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# Giant John

A Musical Play

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Book, Music & Lyrics by Jeffrey Leask

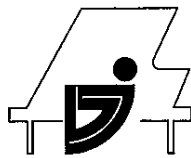
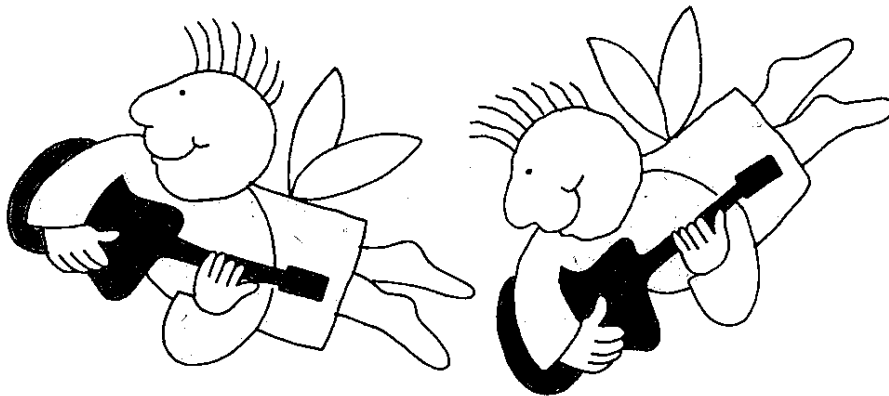
Based on the picture book by Arnold Lobel  
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Illustration and design by Jo-Anne Ridgway  
based on the original drawings by Arnold Lobel

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## Vocal Score/Libretto



BOJANGLES  
MUSIC

# Musical Numbers

|    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 1  | Dance, John, Dance<br>(Storyteller & Children)                | 7  |
| 2  | Reprise — Dance, John, Dance<br>(John)                        | 9  |
| 3  | A Sad Song<br>(Mother, John & Children)                       | 11 |
| 4  | Reprise — A Sad Song<br>(John & Storyteller)                  | 14 |
| 5  | Hello, There!<br>(John, Storyteller & Audience)               | 15 |
| 6  | Reprise — Dance, John, Dance<br>(Children)                    | 16 |
| 7  | A Happy Family<br>(King, Queen, Princess, Courtiers & Guards) | 17 |
| 8  | That's What I Can Do<br>(John, King, Queen, Princess)         | 27 |
| 9  | Clockwork Ballet  | 29 |
| 10 | Nursery Rhymes<br>(Courtiers & Guards)                        | 30 |
| 11 | Reprise — Nursery Rhymes<br>(Courtiers & Guards)              | 32 |
| 12 | One of a Kind<br>(John & Princess)                            | 38 |
| 13 | Marching Music  | 39 |
| 14 | Reprise — Dance, John, Dance<br>(Children)                    | 41 |
| 15 | Castle-building Music   | 43 |
| 16 | Reprise — That's What I Can Do<br>(Children & Courtiers)      | 43 |
| 17 | Reprise — A Sad Song<br>(John & Storyteller)                  | 46 |
| 18 | Finale<br>(Company)   | 49 |
| 19 | Reprise — Hello, There!<br>(John, Audience & Company)         | 51 |

# Characters

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John, a large, overgrown boy  
John's Mother, like our own mothers  
King, a deaf, funny, old man  
Queen, a loveable old bag  
Princess, a young girl with a sinus problem  
The Storyteller  
Magic Children from the magic forest  
Courtiers and Guards

# Scenes

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The magic forest  
A kitchen  
Outside a castle

# Time

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Long ago and far away

# Props

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travelling case containing a number of storybooks  
two portable trees  
a portable tree stump  
handkerchief (Mother)  
vase  
tablecloth  
cutlery for two  
two dinner plates  
salt and pepper shakers  
electric frypan containing two potato crisps  
umbrella  
wooden bench or three royal thrones  
handkerchief (Princess)  
handbag  
large bed  
four sleeping caps  
picnic basket containing a banana, an apple, a packet of nuts and a tin of baked beans  
thermos flask  
bag of gold  
large boot  
tins of baked beans

# Giant John

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Scene: The stage is bare. The lighting is dim. On the apron at extreme R. is a stool.

The Storyteller enters through the audience. He runs, somewhat flustered. He carries a case.

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Storyteller: Oh, there you are!

*(He runs toward the stage. He looks something like a pop singer dressed up as a minstrel.)*

I've been running like mad to get here.

*(and coming up on stage, almost out of breath:)* I thought you would have gone and I might have missed you.

*(He flops down onto the stool, putting his case on his knees and awkwardly pushing his guitar out of the way)*

I've been running and running. You might have missed the story. You see, I'm the storyteller — I've come to tell you a story.

