

ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS

A NATIVITY ROCK OPERA
FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

BY
NIGEL ASHCROFT



CHARACTERS

KING TOM (ROCK STAR)
KING DICK (ROCK STAR)
KING HARRY (ROCK STAR)
ANGEL GABRIEL (ANGEL)
THE HEAVENLY HOST (ANGELS)
JACK THE EARWIG (SPY)
MR. BIG (TYRANT)
SOLDIERS (ROMAN OR OTHER)
THE LOOKOUT
SHEPHERD 1
SHEPHERD 2
SHEPHERD 3
MARY (CLOAK AND SUPERWOMAN COSTUME)
JOSEPH (IN FOLK MUSICIAN STYLE)
ZAGGY STARDUST (INSPIRED BY DAVID BOWIE)
INNKEEPER

SONGS

1. ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS (SHORTER VERSION)
2. SUPERMUM
3. THE KING OF KINGS
4. HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
5. STARDUST
6. THE DONKEY SONG
7. N.A.T.I.V.I.T.Y.
8. ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS (FULL VERSION)
9. THE ANGELS' SONG

SCENE 1: *Three guitarists, WE THREE KINGS (with prop guitars) are centre-stage enshrouded in dry ice mist with the lights turned low and a purple glow around them. They are dressed like rock musicians (the band KISS, for example). The middle guitarist, KING TOM, faces forwards while the other two (KINGS DICK & HARRY) face out towards the left and right respectively forming a kind of crown shape. KING TOM rings out a chord on his prop guitar, with DICK and HARRY ringing out chords in response (Intro to Song 1). Then everyone starts to sing as the cast of musicians enter from behind the audience up the central aisle and gradually join WE THREE KINGS, settling either side. The lights come up. This is the opening song.*

SONG 1

ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS (Shorter Version)

ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS
ROCK-A-BYE, DON'T YOU CRY
ROCK-A-BYE BABY JESUS
EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT

ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS
ROCK-A-BYE, IT'S OK
ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS
IT'S THE START OF A BRAND NEW DAY

After the song has finished our attention is drawn to the screen (or prop depending on availability of a projector) where a picture of an old man with a white beard is projected. The musicians remain in place.

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls
Welcome to the show
Now let me please transport you
To two thousand years ago
To what once was a land of song
But now music is forbidden
Every melody and harmony
To be forever hidden

Enter THE LOOKOUT who has been keeping an eye out for the soldiers. He/she rushes in in a panic.

THE LOOKOUT

Everybody, it's the law! Pack up your instruments.

Enter Mr. Big and his soldiers.

MR. BIG

Too late. No more music on my watch! (We hear boos from the sidelines and from the musicians).

MR. BIG

Boo to you too.

MR. BIG faces the audience, hands on hips looking statesmanlike and defiant.

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

It was the notorious Mr. Big
The ruler of these parts
Who made up this silly law
And that's where our story starts
For he'd heard a prophecy
That a song would be his fall
So he banished all the music folk
So that music would be no more

MR. BIG

Begone, foul musicians. Get a real job. Soldiers, send them away!

The soldiers usher all the musicians into a group and then march them all away with their spears.

SCENE 2: *MARY & JOSEPH are sat down at their dining room table in their home eating their dinner. Their DONKEY is sat in a corner. They don't notice but JACK THE EARWIG, a spy for MR. BIG tiptoes to the front of the stage, pressing a finger to his lips.*

JACK THE EARWIG

Shhhh! You haven't seen me.

He then scurries off to the side of the stage, cupping his ear.

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

Now the thing with prophecies
Is that no matter what you do
They always have a habit
In the end of coming true
So while the people lived their lives
Under the thumb of Mr. Big
An angel quietly planned
The greatest ever gig

Enter the ANGEL GABRIEL and the HEAVENLY HOST OF ANGELS.

ANGEL GABRIEL

Hello there. Is this is a good time?

MARY

Oh gosh. Who are you and what are you all doing in my dining room?

ANGEL GABRIEL

Sorry to drop in like this. I'm GABRIEL, a gospel singer and this is my choir, THE HEAVENLY HOST

THE HEAVENLY HOST

Hallelujah!!! (Sung while waving their arms up in the air)

MARY

You're angels?

ANGEL GABRIEL

Yes, we are. And you're MARY & JOSEPH, the popular folk music duo.

JOSEPH

We were until that nasty Mr. Big stopped all the music.

ANGEL GABRIEL

Well, I've come to ask you to play a concert

MARY

But what about Mr. Big?

