

The PRINCIPAL and the Pea

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Foreword

This short, seven-song musical uses simple rhyming dialog and hip, imaginative songs to tell the story of a school searching for the perfect principal. Taking its inspiration from the classic Hans Christian Anderson tale, *The Princess and the Pea*, the kids in this musical, wondering why they're never asked what they think or what they want, devise the perfect plan when the teachers cannot choose. Of course, the students find the perfect fit, "A grown-up who could not stand peas," only to find out that their new principal is a fan of...Brussels sprouts!

Set in a cafeteria with a cast of students, the costumes, props, and staging are easy and affordable. The songs are well crafted, with limited ranges and careful use of repetition, reproducible lyric sheets and student parts are provided, and the stylish accompaniment tracks provide plenty of melodic support. The result is an entertaining, side-splitting musical sure to peas...I mean please.

—Kris Kropff
Editor

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CD Information

The Principal and the Pea CD can be played in your stereo or CD player just like any "regular" CD, but it also includes data files that you can access through your computer. The lyric sheet for each song is provided so you can project rather than print it, and the piano/vocal scores are also provided if you wish to accompany the students on piano rather than with the CD. A complete script is also included, along with the *Food Fight* reproducibles. To access these files, select the "View Files" option on your computer. You will need the free Adobe Acrobat Reader to open these files and may download it from www.adobe.com.

Introduction

I grew up in a small town in west Texas. We didn't have a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables. Sure, the melons from Pecos were a great summer treat. And we had more pecans than we knew what to do with. But the major crop in our area was cotton, which doesn't taste all that great. So we got most of our fruits and vegetables from a can.

Some were okay, like pineapples and green beans. But the one canned vegetable that always horrified me was peas! And not just any peas, but green peas in that juice they always came in. Just writing this introduction is giving me cold chills. And I'm not alone in this. I've swapped stories with many grown-ups who tried every trick in the book to get out of eating peas, from dropping them on the floor for the dog to hiding them under the mashed potatoes.

This gross-out factor may be the reason why the old Hans Christian Andersen tale *The Princess and the Pea*, while entertaining, has always had a repulsive element for me.

The Princess and the Pea is a humorous musical twist on this classic tale. I'm sure there are many students more enlightened than myself who think peas are simply wonderful. But I also know there are plenty of kids—young and not-so-young—out there in search of new innovations in green-pea avoidance. I dedicate this musical to you. I got through it, and you can too!

Meet Mark Burrows



Mark Burrows received his undergraduate degree in music education from Southern Methodist University and his graduate degree in conducting from Texas Christian University. Mark is currently the Director of Fine Arts at First United Methodist Church – Fort Worth. He directs choral ensembles of all ages and oversees programs in visual arts and theater. Prior to his work in Fort Worth, Mark was a music teacher at Stephen C. Foster Elementary School in Dallas, Texas.

Mark has written music and curriculum for numerous major publishers. His song collections, including *Groovin' with the Grimms*, the *Gettin' Down with Mama Goose* series, and *Yo! Leonardo*, the first in his Smarty Pants series, top many best-seller lists, as do his percussion resources, which include *The Accidental Drum Circle* and *The Body Electric*.

Known to many little listeners as “Mister Mark,” he tours nationally, presenting high-energy family concerts. Several of Mark's CDs, including *You've Got a Song, Go Ape!*, and *Go, Galileo!*, have won awards for children's music.

Mark resides in Fort Worth, Texas with his wife, Nina, and daughters, Emma and Grace.

Setting

The setting is the school cafeteria. Most of the students can stand on risers. Two or three long tables can be set up in front of the risers, with a few students seated at each table. These are the cafeteria tables. (If your students typically perform in a “cafetorium,” this show is going to be a breeze.)

Each seated student can have a tray with fake food (apple, milk carton, etc.). I recommend fake food. I’ve tried washing and re-using old milk cartons before. It just doesn’t work well. I can never quite get the smell out, which means I can’t get all the bacteria out!

See if you can borrow a few trays from the cafeteria. If not, use flat pieces of cardboard (about 10" x16"). You can glue the fake food directly onto the cardboard so it doesn’t slip off during the show.

Here are a few other things that can help set the scene:

- A poster of the food pyramid placed where the audience can see it
- A few napkin dispensers placed on the tables
- A few salt and pepper shakers, also placed on the tables

The Spoken Dialog

I hesitate to use the word “dialog.” The spoken parts are more like recitations, since they are almost always spoken directly to the audience. This makes staging and casting *much* easier, since you don’t have to worry too much about whom stands where. In fact, I recommend that the students with spoken parts be those seated at the tables. Each can stand to deliver his/her lines.

The spoken parts are numbered, but don’t feel stuck with that. You can break up the lines to allow more students to have a part, or you can combine lines to make bigger parts for the students you do have. Do what works for *you*!

You’ll also notice that the spoken lines are in rhyming stanzas. That should make memorization much easier.

To be sure that the audience hears the spoken parts, I recommend using a wireless, hand-held microphone. This can be passed from student to student so that they won’t all have to walk up to the same one or two stationary microphones. Give the students a quick lesson on how to switch the microphone on and off (or mute and un-muted). That way, when it’s time for a song, a student can turn off the mic so the audience won’t just hear the performers closest to that one microphone.

