Elephans

Book and Lyrics by Jeff Goode
Music by Larrance Fingerhut

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STORY OF THE PLAY

On the lonely planet Eleph, where language was never invented, the mango-loving Elephans learn to communicate without words. In a fun and entertaining way, we see how the creatures learn to accept others and seek common ground, especially when confronted with some of the not-so-friendly residents! The creatures share their story with the help of the local children of Earth and through six songs. A delightful score of 6 songs helps to carry the message of the play: tolerance, understanding and listening. The play has mostly gender-flexible roles. The opportunities for creative costumes and sets are also present. Roles can also be expanded or condensed depending on the available talent pool. Performance time about 1 hour.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Elephans opened July 22, 1995 at the Summer Festival of the Arts (Southwest Harbor, Maine) under the direction of Stephen McLaughlin and music director Larrance Fingerhut.

NOTES TO THE DIRECTOR

This musical is designed to provide balanced roles for a potentially large cast, with an emphasis on creating characters which can be played by actors of any gender. The director should feel free to treat the character assignments indicated in the script and the score as merely suggestions. If you are working with a smaller cast, you may prefer to double some of the parts. Conversely, with a larger cast you may want to transform some of the “individuals” in the script into small groups or choruses.

Most of the roles in the play are completely interchangeable and specific line assignments are made here simply to make the script readable. We have also tried to suggest distributions which might serve dramatic or comic purposes, or could help an actor define a character, such as making one of the Translators “the skeptical one,” or create a Narrator/Host by assigning one actor lines from both the opening and closing of the play.

CAST

(Flexible cast of 28 mixed gender roles.)

EDS: Up to 15 actors
TRANSLATORS: Up to 12 actors.
NARRATOR: Designed for one actor (actress).

SONGS

#1 - I Am Only Me
(Ed and the Translators)
(With Elephans)

#2 - Don't Try to Talk
(Ed and Ed-Two)
(With Translators and Elephans)

#3 - Do You Know What It Means To Be Lonesome?
(Ed-With-The-Stick and Ed-With-The-Stick-2)
(With Translators)

#4 - Poke You with a Stick
(The Three Eds)

#5 - I Never Expected
(The Elephans and the Translators)

#6 - Be Kind to the Elephants
(The Company)

To indicate when the characters are speaking in the alien language of the Elephans, type is in bold face. Regular type indicates plain English.

ELEPHANS

(An ELEPHAN enters. It looks out at the audience. A TRANSLATOR appears beside it.)

E-ONE: OOh.
NARRATOR: Hello. My name is Ed.
E-ONE: Ooo.
NARRATOR: We would like to tell you the story of the Elephans.
E-ONE: Nuh.
NARRATOR: Not elephants with big ears and gray skin and trunks and tusks that live in the jungles of Asia and Africa, or in a zoo where they eat peanuts.
E-ONE: *(Pointing at the sky.)* **Ooo.**
NARRATOR: But Elephans. Intelligent beings from the planet Eleph.
E-ONE: OOh.
NARRATOR: Elephans like me.

(E-ONE exits. A trio of TRANSLATORS appears and rushes toward the audience.)

ONE: Please don't panic!
TWO: There is nothing to be afraid of.
THREE: You are not going to be invaded by aliens from outer space.
ONE: In fact, if it will make you feel better, I think it's safe to tell you:
TWO: There is no such thing as an Elephan.
ONE: In fact, our story is not really about Elephans at all.
TWO: It takes place on the planet Eleph. But it could probably happen on <u>any</u> planet. In any galaxy.
THREE: Or in another dimension.
ONE: Or in France.
THREE: France?
ONE: Yeah. This same thing happened to my parents when they were in France last year.

THREE: Really?
ONE: Well, sort of.
TWO: *(To audience.)* Anyway, there's nothing to be afraid of.
THREE: *(Emphatically.)* Really.
ONE: *(Emphatically.)* Seriously.
TWO: *(Emphatically.)* We're totally serious.
ONE: *(To Three.)* Okay, I think they're ready. Bring out the first alien.
THREE: *(Calling off.)* Bring out the first alien!

(ED enters, crosses to center.)

ED: OOh. *(Hello. Screams.)* **AAH!!!**
NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* No, just kidding, he's harmless.

(ED hands some note cards to the TRANSLATORS, then goes to his place for the next scene, sitting in a field picking mangos.)

NARRATOR: This is the story of an Elephan named Ed.
FOUR: Ed was a typical Elephan. He had strong teeth, healthy gums, and five acres of beachfront property. He worked at a typical Elephan job, which mostly involved picking mangos and eating them.
ED: Mma. *(Mango.)*
FIVE: Jobs on the planet Eleph were much simpler than they are here on Earth because there were only a few hundred Elephans on the entire planet at the time, and they rarely saw one another. They led simple, carefree lives without complications like business and politics and differences of opinion.
ED: *(Hums.)* **Hm hm hm.**
FOUR: Ed would work at his job all day, then at night he would sit on the beach and look at the stars. Sometimes when he was sitting alone looking at the stars he would sing this song:

MUSICAL #1 - I AM ONLY ME

ED: **OOH. MAAI. YUUU.**
OOH. MAAI. YUUU. *(...ETC.)*

FIVE: Unbeknownst to Ed, Elephans all over the world were looking at the stars and singing that same song.

(Several other ELEPHANS are discovered sitting on a beach singing to the stars.)