ANGEL GABRIEL

Don't worry about Mr. Big. Laws aren't always right, you know. Oh, and you'll be giving birth to the Son of God.

JOSEPH

Pardon me, what did you say?

ANGEL GABRIEL

That sometimes law's aren't right.

JOSEPH

No, the other bit.

ANGEL GABRIEL

You're to give birth to the Son of God?

JOSEPH

Yes, that's what I thought you said.

MARY

Hang on a minute.

ANGEL GABRIEL

My hands are tied. It is the will of God.

MARY

But why me?

ANGEL GABRIEL

Because Mary, you're a good woman.

THE HEAVENLY HOST

Hallelujah!!! (Sung while waving their arms up in the air).

ANGEL GABRIEL

And you're going to be a Super Mum!

JOSEPH

Why do I feel a song coming on?

SONG 2

SUPER MUM

(Sung by GABRIEL & THE HEAVENLY HOST)

YOU'RE A GOOD, A GOOD, GOOD WOMAN
YOU'RE A GOOD, A GOOD, GOOD WOMAN

WE'VE COME TO BRING THE NEWS
THAT GOD HAS CHOSEN MARY
TO BRING HIS SON INTO THIS WORLD
YEAH WE KNOW IT'S KIND OF SCARY

BUT YOU'RE A GOOD, A GOOD, GOOD WOMAN
YOU'RE A GOOD, A GOOD, GOOD WOMAN
YOU'RE A GOOD, A GOOD, GOOD WOMAN
YOU'LL BE A SUPER MUM

(MARY whips off her cloak to reveal a Superwoman costume. She starts "flying" around the place while everyone dances)

YOU PUT OTHER PEOPLE FIRST
YOU TREAT THEM WITH RESPECT
YOU LISTEN TO THEIR PROBLEMS
YOU'RE KINDEST THAT WE'VE MET

YOU'RE A GOOD, A GOOD, GOOD WOMAN
YOU'RE A GOOD, A GOOD, GOOD WOMAN
YOU'RE A GOOD, A GOOD, GOOD WOMAN
YOU'LL BE A SUPER MUM
A SUPER MUM
YOU'LL BE A SUPER MUM
A SUPER MUM

JOSEPH

(Shrugging his shoulders)

Well, I'll go put some fuel in the donkey then.

SCENE 3: *WE THREE KINGS, the rock band, are having a rehearsal in a barn. rocking and moshing with their guitars. Enter GABRIEL & THE HEAVENLY HOST. WE THREE KINGS stop playing. While GABRIEL talks to the band (mimes) we hear the NARRATOR speak again. Again JACK THE EARWIG tiptoes to the front of the stage, pressing a finger to his lips.*

JACK THE EARWIG

Shhhh! You haven't seen me.

And moves to the side of the stage once more, cupping his ear as though to listen to what is being said.

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

Next the angels paid a visit
To the rock band, WE THREE KINGS
And told them of the concert
And the peace that it would bring
For a new king would be born
King of all the kings
And He would love all people
And all people would love Him

KING TOM

This is an honour. But what gifts shall we bring for the King of Kings?

KING DICK

I have some plastic tat.

KING TOM

That's very kind of you King Dick, but we need to try harder.

KING HARRY

A copy of my book? (Harry holds up his book with the title IT'S A KING THING) It's a King Thing! It could show him how to be a king.

KING TOM

Always with the book, King Harry. Always with the book. Anyway, he's a baby, he can't read.

KING HARRY

A subscription to my Netflix show then?

KING TOM

I know, why don't we sing a song.

THE HEAVENLY HOST

Hallelujah!!! (Sung while waving their arms up in the air).

KINGS DICK AND HARRY

Great idea! Let's sing for the King of Kings!

SONG 3
THE KING OF KINGS

(Sung by everyone)
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
LET'S SING
LET'S SING
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS

(KING TOM, looking in a trunk, rustles around to find a bar of gold)
A GIFT FOR A KING/
WHAT SHALL I BRING?
WHAT NEVER GETS OLD?
I KNOW GOLD!!!

(Sung by everyone)
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
LET'S SING
LET'S SING
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS

(KING DICK looking in a cupboard, eventually finds some frankincense)
A GIFT FOR A KING?
WHAT SHALL I BRING?
WHAT MAKES SENSE?
I KNOW FRANKINCENSE!!!

(Sung by everyone)
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
LET'S SING
LET'S SING
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS

(KING HARRY, produces some myrrh from his pocket with a look of confusion on his face)
A GIFT FOR A KING?
WHAT SHALL I BRING?
WELL, I'VE GOT SOME MYRRH

(EVERYONE)
WHAT'S MYRRH?

