

under the apple tree

*a first step into the magical world of theatre
for people aged 3 to 5*

*devised and performed by harrison phillips and david tarkenter
directed by paul harman and designed by wendy meadley*

CTC's production was set end-on with a turquoise silk backdrop behind a silver tree made of metal rods. The tree was hung with chimes so it tinkled when moved. The performance space was floored with a patchwork carpet and the children sat on russet coloured mats. The props included a fish and a phoenix created from heavily embroidered fabrics. The actors wore simple, coloured tunic tops and trousers.

The play is intended to be performed with a minimum of active participation and audience contact, just enough to make it clear that actors and audience are sharing the story together. The emphasis is on watching and listening.

OVER THE ENTRY OF THE CHILDREN PHILIP IS
WINDING A NUMBER OF MUSICAL BOXES. THEY PLAY
TOGETHER.

WHEN ALL ARE SEATED HE CLOSES THE BOXES AND
THE MUSIC STOPS. THE ACTORS NOD TO EACH OTHER.

DAVID: A DANCE OF AWAKENING FROM WITHIN.
MORE STRETCHING INTO WAKING UP DANCE
IT SHOULD BE GENTLY FUNNY

WARMING DANCE. DAVID BECOMES THE SUN AND
WARMS PHILIP WHO CHANGES INTO A TREE SHAPE

DAVID BECOMES SPARROW

PHILIP A little sparrow

lived in a bush

too many sparrows in the bush

no room to sit in the bush

not enough food to eat in the bush

far too noisy in the bush

DAVID "Too many, too much, too little. I'm off!"

PHILIP The little sparrow

ran away far away

DAVID "Too far"

he went up

"I'm going up"

and up

"Too high"

and up

"Where am I?"

PHILIP "Welcome" said the mountain: "climb higher"
and round and round the mountain: and higher and higher
"Too far, Too high!"
High enough, far enough.

PHILIP AS EAGLE "Welcome little sparrow"

DAVID "What are YOU?"

"I am a bird, like you"

"No you're not you're enormous. You're far too big to be a sparrow, like me"

"I am an Eagle - Haaagh! Haaaagh!"

"I want to go home - aaaGH!"

"Where do you live?"

"In a tree. Far down below. But I can't walk all the way back"

"No need. Heeegh! Heeegh! No NEEEEEED! You're a bird. You can fly"

SPARROW TRIES TO FLY UNSUCCESSFULLY UNTIL
EAGLE SHRIEKS AND THEY BOTH FLY.

"Goodbyeeee..." " Goodbyeeee... "

DAVID Do you know any more birds.

THEY PLAY A GAME OF NAMING AND MAKING THE
SHAPES OF BIRDS

Albatross
Blackbird
Cuckoo
Duck

Eagle
Flamingo
Gander
And Goose

Heron
Ibis
Jackdaw, Jay
Kingfisher, Kestrel and Kite

Lapwing
Magpie
Nuthatch
Owl

Owl!!
Parrot!!
Quetzal
Rook

Sparrow
Turkey
That's a bird you can cook

A-Albatros
B-Blackbird
C-Cuckoo
D-Duck

Ee - Eagle
F - Phoenix

DAVID What is a Phoenix?

PHILIP: The Phoenix is the most wonderful bird in the world

DAVID: I have never seen one

PHILIP: There is the only one

PHILIP BRINGS OUT THE PHOENIX. AS HE TELL THE
STORY DAVID PRODUCES A GOLDEN EGG AND A
REPRESENTATION OF FLAMES

PHILIP: Once every thousand, thousand years
The Phoenix lays a golden egg
She sits on that egg for a hundred years
And when that egg is ready to hatch
She sets fire to her nest and she burns hot and bright
She burns for a day and she burns for a night
But when she has burned and burned away
A new Phoenix rises to start a new day

DAVID: Where does she live?

PHILIP: In a nest. In a tree. In a nest of spices

BOTH: In a nest. In a tree. In a nest of spices ...

THEY SET UP A LITTLE CANDELABRA AND A SMALL PAN. JARS OF COLOURED SPICES

DAVID: DESCRIBES THE SPICES HE IS ADDING

WHEN THE SPICES ARE HEATED THE AROMAS BEGIN TO FILL THE ROOM

DAVID SPRAYS A SHEET OF PAPER WITH WATER AND SHAKES COLOURED SPICES ON TO THE PAPER TO MAKE A PICTURE

DAVID EATS FROM PAN. IT IS HOT AND HE NEEDS TO DRINK WATER

PHILIP BRINGS A GLASS OF WATER. HE TAPS WITH A SPOON MAKING DIFFERENT NOTES AS THE WATER LEVEL FALLS

SOME COMEDY BUSINESS WITH SPOON, PAN AND GLASS

DAVID IS STILL VERY THIRSTY. PHILIP BRINGS OUT FOUR SILVER SPRAYS. HANDS TWO TO DAVID. GETS THE OTHER TWO. THEY STAGE A MOCK GUNFIGHT. THEY SPRAY THE AUDIENCE.

**THEY SIT
THE STORY OF THE FISH WHO DRANK THE SEA**

DAVID Once there was a fish. A big fish. The fish was blue and gold and silver and green and he was the biggest fish that you've ever seen.

And he was always hungry. He ate anything. Shell fish and crayfish and lobsters and crabs and Starfish and clown fish and sea bass and dabs. PAUSE He ate everything . . . except the octopus. The octopus had eight legs and a pointy beak and didn't look like food at all.