ELEPHANS: **OOH. MAAI. YUUU.**
OOH. MAAI. YUUU. *(...ETC.)*

FOUR: Roughly translated, this is what they were singing:

SIX: *(Translating for ED.)*
SOMETIMES I LOOK AT THE STARS IN THE SKY
AND I WONDER IF THEY CAN SEE ME.
SEVEN: *(Standing with a group of ELEPHANS.)*
SOMETIMES I LISTEN TO THE BABBLING BROOK,
BUT I WISH THE BROOK WOULD LISTEN TO ME.
EIGHT: *(Standing with another group of ELEPHANS.)*
SOMETIMES I FEEL THE WARM SUN ON MY FACE
AND I THINK OF IT SHINING THERE ALONE IN SPACE
AND I WONDER IF THE SUN FEELS ME TOO.
AND I WONDER IF THE SUN FEELS ME TOO.
ELEPHANS: **OOH...**
SIX: I AM ONLY ME.
SIX & SEVEN: I AM ONLY ME!
SIX, SEVEN & EIGHT:
AND I WISH THERE WAS SOMEBODY ELSE I COULD BE.
ALL TRANSLATORS:
SOMEONE TO TALK TO,
SOMEONE TO PLAY,
AND UNTIL THAT SOMEBODY COMES MY WAY...

(Pause. ED looks around expectantly, but he is alone onstage.)

SIX: YES, UNTIL THAT SOMEONE COMES ALONG
I WILL SIT BY MYSELF AND I'LL SING ME THIS SONG.
I AM ONLY ME.
I AM ONLY ME!
AND I WISH THERE WAS SOMEBODY ELSE I COULD BE.

EIGHT: SOMETIMES I TALK TO THE LEAVES ON THE TREES
OR THE BIRDS OR THE CLOUDS IN THE SKY.

SEVEN: SOMETIMES I DANCE WITH THE WEEDS IN THE FIELDS
OR THE WIND AS IT WINDS ITS WAY BY.

SIX: SOMETIMES I LOOK DOWN FROM ON TOP OF A HILL
AND I FEEL LIKE A KING AND IT GIVES ME A THRILL
BUT I WONDER IF THAT KING STILL NEEDS YOU.
AND I WONDER IF THAT KING STILL NEEDS YOU.

ELEPHANS: OOH...

EIGHT: I AM ONLY ME.

EIGHT & SEVEN: I AM ONLY ME!

EIGHT, SEVEN & SIX:
AND I WISH THERE WAS SOMEBODY ELSE I COULD BE.

ALL TRANSLATORS:
SOMEONE TO TALK TO,
SOMEONE TO PLAY,
AND UNTIL THAT SOMEBODY COMES MY WAY...

(Pause. All the ELEPHANS look to see if someone is coming, but they don't see each other.)

ALL TRANSLATORS:
YES, UNTIL THAT SOMEONE COMES ALONG
I WILL SIT BY MYSELF AND I'LL SING ME THIS SONG.
I AM ONLY ME.
I AM ONLY ME!
AND I WISH THERE WAS SOMEBODY ELSE I COULD BE.

(The TRANSLATORS disappear.)

ELEPHANS: *OOH MAI YUUU. OOH MAI YUUU. OOH MAI YUUU. MMA!*

(The other ELEPHANS disappear, and ED is left alone again. He sighs and goes back to his mangos.)

(TRANSLATOR THREE enters and looks around, but there is no one else onstage, except Ed, of course. The translator finally decides to take matters into his/her own hands.)

THREE: The End.
ED: Nuh! *(No, that's not the end.)*

(ED hands the TRANSLATOR a note card.)

THREE: Oh. *(To audience.)* I'm sorry, <u>not</u> the end.

(ED, walking along, humming to himself.)

THREE: One day, when Ed was on his way to work, he came upon another Elephan picking mangos in the field.

(Enter ELEPHAN TWO, polishing a fresh-picked mango. THEY see each other.)

ED: Ooo. *(Wow.)*
ED-TWO: Ahh. *(Wow.)*
ONE: Ed had never met another Elephan before, and as you can guess from his song, Ed was very excited to meet one at last.
ED: Ooo.
TWO: The other Elephan's name was also Ed, and Ed was just as excited to meet Ed as Ed was to meet him.
ED-TWO: Ahh.
THREE: That's kind of a strange coincidence that both of the Elephans are named Ed.
ONE: Actually it's not.
TWO: Actually <u>all</u> Elephans are named Ed.
ONE: Actually... Elephans don't really have names at all.
TWO: There isn't a phone book on the planet Eleph, and the postal service is terrible, so there's really no need for them.
ONE: *(To the audience.)* But for <u>your</u> benefit we thought they should have names.

TWO: And we thought if we called them all Ed, it would be easy to remember.
ONE: But in retrospect that probably wasn't such a good idea. Anyway...
TWO: Ed was happy to finally meet another Elephan.
ONE: And so was Ed.
TWO: This is how their first conversation went:
ED: OOh.
ED-TWO: Om?
ED: Hmm?
ED-TWO: Ahm?
ED: Hum.
ED-TWO: Err.

(Pause, BOTH perplexed.)

ED: *(Pointing at the mango.)* **Mma?**
ED-TWO: *(Tossing the mango to ED.)* **Oo.**
ED: *(Tossing it back.)* **Nuh.**
ED-TWO: *(Tossing it to ED again.)* **Nuh.**
ED: Nuh.
ED-TWO: Nuhp.
ED: *(Pointing at the mango.)* **Ta!**
ED-TWO: Yee.
ED: Ta! ta! ta!
ED-TWO: Yeeeeep. *(ED-TWO storms out.)*

THREE: I thought they were going to be happy to see each other.
ONE: They were, but remember: on the entire planet, there were only a few hundred Elephans. They rarely saw one another, and they <u>never</u> spoke to each other, so they don't have a common language as we know it.
TWO: Taking that into consideration here's what the conversation sounded like from Ed's point of view:
ED: Hello. My name is Ed.
ED-TWO: Om?
ED: What?
ED-TWO: Ahm?

End of Freeview

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