

Queen Victoria Dreams

A musical play for Primary School children

Script and words by Helen Rawson

Music and words by Jeremy Rawson

© 2003-2004 Helen and Jeremy Rawson

Queen Victoria Dreams

Introduction

This musical consists of seven songs and a script which intersperses the music. The script which follows this introduction indicates where the songs are performed.

The idea of this show is that Queen Victoria is an old lady, dreaming and remembering various important and notable people of the age over which she reigned. In this way some of the achievements of the Victorian Era are brought to life in an interesting and entertaining way.

You can experiment with different groups singing verses and choruses in most of the songs. Where a song has two vocal lines, then a half-and-half split will usually work very well. Learn each line separately before putting them together. This is especially important for "The Photographer", which is deliberately written in the style of a Gilbert and Sullivan "double-chorus". The children in each group need to learn their own tune independently. When they are known well, putting the two together should be quite easy.

Queen Victoria Dreams

Song: *Queen Victoria Dreams*

Narrator It is a dark early evening and the year is 1900. A new century has just begun, the 20th century. Queen Victoria, has celebrated her diamond jubilee, watched her children and grandchildren grow and marry and become part of the most important families in Europe but.....

she is old and tired. She is warm. She thinks back over her long, long reign. So much has happened. The empire has grown. So many people have died in wars and because of disease but it has been a good time.....

Clever people have made lives better and some people have made her smile. Oh...those bicycles!

Song: *Riding By*

Florence
Nightingale Remember me Victoria.... Florence Nightingale.

Victoria, we have things in common. I, too, am old and I too was born to a rich family but, whereas you became queen, I chose to become a nurse. I say that I chose, but I believe God chose my life for me. My parents did not think that it was right for me to be a nurse but they couldn't stop me. How I remember the awful sights that met me when I arrived at the Scutari hospital, a huge barrack like building meant to save our soldiers in the Crimean war. It was more likely to kill them. The men and the rooms were filthy, the rats were common place and the doctors didn't want the nurses. It wasn't long however before I took charge and in a few months the changes started to save lives. The men were clean and well fed and they began to get better. They loved me and called me 'the lady of the lamp'.

Anthony Trollope

Remember me Victoria..... Anthony Trollope.

Did you like my books Victoria? How many did you read? Did you like the way I described your kingdom, the bishops, the beautiful young woman, the villains and the brave young men? I worked for nearly 40 years telling those stories and I'm still not sure how many novels I wrote, perhaps 48?

My mother wrote novels too, to keep our family when my father died and I wrote at night when I had finished my work in the post office.

Do you like my pillar boxes? Bright red and bold standing along the street engraved with your initials. They, too, are the legacy of my life.

Song: *The Penny Post*

Doctor Barnardo

Remember me Victoria..... Doctor Barnardo.

Isn't it a dark, cold day Victoria and aren't we so lucky to be able to sit beside the fire to rest our weary bodies. My heart is not strong and although I still work it is good to look back on what I have done. On this table here I am surrounded by the photographs of some of the thousands and thousands of children that I have helped. This little boy came to me ragged, hungry and weak and left me to be a carpenter and a strong man. I remember the day, oh so long ago now it seems, when as a very young man I first met Jim who took me to see where all the children were sleeping. I couldn't have known then just how many homes were needed and just how many children were needy. Rest well, Victoria, but do not forget to send some money....

I will only stop fund-raising when I stop breathing.

Gilbert & Sullivan	Remember us Victoria...
Gilbert	William Schwenk Gilbert
Sullivan	and Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Gilbert & Sullivan	at your service, your majesty Here's a tale of Cock and Bull !
--------------------	---

Gilbert	Librettist and playwright
Sullivan	Composer
Gilbert	Illustrator
Sullivan	Musician
Gilbert	Poet
Sullivan	Conductor
Gilbert	Military Officer
Sullivan	Professor
Gilbert	Civil Servant
Sullivan	Teacher
Gilbert	Barrister
Sullivan	Organist
Gilbert & Sullivan	Knighted

Gilbert	I was kidnapped at the age of 2 and you can't beat that!
---------	--

My writings are nonsensical and very funny. I love to tease and poke fun at everyone when I write. I wrote the words for fourteen light operas with that gentleman over there but please don't forget my comedies, hilarious they were. I also direct plays, design costumes and sets. Multi-talented as you see. Oh! and don't forget that I helped to build a famous theatre.

Sullivan	I realise that I will always be known for my light and funny operas that I wrote with W. S. Gilbert (who once described me as "incomparably the greatest English musician of the age). We are not always unkind to each other. I also wrote many very serious works and conducted orchestras. I have important friends including the royal family and was knighted before him.
----------	--

Narrator

G and S - Always remembered together.