Costumes

Because this show takes place in an elementary school cafeteria, the costumes are a snap. The students dress like, well, students. Invite them to wear what they wear everyday to school. Select about eight students to wear business attire. These are the teachers (four), the retiring principal (one), and the job applicants (three).

Another option is to have the “adults” played by adults. Consider having teachers at your school play the parts of the teachers, and your principal could play either the retiring principal or the job applicant who is eventually hired as the new principal.

Staging

Again, most of the students can stand on risers, with a few students seated at each long table. Have the teachers stand down stage left, clearly apart from the students. The retiring principal can stand with them at the beginning. The three job applicants should be offstage.

At the end of the song *Principals (They Grow Up So Fast)* have the principal exit stage right, opposite of where he/she was originally. The students and teachers can wave (tearfully) as the principal leaves. (By the way, about this whole he/she thing—the principal can be a “he” or a “she.” It’s totally up to you. Just make sure to use the correct gender pronouns in the dialogue and songs.)

The song *Food Fight* has a lot of action. Clearly the students can’t have a real food fight right there on the stage (though they will ask) so we’ve created a way for your students to have a mess-free food fight. On the mixed-media CD you will find pictures of the different foods mentioned in *Food Fight*. Print these onto cardstock and have the students color them. The file also contains words like “WHAM!” and “POW!” Print these onto cardstock and have the students color these as well. (Color versions of both sets are also provided.) Then, attach a “food” to one side of a paint stirrer or tongue depressor (unused, please) and a word on the other. Now, here’s how to make it look like a food fight. But first...

Do you remember the old Batman show? You know, the one with Adam West? Remember when Batman and Robin would fight the bad guys? Any time a punch or kick landed, it was accompanied by a big, Technicolor (often made-up) word like “ZANG!” or “SPLOOF!” That’s how the food fight will work.

Whenever one of the foods is mentioned in the song, have a student walk with the corresponding sign (food side facing out) towards another student. Just as the “food” reaches the student’s noggin, have the student holding the sign flip it around very quickly to reveal the word. This will create the illusion of a food fight. It will still be chaotic, but not nearly as chaotic as 12 pints of actual sauerkraut flying through the air at 50 MPH.

When the teachers adjourn to the teachers’ lounge, have one of the teachers hold a big piece of cardboard, painted to look like a door. No need for any fancy scene changes. The teacher, holding the door between the teachers and the students, creates the illusion of separation. Consider having a few of the students tip-toe to the door and try to listen through it, with no luck.

For the song *Try It*, have each job applicant enter from the same side of the stage as the teachers. The idea is that each applicant has just left the teachers’ lounge and is headed for the students. One student can hold the bowl of soup while the others sing, “Try it! Try it!” and so on.

The first two applicants try the soup, then issue their comments. The students act disappointed, then sing as another student escorts each applicant off stage right. The third applicant tries the soup, then issues his/her comment. The students act excited, then sing as the third applicant is escorted to center stage. After the song, all the students cheer. Then, have the teachers enter from the teachers’ lounge.

These are just some very basic staging suggestions. Feel free to do as much or as little as you see fit. Use your Music Teacher super powers! You know your students and your situation better than anyone. Do whatever you feel will make this musical a more enriching experience for your students.

Rhyming Dialog #1



Speaker 1: Once upon a time there was
An elementary school,
Where every teacher was the tops
And every kid was cool.

Speaker 2: The school was run by someone great.
She had amazing powers—
A principal both strong and sweet,
A principal like ours.

Speaker 3: Her students got the very best,
Her teachers were well-paid.
It was the greatest school around.
It always made the grade.

Our School

By Mark Burrows

Our school, it runs like clockwork.
Ev'rything is in its proper place.
Each lesson is exciting.
Ev'ryone has a smiling face.

The lunch here tastes a little bit better.
The halls are nice and clean.
Our principal keeps our school running
Like a finely tuned machine.

Our teachers are a little bit nicer.
They make the learning fun.
They take the time to make each student
Feel like they are number one.

Our school, it runs like clockwork.
Ev'rything is in its proper place.
Each lesson is exciting.
Ev'ryone has a smiling face.

Our school, it runs like clockwork.
Ev'rything is in its proper place.
Each lesson is exciting.
Ev'ryone has a smiling face.



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Our School

By Mark Burrows

Steady, mechanical $\text{♩} = 88$



mf

Our

5 school, it runs like clock - work. Ev - 'ry - thing is in its

8 prop - er place. Each les - son is ex - cit - ing.

11 Ev - 'ry - one has a smil - ing face. *Last time to Coda* Ⓢ

15 1. Our teach - ers are a
 2. The lunch here tastes a

18 lit - tle bit nic - er. They make the learn - ing fun. They
 lit - tle bit bet - ter. The halls are nice and clean. Our

21 take the time to make each stu - dent feel like they are
 prin - ci - pal keeps our school run - ning like a fine - ly

24 num - ber one. Our
 tuned ma - chine. *(to m. 5) CODA 2* 27-28

Rhyming Dialog #2



Speaker 4: Everything was going great
Until one fateful day,
The principal announced that she
Was moving far away.

Speaker 5: She'd worked with children all her life.
She loved to lead and teach.
But now she dreamed of walking barefoot
On a sandy beach.

Speaker 6: It wasn't that she didn't love
The students she'd inspired.
But after years and years of work,
Their principal retired.