic necessities and make a few suggestions here and there.

There are just two main locations to set for the whole stage- 'The Deck of the Hispaniola' and 'The Island'. The other places are 'The Admiral Benbow Public House', 'The Captain's Cabin', 'On the Beach', 'In the Jungle', and 'The Bounty Bar'. These can be suggested by tables, chairs, benches and other appropriate stage properties.

The Admiral Benbow Public House

This is a dark and dingy pub next to the sea. There are various benches and tables at which the patrons sit and booze. There is a bar stage left, behind which our heroes hide. The door to the street is stage right. As this scene occurs only once and it is a gloomy place, a simple black curtain drop might be a suitable background.

The Deck of the Hispaniola



The Hispaniola is an eighteenth century sailing ship so we need to see appropriate ropes, sails, yardarms, capstans etc. Any background needs to involve sky, of course, to show that the action is taking place on top deck.

Upstage are deck railings, over which four ropes descend from small davits. These lead to the four Jolly Boats (out of sight). Various members of the cast need to climb over this railing and appear to shin down these ropes into the Jolly Boats whereupon the rope disappears as the Jolly Boat leaves the mother ship! Therefore, it is necessary to raise this part of the stage a little.

Downstage right there is a mast with a crow's nest (at a reachable height) and a working rope for hoisting flags. This can either be painted onto a side-flat or, with suitable supports, be a freestanding prop! We can also see a barrel upstage right with the word 'apples' painted crudely on the side. This needs to be sufficiently big and padded for Jim to climb inside. A cannon points through the gunnel. This is going to be fired during the production, the sound being on the backing tracks CD. Stage right is towards the galley and the rest of the ship.

The Captain's Cabin

This is downstage left of the Main Deck. It should be lit separately so that the action can swap seamlessly from the Main Deck and back again with a simple lighting cue. There is an imaginary door linking the two areas. The safe can be onstage or imagined just offstage left.

The Island

Skull Island is a tropical paradise so we need to see palm trees, azure sea, golden beaches etc. There are three locations to be suggested within the island. These are:

On the Beach - At the opening to Act 2 the pirates are sitting on the beach, swigging rum and having a bit of a party. They are gathered round a fire in the centre of the stage.

The Bounty Bar - This could be the same bar as used in *The Admiral Benbow* but dressed up somewhat to give it more of an Hawaiian ambience. The bar needs to advertise itself with a suitable banner reading 'The Bounty Bar - Private Beach Club and Exclusive Cocktail Bistro'. It should have all the trappings of any good cocktail bar ie. cocktail shakers, mini-umbrellas etc. The area around the bar is scattered with chests, which actually contain the treasure although most of the characters are ignorant of this fact until towards the end. The chests can be used as convenient seats until this point!

In the Jungle - The atmosphere needs to be quite spooky here. This is most effectively done through a lighting change to suggest twilight. We need to see a rock, behind which is hidden the big hole where the treasure used to be. Short of rolling a real rock onto stage, a cardboard cutout will suffice!

Properties by Character and Scene

Scene One

Billy Bones	An old sea chest containing the treasure map written on a napkin, a captain's hat, a straw donkey, a diary, a cocktail menu, a large cocktail glass, and a pair of large bloomers!
Patrons	Tankards and bottles
Blind Pew	A blind man's stick; 'The black spot'
Black Dog	A pistol

Scene Two

Squire	A glass of brandy
Silver	A knife and vegetables placed on a board on top of the barrel, a wooden crutch
Black Dog	A poor sailor that is being dragged around on a piece of rope as punishment!

Scene Three

Jim	The treasure map drawn on the napkin
Doctor	The safe key; a logbook (on the table)

Scene Four

Big Jesse	A feather duster
Black Dog	A teddy bear dressed like himself; a hipflask
Jim	The safe key

Scene Five

Arrow	A pocket watch
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Scene Seven

Squire	A telescope
Jim	He is gagged
Black Dog	Some 'torture appliances'. e.g. spikes, ropes, pokers etc. I'll leave the exact choice of items to you!
Big Jesse	The Jolly Roger

Scene Eight

The Pirates	A few flasks that they pass around to each other
Ben Gunn	A deck chair; a cigarette in holder

Scene Nine

Silver	A white handkerchief as a flag of truce
All	The 'Fruit Fight' needs to be fought with both sides using an array of missiles including, but not limited to, fruit and coconuts! In the premiere production toy plastic fruit was used but this tended to

'bounce' around rather unrealistically. So, I suggest using either painted foam models or, if you have sufficient insurance, then why not try the real thing!