(KING HARRY)
I'M REALLY NOT SURE
(Sung by everyone)
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS

LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
LET'S SING
LET'S SING
LET'S SING FOR THE KING OF KING

BELLS RING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
BELLS RING FOR THE KING OF KINGS
BELLS RING
BELLS RING
BELLS RING FOR THE KING OF KINGS

SCENE 4: *Three Shepherds are tending to their flock in a field, sat upon a rock. Once again JACK THE EARWIG tiptoes to the front of the stage, pressing a finger to his lips.*

JACK THE EARWIG

Shhhh! You haven't seen me.

And moves to the side of the stage once more, cupping his ear as though to listen to what is being said. Enter ANGEL GABRIEL & THE HEAVENLY HOST.

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

After that there came The Shepherds
Tending to their flock
An underrated trio
With a sound of country pop
They were truly humbled
To receive the invitation
And wrote a song right there and then
As a means of celebration

SHEPHERD 1

But we are simple shepherds, we have no right.

ANGEL GABRIEL

You have every right. Jesus too will come from humble beginnings. He shall be born in a stable.

SHEPHERDS

In a stable?

ANGEL GABRIEL

Yes, in a stable. And he shall sleep in a manger

SHEPHERDS

In a manger?

ANGEL GABRIEL

Yes, in a manger, If you could sing one of your songs that would be great

SHEPHERD 3

We'll do better than that. We'll write a song for Him.

THE HEAVENLY HOST

Hallelujah!!! (Sung while waving their arms up in the air).

SHEPHERD 2

(Gets out a pen and pad)

Ok, Let's get started. Hmmm! You say he comes from humble beginnings?

ANGEL GABRIEL

That's right.

SHEPHERD 2

Then that shall be the name of our song.

He scribbles something down and shows the other Shepherds. They all nod. Shepherd 1 picks up a guitar and the music starts.

SONG 4

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

(Sung by THE SHEPHERDS & EVERYONE)

HE COMES FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
A MANGER FILLED WITH STRAW
HE COMES FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
OUR SAVIOUR AND OUR LORD

YOU SAY HE'LL FORGIVE OUR SINNING
AND SHOW US HOW TO LIVE
YOU SAY HE'LL FORGIVE OUR SINNING
AND TEACH US TO FORGIVE

PICK ME UP WHEN I
PICK ME UP WHEN I
PICK ME UP WHEN I STUMBLE

SHOW ME HOW TO BE
SHOW ME HOW TO BE
SHOW ME HOW TO BE HUMBLE

PICK ME UP WHEN I
PICK ME UP WHEN I
PICK ME UP WHEN I STUMBLE

SHOW ME HOW TO BE
SHOW ME HOW TO BE
SHOW ME HOW TO BE HUMBLE

HE COMES FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

A MANGER FILLED WITH STRAW
HE COMES FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
OUR SAVIOUR AND OUR LORD
OUR SAVIOUR AND OUR LORD

SCENE 5: *We are in the palace of MR. BIG. MR. BIG is sat in a throne with JACK THE EARWIG kneeling down in front of him.*

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

Now I'm not sure if you noticed
But that nasty Mr. Big
Has a spy lurking about
Known as Jack The Earwig
For he always has his ear
Placed firmly to the ground
Here he is reporting back
On the gossip he has found

MR. BIG

So tell me Jack The Earwig, what's the news?

JACK THE EARWIG

There will be a concert.

MR. BIG

A concert! But I have forbidden music! Where will this concert be?

JACK THE EARWIG

It's a secret. But I know that a bright star will guide the way.

MR. BIG

A bright star?

JACK THE EARWIG

Yes. And a song shall will bring everyone together and bring peace and harmony across the land.

MR. BIG

Bring everyone together? Peace and harmony? Nooooo!!! The people must be divided. That's how a government works. Gather the troops.

SCENE 6: *Stars are hanging down. A disco globe is spinning. Everything is enshrouded in dry ice mist. We are up in the heavens. ZAGGY STARDUST is looking at himself in a mirror, pouting and brushing his hair. He is dressed like David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust.*

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

Now there was no such thing as Sat Nav
Back in these olden days
So the angels went up to the heavens
To ask a star to guide the way
But the star was quite reluctant
She was no eager beaver
In fact to put it bluntly
She was really quite the diva

Enter the ANGEL GABRIEL & THE HEAVENLY HOST.

ANGEL GABRIEL

Zaggy Stardust?

ZAGGY STARDUST

That's my name. Don't wear it out.

ANGEL GABRIEL

Yes, well. We are putting on a concert and we need you to guide everyone there.