The big fish swims around looking and searching and poking and prying but he can't find anything to eat. Except the octopus.

"Well octopus, you have eight legs and a pointy beak and you don't look like food at all. But I am very hungry so you will be my dinner."

And he swims after the octopus. The fish was blue and gold and silver and green and he was the biggest fish that you've ever seen. But an octopus has eight legs and can swim very quickly. "So no matter how fast you swim you will never catch me!"

"If I can't catch him I will drink all the water in the sea, I will swallow down the whole ocean and the octopus with it."

And he drank. He slurped and he glugged and he gobbled and he gulped, and he gulped and he gobbled and he slurped and he glugged. And the sea got smaller and smaller and the fish got bigger and bigger and on his last slurp . . . he swallowed the octopus down.

Now the octopus was inside the big fish and there was no way out but an octopus has eight legs so he tickled and he tickled and he tickled and he tickled and tickled and he tickled and he tickled and he tickled and tickled. And the big fish tittered and sniggered and chuckled and gurgled and chuckled and giggled and tittered and sniggered until he could keep his mouth shut no

longer and he laughed and laughed and laughed and laughed and laughed and laughed. And all the sea water he had drunk came flooding out of his mouth and with it the

Shell fish and crayfish and lobsters and crabs and Starfish and clown fish and sea bass and dabs. And the last one out was the octopus.

FISH IS PRESENTED

The fish was blue and gold and silver and green and he was the most beautiful fish that you've ever seen.

THEY PULL A SILK CLOTH OUT OF THE FISH. THEY MAKE WAVES

THEY BECOME FISH SWIMMING.

I wish I was a fish

I wish I was a fish

What do fish wish?

THEY DANCE AS WAVES

For warm, wet waves

for wild, whirling waves

for shimmering scales

for spouting whales

How does a fish swim?

With splash of water on sparkling scales

How fast do fish go?

in the blink of an eye and a flick of a tail

So how do they swim?

they glint and gleam and glisten

dazzling and dashing and darting away

splashing and sparkling and slipping away

Where do they go?

They weave their way through the seaweed so green

Deep in the dark where the sharks are unseen

gliding so quietly no one can hear

darting away when danger is near

How do I know if a fish can cry?

Taste the salt of the sea - like a tear from your eye

How would you like to kiss a fish?

I'd kiss a fish that was on a dish

Would you kiss it on the lips?

I'd kiss its lips - if it came with chips

How does a fish wash?

With a sponge . . .

THE CLOTH BECOMES THE WIND

PHILIP The North Wind Doth Blow and we shall have snow,
(REPEATED)

DAVID North Wind You have blown and now you must go!
(REPEATED)

DAVID GETS SUN DISC AND DANCES AGAINST THE NORTH
WIND

THEY START THE MUSICAL BOXES AGAIN

THEY BRING BUNCHES OF BLOSSOM AND HANG THEM
ON THE SILVER TREE

PHILIP COMES FORWARD WITH THE SILVER APPLE WHICH
HAS BEEN HANGING ON THE TREE

TO CHILDREN What's in here?

On the tree there's an apple, in the apple there's a seed, in the seed there's a tree

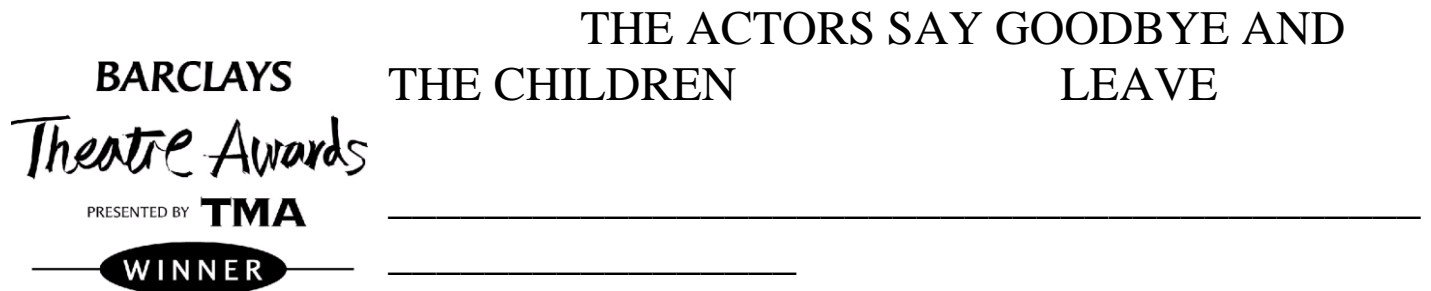
DAVID TAKES REAL APPLE. BITES.

TO PHILIP Do you want some?

SPLITS APPLE IN HALF.

TO AUDIENCE: Look. Here are the seeds. I think you will get some apple too ...

THEY BRING OUT TRAYS OF APPLE SLICES AND PASS THEM AROUND. AS ALL EAT THE ACTORS RECAP THE FISH STORY AND ANY OTHERS THE CHILDREN REQUEST AND THE AUDIENCE JOINS IN WITH ACTIONS.



After the performance each class received a 'story sack' containing objects from the play - a feather, spices, a piece of silk etc.

In the year 2000, **under the apple tree** won the Barclays TMA Award, presented by Equity, for the Best UK Show for Children.

This play was devised in rehearsal. The aim was to create a play based first of all on actions to be watched. Sensual elements, such as smell