*(He opens the case and fumbles through the storybooks in it)*

Now, let me see — what was I going to tell you about?

*(He takes out a book:)* 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' — *(then reconsidering:)* Oh, no. You must have heard that one.

*(He puts that back and takes out another:)* 'The Sleeping Beauty' — a wonderful story — but, you must have heard that one too.

*(He fumbles in the case again:)* Now what can I tell you?

*(He finds the correct book:)* Ah, yes! Here it is!

*(He holds up the book:)* 'Giant John'. The story of Giant John.

*(He closes the case and puts it beside him.)* Well, let's get started.

*(He opens the book and begins to read:)* 'Long ago — long, long ago in a faraway magic forest . . .'

*(He suddenly realises that there is no scenery)* A forest! We need a forest. A magic forest!

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*(He busily runs off R. and returns with two trees which he places at R. For a moment he looks at them.)*

*(weakly:)* This is the forest. *(Deciding that the two trees look lonely, he does a quick think and then runs to L.)* Wait a minute.

This is the forest and . . .

*(He runs off L. and returns with a tree stump which he places downstage R.)*

. . . this is a tree stump in the forest.

*(He looks around.)* One more thing. We need a beautiful day.

*(The lights come up to evoke a beautiful day.)*

And now! . . .

*(He runs back to his stool)*

We're ready!

*(He begins to read again:)* 'Long, long ago in a far-away magic forest, there lived a big, big boy called John.'

*(On the word 'John' he indicates towards the C. but realising his absent-mindedness once more, he looks front.)*

John! Oh, dear, I'd almost forgotten.

*(He runs off R. and reappears, dragging John by the hand. He stands John by the tree stump in front of the trees.)*

This is John.

*(John stands like a window dummy, motionless, expressionless. He is very large in stature. When he comes to life eventually, we find that he has a very pleasant, easy-going nature.)*

*(The storyteller, not pleased with John's stance and general appearance, decides to model John into a pose. The Storyteller strengthens John's stance by placing his arms on his hips. Standing back to look at his handwork, the storyteller then puts a smile onto John's face.)*

*(satisfied:)* That's better. *(Then to the audience:)* He's so big nearly as big as a giant. In fact, some people think that he is a giant.

And now — at last! we're ready.

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*(He is about to begin reading again when he remembers something else)*

Storyteller: Oh, yes, the magic children! The magic children who also lived in the forest came to sing magic music to John.

*(Two of the magic children run on upstage L., looking for John)*

When they sang their magic music, it made John dance. He had to dance and dance . . . and he couldn't stop until the music stopped.

1st child: *(indicating off:)* Hey, kids, here he is! Come on!

*(The magic children run on, squealing for joy. They surround John. When the first chord of the music is heard they freeze, as the Storyteller sings the introduction)*

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### 1. Dance, John, Dance (Storyteller and Children)

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Storyteller: We've got the story,  
We've got the forest,  
We've got a beautiful day.  
So, play the music!  
Play the music!  
Play!  
Go on and play!

*(The magic children come to life and sing. The Storyteller sits to one side)*

Children: Everywhere the tune,  
Everywhere the song,  
Dance, John, dance,  
Dance along,  
Dance along.

*(From the time the magic children begin to sing, John gradually comes to life and begins to dance. First, his feet move; then his arms and then the rest of his body. As the song proceeds, he becomes more and more animated)*

Listen to the tune,  
Listen to the song,  
Dance, John, dance,  
Dance along,  
Dance along.

You can't resist it  
Could you have missed it?  
Could you have missed the music?  
We couldn't let you,  
Couldn't forget you,  
Hope we don't make you too sick.

Everywhere the tune,  
Everywhere the song,  
Dance, John, dance,  
Dance along,  
Dance along.

You can't resist it,  
Could you have missed it?  
Could you have missed the music?  
We couldn't let you,  
Couldn't forget you.  
Hope we don't make you too sick!

Storyteller: Everywhere the tune,  
Everywhere the song,  
Dance, John, dance,  
Dance along,  
Dance along,  
Dance along!  
STOP!

*(John freezes)*

Storyteller: Play the music,  
Play the music,  
Play the music now!

*(John dances again)*

Children: Everywhere the tune,  
Everywhere the song,  
Dance, John, dance,  
Dance along,  
Dance along.

Listen to the tune,  
Listen to the song,  
Dance, John, dance,  
Dance along,  
Dance along.

You can't resist it,  
Could you have missed it?  
Could you have missed the music?  
We couldn't let you,  
Couldn't forget you,  
Hope we don't make you too sick!

