BEULAH BEAR DISCOVERS CHRISTMAS

A Children's Musical

Written and Composed by Christy Long

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Beulah Bear has had her winter sleep interrupted by ringing Christmas bells. Now she and her fearful friend, Donald Deer, venture into the big city to discover what Christmas is all about. There they meet up with some colorful characters, among them Rodney Rat, a shady street salesman, and Rover the Dog whose dread of the holiday is revealed with the poem, "The Nightmare of Christmas." Discouraged by the commercialism they encounter, they almost give up until the true meaning of Christmas is finally revealed to them by a church mouse. Wonderful characters, humorous lines and clever, original songs all help to deliver the final, touching message of this play: Jesus is the true gift of love to all of us.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 boys, 3 girls, 6 flexible, extras as animals, shoppers, carolers)

BEULAH BEAR: Female lead. Major speaking part. Vocal solo.

DONALD DEER: Male lead. Major speaking part. Vocal solo. Fearful, cautious character.

COUNTRY MOUSE: Male or female. Medium speaking part.

RODNEY RAT: Male. Major speaking part. Shifty street salesman, only interested in money.

BELL RINGER: Male or female. Minor speaking part.

SHOPPER: Male or female.

ROVER: Male or female. Major speaking part. Well-mannered character with English accent, if possible.

CAT: Male or female. Minor speaking part. Hip, jazzy character.

OLD MAN: Male. Minor speaking part.

OLD MAN'S WIFE: Female. Minor speaking part.

CAROLER: Female. Minor speaking part with solo song.

CHURCH MOUSE: Male or female. Major speaking part.

EXTRAS: Forest animals, shoppers, carolers, manger scene characters.

Performance time: About an hour.

SCENERY, COSTUMES, AND PROPS

SCENE 1: Winter forest set. Use plants and potted trees covered in artificial snow and forest backdrop to create a forest.
SCENE 2: City. Backdrop of storefronts decorated with lots of bright Christmas lights. Tree or plant on stage right and church front with steeple on stage right. Manger scene set up in front of or beside church.
MANGER SCENE can be as elaborate as desired. You may add straw, real animals, Wise Men, angels, shepherds, etc.

COSTUMES should be as appropriate for each animal character.
RODNEY RAT: Trench coat lined with jewelry, trinkets and other brightly-colored objects.
BELL RINGER: Red bucket and small hand bell.
SHOPPERS, CAROLERS, OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN: Coats, hats and mittens.
MANGER SCENE CHARACTERS: Biblical costumes.

SONGS

Scene 1
NATURE SINGS - Forest Animals

ANIMAL MAGNETISM - Beulah and Forest Animals

CHRISTMAS NIGHT - Beulah and Forest Animals

Scene 2
CHRISTMAS CRAZIES - Shoppers

THE GIVING COW - Donald

RING THE BELLS - All the Carolers

GIFT OF LOVE - A Caroler

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? - Manger group

WHAT CAN I BRING? - All

Sound Effects: Church bells ringing. Sound is included on rehearsal/performance CD.

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SCENE 1

(AT RISE: BEULAH BEAR lies under a pile of snow, sleeping. CHURCH BELLS RING in the distance. Beulah wakes with a big, loud yawn. She rises, stretches, and shakes off the snow.)

BEULAH: *(Very sleepy.)* What day is this? Is it spring yet? *(Looks around.)* No, it doesn't look like spring. Well then, why in the world am I awake? I should never have eaten that anchovy pizza just before hibernation. *(Church bells ring again.)* There's that ringing sound again. That's what woke me up.

(DONALD DEER enters, running. He almost runs into BEULAH.)

DONALD: Oh, Beulah, you startled me. I'm still a nervous wreck even though hunting season's been over for almost a month. Just the thought of men in orange, shooting ... *(Shivers.)* it just scares me to pieces every time I hear a twig snag or a ... *(Pause.)* Beulah, why are you awake? This is the middle of winter. You should be fast asleep right now.

BEULAH: A ringing sound woke me up. I'm not sure what it was.

DONALD: A ringing sound? *(Pauses to think.)* I think I know what you're talking about.

(The music begins, and other FOREST ANIMALS enter and sing.)

SONG: NATURE SINGS

CHORUS:
NATURE SINGS, LISTEN TO THE MUSIC.
'ROUND US RINGS THE GLORIOUS SONG.
NATURE SINGS, LISTEN TO THE MUSIC.
HEAR THE SONG THAT NATURE SINGS.
HEAR THE SONG THAT NATURE SINGS.
THE BIRDS THEY CHIRP A HAPPY WINTER TUNE.
CHRISTMAS WILL BE COMING SOON.
ON THE WING, SINGING OUT HIS PRAISE.
HEAR THE SONG THAT THEY RAISE.
HEAR THE SONG THAT THEY RAISE.

(REPEAT CHORUS.)

TREES LIFT THEIR BOUGHS TO THE SKY.
UPLIFTED LIMBS TO GOD ON HIGH.
BLIZZARDS RAGE IN A MIGHTY ROAR.
AT THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.
AT THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

(REPEAT CHORUS.)

LOOK AROUND, AND YOU WILL SEE
WIND AND ICE AND SNOW-BENT TREES,
RISING SUN, WINTER DAYS
ALL DECLARE THEIR MAKER'S PRAISE.
ALL DECLARE THEIR MAKER'S PRAISE.