Scene Ten

Big Jesse	The teddy bear; a pistol
Black Dog	A 'Dick Whittington' style pack on a stick
Jim	A knife

Scene Eleven

Silver	The map
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Scene Twelve

Silver	A pistol
Pirate 1	A piece of paper with a large black spot on it
Squire	A pistol

Scene Thirteen

The Pirates	Armfuls of treasure
Jim	A bo'sun's whistle

Scene Fourteen

Ben Gunn	A deck chair
Black Dog	A silver tray holding glasses of port
Big Jesse	A feather duster

Costumes

There is no need here to be specific. Most people have a very clear idea of what pirates wear! There are a few characters that require special mention:

The Squire	He is landed gentry, so he needs to be suitably attired in tweed and maybe plus fours. A monocle would not go amiss.
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The Doctor	He is well-dressed and middle class.
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Silver	To make him stand out from the other pirates Silver needs a long brightly coloured frock coat and possibly a tri-corn hat.
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Polly	Silver's prattling pet parrot: cheeky and ever so slightly camp! This part can be played by a live or model parrot with voice thrown from offstage. The part can easily be adapted for a suitably attired human actor. In the premiere production, the latter was used very effectively as it allows for some great comedy between parrot and
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owner. The comedy value of a model parrot sitting on Silver's shoulder dressed like him (small wooden leg included!) should not be overlooked. A live parrot would be interesting. We decided against this in the premiere, what with there being 40 or so kids backstage!!

Arrow	He is a dutiful officer and so needs a smart, possibly naval-style uniform.
Ben Gunn	He is a special case! The character has the elegance and air of Noel Coward so anything from Mr Coward's wardrobe would be fine! Some smart and well-pressed eveningwear would be quite surreal!
Ben's Bevy	Grass-skirted, Hawaiian flower garlands etc. They can be equipped with palms to gently fan their idol!
Phantom Crew	They wear pirate's garb that is all ragged, torn and covered in dust and cobwebs.

Lighting Effects

There are fairly specific lighting instructions in the script. Hence there is no need here to detail every 'lights up' and 'lights down'! However, here are a few ideas:

Scene 1	The Admiral Benbow needs to feel like a dark and dingy Inn.
Scene 2	During 'We're on our Way' the crew try to scare Big Jesse by imitating a thunderstorm so lights need to darken and a few flashes of lightening would complete the effect.
Scene 2/3	The Deck of the Hispaniola and The Captain's Cabin are set on the same stage (see diagram on page 3). In Act One the action needs to swap effortlessly from one to the other. Thus, the lighting needs to fade up and down on each area as required.
Scene 7	A spotlight is required to draw attention to the Jolly Roger flag as Big Jesse hoists it up the mast. During 'Up the Jolly Roger' the main stage needs to darken and a UV light would be effective to show up the skulls and cross bones as detailed in the script. The spot needs to be extinguished as the cannon is fired at the end of the song.
Scene 8	The daytime island scenes need to be lit as warmly and brightly as possible.
Scene 9	As our heroes open one of the chests that have been laying around the Bounty Bar, it would be great to see a shimmering golden light on their

faces so that, even though we cannot see the contents, we know that there be gold in them thar boxes!

- Scene 10 At the end of this scene, Ben's Bevy take control of the ship. As the main lights go down they freeze in their sailing postures and a spot highlights Big Jesse and Black Dog for the short reprise of 'I Wanna go Home'. As they both pass out again the spot is extinguished.
- Scene 11 It is late afternoon and getting dark. At the Bounty Bar, the pirates are having an afternoon snooze!
- Scene 12 It is twilight now and a bit more spooky.
- Scene 13 The treasure strewn across the stage is shimmering in the moonlight.
- Scene 14 Bright daylight again.

Music and Sound Cues

The 33 tracks on the CD supplied with the Vocal Score contain the song backings, the incidental music and the sound effects (see details in the script). If you are using a band for the songs and incidental music then you will still need this CD for the sound effects.

Although the levels of each track on this CD have been carefully balanced, it is assumed that the sound technician will adjust the volume of each track as necessary during the performance. The exact cue for each track has been clearly marked in the script. The tracks all start 'on the nose' so there should be no delay if they are play/paused. The incidental music will need fading manually when either the scene has been changed or the stated action on stage has taken place. This fade cue is underlined in the script.

Two other CD's are available: 1) Rehearsal Backing Tracks - with a prominent tune for rehearsal purposes. 2) Vocal Recording CD - all the songs, with vocals included.