Everywhere the tune,  
Everywhere the song,  
Dance, John, dance,  
Dance along,  
Dance along!

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Storyteller: Can you resist this magical song?  
We want to see you dancing along.  
Why don't you dance, John?  
Why don't you dance, John?  
Why don't you  
Dance along?  
STOP!

*(John freezes. The magic children sit around, smiling.)*

Storyteller: The dancing made John's big feet hurt, but he thought it was great fun.

*(The sound of John's mother calling can be heard offstage)*

Mother: *(offstage:)* John! John!

2nd child: Come on, John, your Mother wants you.

*(John comes to life)*

John: Yes, she's been waiting for me.

*(Some of the magic children run off.)*

2nd child: Well, come on then! We'll go with you.

3rd child: We'll sing some songs. Come on!

*(The rest of the children run off ahead of John)*

Storyteller: In the evening John would pick a bouquet of flowers to take home to his mother.

*(John bends and 'picks' some imaginary flowers. The light goes out on the Storyteller, leaving only a spot on John as he gathers the flowers)*

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## 2. Reprise — Dance, John, Dance\* (John)

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John: Everywhere the tune . . .  
Everywhere the song . . .  
Dance, John, dance . . .

*(He exits humming as the music finishes.)*

*The light fades out on John and simultaneously comes up on the Storyteller at R.)*

\*May be sung unaccompanied.



Storyteller: John and his mother were very poor.

*(The lights come up on the kitchen of John's house. There is a sideboard at the back. Downstage there is a table and two chairs, one at each end of the table. John's mother sits on the chair at the R. end of the table.)*

Storyteller: One day, John's mother began to cry.

*(She takes out a large handkerchief and begins to cry.)*

*John's mother is the ideal picture of a loving mother. She is a little dumpy with greying hair worn in a bun. She could possibly wear small-rimmed glasses. Her clothes are plain and she wears an apron — scrupulously clean and tidy!*

John: *(offstage:)* Mother! Mother!

*(She dries her eyes and quickly puts away her handkerchief. She pretends to have been setting the table as John enters. He carries a bouquet of flowers. The Storyteller watches with amusement. Some of the magic children follow John in and place themselves all around the kitchen, watching the action)*

Mother: Wipe your feet, John.

Children: Wipe your feet, John.

*(John goes back to the entrance and wipes his feet)*

John: *(holding out the bouquet:)* Look, Mother! Look what I brought home!

Mother: *(coming and taking the flowers:)* John, they're so beautiful.

*(She places the flowers in a tall vase on the sideboard. John sits on the chair to the L. of the table and takes off his boots. The Storyteller goes out L. John's mother takes a tablecloth from the sideboard which she lays over the table. She then brings some cutlery which she sets before two places. After this she brings two plates from the sideboard and places one at each place. This, she follows with the salt and pepper shakers. The Storyteller enters from L. carrying an electric frypan which he hands to John's mother. She puts this in the centre of the table and, after she sits at the R., she lifts off the lid. John looks eagerly into the frypan. From the frypan, John's mother ceremoniously takes one potato chip which she places on John's plate. She then places another on her own plate and replaces the lid. John looks rather disappointed at the small offering on his plate. They face each other to say grace, holding their hands in a Sunday School manner. The magic children also hold up their hands and close their eyes to pray)*

All: For what we are about to receive make us truly thankful. Amen.

*(They eat the potato chips simultaneously. When they have finished, they sit staring at each other across the table, gloomy expressions on their faces.)*

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Storyteller: All they had to eat were two potato chips. John and his mother were very poor.

*(John's mother breaks down crying. John jumps up)*

John: Mother!

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### 3. A Sad Song (Mother, John and Children)

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Mother: I'm gonna sing you a sad song,  
Oh, oh, very sad  
Though it really isn't a bad song,  
It is oh, oh very sad.  
Though it's not very long,  
It's the kind of a song  
That can bring a tear to your eye  
It's the kind of a song  
That can make you cry.

Oh, John, oh, John,  
Our money's gone  
And we are very poor  
It's not very nice  
When even the mice  
Don't live with us any more.  
Where the roof is leaking,  
The rain comes in  
And the floor is rather wet.  
But even so,  
The mushrooms grow  
And we haven't starved as yet.

Did you like my sad song?

John: No, no it was very sad  
And the person who made up this sad song  
Can be very glad  
That it made me sad.

Though it's not very long,  
It's the kind of a song  
That can bring a tear to your eye  
It's the kind of song  
That can make you cry.

John/Mother: It's the kind of a song

Children: It's the kind of a song

John/Mother: It's the kind of a song

Children: It's the kind of a song