ZAGGY STARDUST

No can do. I'm busy that day.

ANGEL GABRIEL

I didn't say when it was.

ZAGGY STARDUST

When is it?

ANGEL GABRIEL

Saturday Night.

ZAGGY STARDUST

I'm busy.

ANGEL GABRIEL

Come on, Zaggy. It's for a good cause.

ZAGGY STARDUST

What do I get?

ANGEL GABRIEL

You get to have everyone follow your every move.

ZAGGY STARDUST

Really? I like the sound of that. Tell you what, if you can follow my moves then I'll do it.

The song begins with a simple dance routine that corresponds with the lyrics of the song. The Angels follow ZAGGY's moves.

SONG 5
STARDUST

STARDUST, STARDUST
WE'RE ALL JUST STARDUST, STARDUST
EVERYBODY, STARDUST, STARDUST
STARDUST

PUT YOUR LEG TO THE LEFT
THE OTHER OUT TO THE RIGHT
WAVE YOUR ARMS IN THE AIR
AND THEN PULL IT ALL IN TIGHT

ARE YOU READY TO ROCK?
ARE YOU READY TO ROLL?

(Star jumps for the chorus)

STARDUST, STARDUST
WE'RE ALL JUST STARDUST, STARDUST
EVERYBODY, STARDUST, STARDUST
STARDUST

FOLLOW ME IF YOU CAN
AS I SPIN AROUND
WAVE YOUR ARMS IN THE AIR
AND THEN YOU TOUCH THE GROUND

ARE YOU READY TO ROCK?
ARE YOU READY TO ROLL?

(Star jumps for the chorus)

STARDUST, STARDUST
WE'RE ALL JUST STARDUST, STARDUST
EVERYBODY, STARDUST, STARDUST
STARDUST

SCENE 7: *Mary & Joseph walk alongside their donkey through the desert by day and by night.*

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

And so Mary, Joseph and their donkey
Set off upon a journey
They loved their donkey very much
His name was Buck-Toothed Bernie
By day they followed a dusty track
And so they ventured far
By night the path was lit up
By a bright and shining star

SONG 6
THE DONKEY SONG

DONKEY, FOLLOWING THE DUSTY TRACK
UNDER THE BEATING SUN
YOU JUST KEEP MOVING ON
WHAT DO YOU THINK WE'LL FIND
WHEN WE COME TO THE END OF THE LINE
DONKEY, FOLLOWING THE DUSTY TRACK

DONKEY, FOLLOWING THE STAR AT NIGHT
SHINING OH SO BRIGHT
IT'S ALWAYS IN YOUR SIGHT
WHAT DO YOU THINK WE'LL FIND
WHEN WE COME TO THE END OF THE LINE
DONKEY, FOLLOWING THE STAR AT NIGHT

DONKEY, YOU KNOW WHICH WAY TO GO
DONKEY, WE LOVE YOU SO
DONKEY, YOU KNOW WHICH WAY TO GO
DONKEY, WE LOVE YOU
WON'T YOU LET ME COME A-WANDERING WITH YOU
WON'T YOU LET ME COME A-WANDERING WITH YOU

LET ME COME A-WANDERING WITH YOU
LET ME COME A-WANDERING WITH YOU
LET ME COME A-WANDERING WITH YOU

JOSEPH

The star has stopped moving. It is hovering above that Inn over yonder. We're here Mary. We're here!

SCENE 8: *The INNKEEPER is standing in front of the Inn door with his arms folded like a bouncer. There is a red rope blocking the way. MARY & JOSPEH walk up to him.*

MARY

We're here for the concert.

INNKEEPER

What concert?

MARY

The concert that is here.

INNKEEPER

I don't know nothing about no concert. Unless (and the INNKEEPER checks to see there is no-one listening) You know the password.

MARY

But I don't know what the password is.

INNKEEPER

Well, I'll give you a clue. It starts with N.

(Somebody appears with a letter N on a placard. MARY & JOSEPH look none the wiser.)

INNKEEPER

A (Somebody else appears with a placard showing a big A and so on and so forth through the letters. T.I.V.I.T.Y until all the letters are lined up spell Nativity.)

What does it spell?

JOSPEH

Naivety?

INNKEEPER

No

EVERYONE

Nativity!!!

SONG 7

N.A.T.I.V.I.T.Y

N.A.T.I.V.I.T.Y

WHAT DOES IT SPELL?

NATIVITY

N.A.T.I.V.I.T.Y

WHAT DOES IT SPELL?

