MR. TOAD
AND
COMPANY

Adapted by Frumi Cohen
from the novel by Kenneth Grahame
Music and lyrics also by Frumi Cohen

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The rich Mr. Toad develops a taste for driving and crashing fast cars. Finally, after being forbidden to drive, he steals a car and ends up in jail. The story's villains, the weasels and foxes, take over Toad's estate in his absence. Badger, Rat, and Mole come to the rescue, conquer the Weasels, and save Toad Hall from ruin.

The story of how bedtime stories were turned into the book, *The Wind In The Willows,* is told in this hour-long musical for young audiences. Biographical information about the author, Kenneth Grahame, his son Alastair, and how these stories came to be published, is revealed alongside adventures of the resourceful Rat, trusty Mole, gruff Badger, and the ever frivolous Toad.

SETTING

Two sets, the River and the Wild Wood are needed. The Wild Wood may be set behind the curtain and left there throughout the show. It can be as simple (backdrop) or as complicated as desired. Adding multi-level platforms will give it more depth. A rowboat facsimile is needed. Giant window frame is optional. The scene in Grahame's study can be simply suggested by a wing chair and bookshelves. A bench and appropriate lighting will suffice for the jail scene.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 M, 1 W, 4 Flexible, plus extras)
(Minimum 7 players)

ENGLISHMAN - Alastair Grahame
RIVER RAT - Kindly rat who loves the river *(Soprano, tenor)*
BADGER - Gruff, but wise *(Baritone, bass)*
MOLE - Gentle, prefers underground *(Baritone, second tenor)*
TOAD - Exuberant, loves fast cars *(Soprano, tenor)*
JAILER'S DAUGHTER - Helps Toad escape
POLICEMAN/WOMAN - Arrest Toad
WEASELS, FOXES - As chorus

*A woman may be cast as the River Rat, Toad or Mole because of the singing range of those roles.

SONGS

SONG OF THE RIVER by all Animals
MOLES SONG/RAT'S SONG by all Animals
THE LIFE ADVENTUROUS by Toad, Rat and Mole
SONG OF THE WILD WOOD by weasels and foxes
THROUGH THEIR WINDOWS by Mole, Rat, Animals
THE BATTLE OF TOAD HALL by Rat, Badger, Mole, Toad
FINALE: THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS by Entire Cast

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

ENGLISHMAN: Three piece suit, early 1800s, spats.
RAT, MOLE, BADGER, TOAD: Normal clothes with animal accessories. Suit slacks, velvet suit jackets, vests, spats, suspenders, scarves, whiskers, tails, caps with ears, make-up. Toad can wear oversized painted green spectacles for toad eyes. Wears a shawl, bonnet and a skirt for the washerwoman.
WEASELS: Masks on popsicle sticks that are help in front of the face and removed to reveal make-up during the Weasel's Song. Gangster suits ála 1940.
JAILER'S DAUGHTER: Layers of aprons, high lace shoes, lots of make-up.

PROPS

Englishman-book
Rat-picnic basket, belts, pistols, swords, sticks
Toad-backpack laundry basket, scarf, helmet, and goggles Wild Wood animals-drums and noisemakers
Jailer's Daughter- tray of food

SOUND EFFECTS

Motorcar approaching and leaving
Jungle drumming
Motorcar speeding in and away
Crashing noise

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: A study. A well-dressed old ENGLISHMAN looks up from a book he's reading and speaks to the audience from a wingback chair.)

ENGLISHMAN: Oh, hello. I didn't see you there right away. I was busy reading. Do you like to read? You know, sometimes when I sit down with a good story the room disappears and a new world springs up, right before my eyes. It's better than the movies. Even better than TV. At least, I think so. You see, I love stories. I love stories more than anything. Would you like me to tell you one? A lifetime ago, in England, there lived a young boy named Alastair, Alastair Grahame. He loved stories, especially the ones his father told him each night before bed. One night, it was a special night because it was Alastair's seventh birthday, he asked for a very special story about a mole, a water rat, and a giraffe. The little boy loved that story so much that every night he asked for more stories about the mole and the rat. The giraffe was not such a hit so he was forgotten, and instead a silly toad that Alastair loved very much took his place. And then Kenneth, that was Alastair's father's name, added one more animal to the crew, a Mr. Badger. They all lived near the riverbank....

(LIGHTS fade on MAN as voices are heard singing.)

End of Scene 1

Scene 2

(AT RISE: The riverbank. Behind it, the Wild Wood backdrop. A rowboat flat on wheels. WEASELS, RABBITS, FOXES, etc., are milling around.)

SONG: SONG OF THE RIVER

ANIMALS: OOO....OOO.....OOO...

(This continues, gets louder as LIGHTS come up. It continues as a counter melody to the river theme).

SHAKE AND SHIMMER, GLINT AND GLEAM
SPARKLE, RUSTLE, SHINE
BUBBLE, RIPPLE, CHATTERING
THE RIVER MOVES LIKE TIME.

(Enter RIVER RAT. He drags a small rowboat with oars, launches it and climbs in, obviously enjoying himself.)

RATTLE, WRINKLE, RUSHING IN
TATTLE, TINGLE, TWIST
MURMUR, MINGLE, MEANDERING
THE RIVER MOVES LIKE THIS.

(Enter BADGER)

BADGER:
TOO MANY PEOPLE ON THE RIVER THESE DAYS
WISH THEY'D ALL JUST STAY IN THEIR HOLES.
WHAT DOES AN ANIMAL HAVE TO DO
FOR SOME PEACE AND QUIET?
I'M GOING BACK TO THE WOODS. *(Exit BADGER)*

ANIMALS:
TWINKLE, TRIPPING, TATTLING

End of Freeview

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