Songs

TITLE	VOCALISTS	VOCAL/PIANO SCORE PAGE
Fifteen Men	Billy Bones and the Patrons of The Admiral Benbow Public House	1
We're on our Way!	The Crew of The Hispaniola featuring Big Jesse and Black Dog	9

Facing up to the Danger	Jim Hawkins and Offstage Chorus	20
We're Gonna be Rich!	The Pirates	25
I Wanna Go Home!	Black Dog and Big Jesse	36
Up the Jolly Roger!	The 'Skull and Cross bones' Dance Company aka The Pirates	42
A Pirating Life	The Pirates featuring Long John Silver	45
I'd Rather have a Lump of Cheese!	Ben Gunn and his Bevy of Island Beauties	55
Island Paradise	The Squire, The Doctor, Mr Arrow and Ben's Bevy	63
The Treasure Dance	The Pirates	72
Six Poor Souls!	Flint's Phantom Crew	80
Six Poor Souls! - reprise	Flint's Phantom Crew	90
Find the Treasure There	The Company	96

The Band

The music has been orchestrated for a 9-piece band made up of the following instruments:

- Flute/Piccolo
- Clarinet in Bb
- Trumpet in Bb
- Tenor Saxophone
- Baritone Saxophone
- Keyboard (playing the vocal/piano score)
- Bass Guitar
- Drum Kit
- Percussion

Vocal/Piano Score

A harpsichord timbre gives an suitable period feel and is recommended for most songs with the possible exception of 'I'd Rather Have a Lump of Cheese' and 'Find the Treasure There' where the piano is better. Chord symbols are included which are for those

musicians who like to 'develop' the music beyond the written notes, in keeping with style of the song.

In the premiere production, the technology teacher (a Black Sabbath fan!) played rhythm guitar from these chords. However, please remember that this is not a rock score and any guitar needs to be added with great care because the sound is already filled out with the existing parts. Having said that, it did work rather well on these numbers:

- Fifteen Men (Reggae-style chords)
- Facing up to the Danger (Playing the opening riff)
- The Treasure Dance (Stabbing chords on the beat)
- Find the Treasure There (General strumming)

Percussion

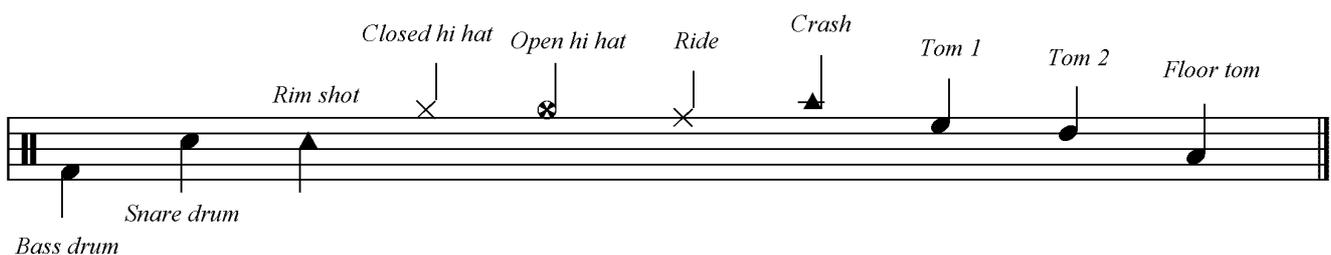
This part is scored for:

Glockenspiel	Vibraphone	Timpani	Congas	Vibra slap
Tambourine	Cowbell	Timbales	Claves	Maracas
Suspended cymbal		Guiro		

The tuned percussion could be played on a suitable MIDI keyboard. The conga parts show only where the congas are to be played and the player is required to improvise around this. Some numbers may require a second player to play all the parts. This is particularly true of 'Island Paradise'.

Drum Kit

This part is written for standard drum kit using the following notation:



Flute/Piccolo

The piccolo part is written to sound one octave higher than written.

Bass Guitar

The bass guitar part is written to sound one octave lower than written.

Song and Incidental Cues for the Band

In each band part there is a table detailing the page numbers and sections of each song that are to be played for each corresponding track on the backings CD. In the premiere production the band found it useful to label relevant pages with post-it stickers to enable them to get to the right page quickly.

A Final Note From the Writer...

Thank you for choosing to produce Treasure Island! The piece was written to be fun for performers and entertaining for audiences. I hope it succeeds in both departments! Please contact me via the publisher - **Kingsbury Creations** - if you have any queries regarding the show, I will be glad to help.

Best wishes!

Stephen Kingsbury