NATIVITY

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TONIGHT

I SEE THAT STAR SHINING BRIGHT

OH AND I'VE JUST GOT TO FOLLOW

IT'S GOING TO LEAD US TO A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

N.A.T.I.V.I.T.Y

WHAT DOES IT SPELL?

NATIVITY

N.A.T.I.V.I.T.Y

WHAT DOES IT SPELL?

NATIVITY

DID YOU HEAR THE ANGEL SAY

A NEW KING WILL BE BORN TODAY

IT'S THE GREATEST EVER STORY

THE SON OF GOD IN ALL HIS GLORY

N.A.T.I.V.I.T.Y
WHAT DOES IT SPELL?
NATIVITY

INNKEEPER

Password, please?

MARY & JOSEPH
Nativity!

INNKEEPER

Thank you, enjoy your evening. (Lifting the rope to let them through). The concert will be in the barn out back.

THE HEAVENLY HOST

Hallelujah!!! (Sung while waving their arms up in the air).

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

I hope you understand
But for this next important scene
What really is required
Is a little privacy
And so please bear with us while
We're absolutely certain
The birth of Christ our Lord
Is hidden behind this curtain

SCENE 9: *A curtain or sheet is drawn across the stage by THE INNKEEPER. The phrase THE BIRTH OF CHRIST is written upon it. Incidental music is played. THE INNKEEPER checks his watch impatiently. The music eventually fades and then we hear the crying of a baby. THE INNKEEPER draws the curtain back to reveal the nativity scene enshrouded in dry ice mist. MARY & JOSEPH beside the manger. WE THREE KINGS, THE SHEPHERDS, GABRIEL & THE HEAVENLY HOST are all present.*

ANGEL GABRIEL

Behold. A new king has been born today!

THE HEAVENLY HOST & EVERYONE

Hallelujah!!! (Sung while waving their arms up in the air).

INNKEEPER

Let's celebrate. Let the concert begin!

SONG 8

ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS – REPRISE (FULL VERSION)

ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS
ROCK-A-BYE, DON'T YOU CRY
ROCK-A-BYE BABY JESUS
EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT

ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE
ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE
ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE
BABY JESUS

ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS
ROCK-A-BYE, IT'S OK
ROCK-A-BYE, BABY JESUS
IT'S THE START OF A BRAND NEW DAY

ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE
ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE
ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE, ROCK-A-BYE
BABY JESUS

Enter MR. BIG, JACK THE EARWIG and THE SOLDIERS half way through the song. There is a scuffle. Chaos ensues. Soldiers chasing musicians around until

MARY

STOP!!!!

Everyone goes silent.

MARY

You're going to wake the baby!

JOSEPH

Quick, let's sing him a lullaby to get him back to sleep.

KING TOM

A rock lullaby!

The soldiers stand back, awaiting instructions. Everyone else sings.

SONG 9
THE ANGELS' SONG
(Sung by everyone)

LYING IN A MANGER
IN A LAND OF STRANGERS
WE'LL KEEP YOU OUT OF DANGER
LITTLE BABY BOY

AND IF THERE IS A STORM
WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU ARE WARM
AND KEEP YOU FAR FROM HARM
LITTLE BABY BOY

A MIRACLE HAS HAPPENED
OUR HEARTS ARE FULL OF JOY
A MIRACLE HAS HAPPENED
SWEET LITTLE BABY BOY

AND WE WILL BE YOUR GUIDE
YOU'LL FILL OUR HEARTS WITH PRIDE
WE'LL BE THERE BY YOUR SIDE
SWEET LITTLE BABY BOY

AND YOU WILL GROW UP STRONG
AND LEARN TO GET ALONG
WITH A HEART SO FULL OF SONG
LITTLE BABY BOY

MR. BIG

Troops! (Dramatic pause. He raises his arm to execute an order then drops his arm).

JACK THE EARWIG

What is it?

MR. BIG

A strange feeling.

JACK THE EARWIG

Disgust?

MR. BIG

No, not disgust.

JACK THE EARWIG

Anger?

MR. BIG

No, not that either.

SHEPHERD 3

What then?

MR. BIG walks over to the baby Jesus and smiles.

MR. BIG

Joy!!! I feel joy. I had forgotten how beautiful music could be. (Turns to the audience) We all need music in our lives. I see that now.

EVERYONE

Hallelujah!!! (Sung)

Everybody claps and cheers.

NARRATOR (Pre-recorded)

And so Jack The Earwig and Mr. Big?
From then on changed their ways
No more reign of fear
Instead they spent their days
Going from town to town
And singing on the streets
To spread the joy of music
To everyone they'd meet

THE END