(REPEAT CHORUS.)

BEULAH: No, no, no. Those aren't the sounds I'm talking about, Donald. I have heard the music that comes from creation, but what I heard this time was different. It came from far away and it floated on the air.

DONALD: Are you sure that the ringing isn't just in your head? Maybe there's some snow stuck in your ears. Here, let me check. You never know about these things. *(HE looks in BEUHLA'S ears as she reluctantly cooperates.)* If you ask me, you should always be extra careful when it comes to your health. Better safe than sorry, I always say.

(COUNTRY MOUSE enters.)

COUNTRY: Hi, guys. What are you doing?

DONALD: I'm checking Beulah's ears because she's been hearing things that aren't really there.

BEULAH: They are so! It even woke me up.

COUNTRY: What was it you've been hearing?

BEULAH: A faraway ringing sound.

COUNTRY: I heard it too and I know what it was.

BEULAH and DONALD: You do?

COUNTRY: Yes. Those were church bells ringing and I think that was a Christmas song. My cousin, Church Mouse, lives in a huge church where those bells are rung. I've been there to visit him.

BEULAH: What's a Christmas song? Or for that matter, what's Christmas?

COUNTRY: I'm not quite sure. I've never been in the city this time of year. I do know that Christmas is a special celebration for people, but what they're celebrating, I don't know.

BEULAH: Well, I want to find out what Christmas is all about. I'm going to go to the city to see for myself. Are you coming with me?

COUNTRY: Sure I'll go. It's been a while since I've seen my cousin.

BEULAH: How about you, Donald?

DONALD: Why should we care about this Christmas thing? We're just animals.

BEULAH: Just animals! God made us too.

SONG: ANIMAL MAGNETISM

CHORUS:
THEY'VE GOT THAT ANIMAL MAGNETISM,
A CERTAIN KIND OF CHARM.
ANIMAL MAGNETISM.
THEY MEAN NO HARM.
LOOK CLOSELY AND YOU'LL SEE,
ALL CREATURES FROM A TO Z
WERE MADE BY GOD FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE.

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YOU GOTTA LOVE THE ELEPHANT WITH A NOSE DOWN TO THE GROUND
SKIN AROUND HIS ANKLES AND WRINKLES ALL AROUND.
AND DON'T YOU THINK THE AARDVARK SHOULD CHOOSE A BETTER LUNCH.
THOSE BUSY ANTS PROVIDE A MEAL WHEN IT'S TIME TO MUNCH A BUNCH.

(REPEAT CHORUS.)

THEN THERE'S MISTER BUSY BEAVER, WORKING ON HIS DIKE.
HIS TEETH WILL DO THE JOB. HE LOVES HIS OVERBITE.
AND, BOY, THAT OL' RHINOCEROS CAN SURE GET IN A HUFF.
DON'T GIGGLE AT HIS SINGLE HORN OR THINGS COULD GET REAL ROUGH.

(REPEAT CHORUS.)

GIRAFFES CANNOT WEAR TURTLENECKS BUT THEY DON'T SEEM TO CARE.
THEY'RE PROUD TO HAVE A NECK WAY HIGH IN THE AIR.
AND WHEN GOD MADE THE ZEBRA HE JUST COULD NOT DECIDE.
"BLACK OR WHITE, WHICH SHOULD I CHOOSE?" SO STRIPES ARE ON HIS HIDE.

ANTELOPE, BUMBLE BEE, CAT, DOG, ELK,
FERRET, GIRAFFE, HA! HYENA,
IRISH SETTER, JACK RABBIT, KANGAROO,
LADYBUG, MONKEY, NEWT, OWL, PIG,
QUAIL, RATTLESNAKE, SALAMANDER
TARANTULA, UNDERDOG, UNDERDOG?
VULTURE, WALLABY, X. NO WAY!
YAK AND ZEBRA, ALL OF THESE CREATED BY GOD!

(REPEAT CHORUS.)

BEULAH: So what do you say, Donald?
DONALD: I don't know about this. It could be dangerous. I'm kind of scared.
BEULAH: Everybody's scared sometimes, but you don't have to be afraid.

SONG: CHRISTMAS NIGHT

CHORUS:
CHRISTMAS NIGHT, A NIGHT OF HOPE AND CHEER,
A NIGHT TO TAKE OUR FEARS AND SEND THEM ALL A-PACKIN'.
YES, THIS IS CHRISTMAS NIGHT, PUT TEARS AND PAIN TO FLIGHT.
THE DARKNESS NO LONGER RULES.

BECAUSE IT'S CHRISTMAS NIGHT, A NIGHT OF HOPE AND CHEER,
A NIGHT TO TAKE OUR FEARS AND SEND THEM ALL A-PACKIN'.
YES, THIS IS CHRISTMAS NIGHT, PUT TEARS AND PAIN TO FLIGHT.
THE DARKNESS NO LONGER RULES.
REJOICE! IT'S CHRISTMAS NIGHT.

THE SUN AND MOON GO 'ROUND AND 'ROUND
AFTER NIGHT THE DAY IS FOUND, WHEN THE MORNING LIGHTS ABOUND.
NIGHTTIME WITH ITS FEAR AND DREAD.
ALL IS BLACKNESS IN ITS STEAD, UNDER BLANKETS IN YOUR BED.
BUT NOW THE NIGHT IS LIKE THE DAY
AND ALL YOUR FEARS HAVE GONE AWAY.

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