The Photographer – a very important gentlemen of our age!

Song: *The Photographer*

Victoria

That was a refreshing nap, It is still awhile before I can dress for dinner; I wonder who will be visiting tonight. I had the strangest dreams, very real, it was almost as if I saw the people in front of me.

So many people.....
So many clever people....
So many very clever people.....

The railways have changed all of our lives. I will introduce you to two of the cleverest men of our age and they can tell you what they have done. Meet Robert Stephenson and Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Welcome Gentlemen.

Brunel

Remember me Victoria...
Isambard Kingdom Brunel

Can you think of some of the great feats of engineering which I have designed and built? Did you ever travel through the tunnel under the Thames which I worked upon with my French father? I was only 27 when I became chief engineer of the Great Western Railway and joined all the towns from London to Bristol including Reading. Did you imagine as a little girl that we could cross to America in only fifteen days aboard the steam ships which I designed and built? The 'Great Britain' not only took 250 passengers but also our name to that vast and growing country. It was the 'Great Eastern' steamship, however, which gave me most trouble, an iron ship to carry 4,000 passengers and as I watched this great vessel on her trials, I left the Victorian World behind.

Stephenson

Remember me Victoria... Robert Stephenson

Famous son of a famous father. I spent my life working on railways and the engines which ran on them but I owe so much to the genius of my father George, the locomotive engineer, who worked up from the collieries to designing engines and so could afford to send me to private school. I worked far away from home, in South America and Canada but remember me for the work I did in this country, Victoria. The tunnels and bridges, the lines and the cuttings, the locomotives to allow the railways to spread and our goods to move. Please remember my beloved engine, 'The Rocket'.

Song: *On To Where We're Going*

Charles Dickens

Entering reading

from a Tale of Two Cities.

"It's the best of times. It's the worst of times" etc.

What a long, long life you have led Victoria. How many changes you must have seen in such a life. How I hope that things have improved for the poor. Being poor is so humbling and humiliating. When I think back to how life was when I was a very young man and picture my father in jail, for debt, and myself working many long hours in a shoe tanning factory, I can still feel the tears prick in my eyes. I saw so many desperate people at that time and felt that with the help of my pen and my stories I could show the world the sufferings that existed. Do you remember some of my characters? The sad ones and the greedy ones, the spiteful cruel ones and the honest humble ones. All the world and its people were in my novels Victoria.

Lord Melbourne

Victoria- remember me.

I hope that you still remember me as a favourite friend and advisor. I loved you as a daughter.

Victoria	<p>Dear Lord Melbourne.</p> <p>So true, so gentle, so honest and trustworthy. No prime minister since have I loved and depended upon as I depended on you when I was a very young queen. I used to enjoy our meetings but now such meetings just tire and bore me. Dearest Lord Melbourne.</p>
Lord Melbourne	<p>Victoria, you were so kind and tolerant to me. You even forgave me when I fell asleep after dinner one night and started to snore and do you remember how often I slept in chapel disturbing the peace and the poor chaplain who was trying to preach. You even forgave me when I warned you that you might end up being fat because of some of your German ancestors. You were so tiny as a young queen. You always listened to me when I tried to explain about the politics of the day and the dry subject of the constitution.</p>
Victoria (<i>reading from her diary</i>)	<p>"Such stories of knowledge; such a wonderful memory; he knows about everybody and everything,,; who they were and what they did. He has such a kind and agreeable manner; he does me the world of good."</p> <p>What's the time?</p>
Narrator	<p>What a simple question! It wasn't long ago that the answer would depend on where you lived in the country. Now we all work to the same time, thanks to the Greenwich Meridian Line.</p>

Song: <i>The Greenwich Meridian Line</i>
--

George Eliot

From Mary Ann Evans to George Eliot. Why did I choose to publish my books under the name of George Eliot? I felt that writing was considered to be a profession for men and I had so much to write about, and so much to say. I wanted people to read my books Victoria, and I succeeded.

Did you read 'Middlemarch'? My great novel telling the life of many of the characters who lived in and around a town in the centre of England. Dorothea, a very rich young woman, could not find meaning in her life from fine jewels, beautiful clothes, horse riding and dining in high society. She needed to learn and to be useful and we follow her on her journey throughout the novel. I challenged society throughout my life, Victoria, which was often difficult and uncomfortable and made my friends unhappy.

And just before I go I must tell you that I was described as being "magnificently, awe-inspiringly ugly," What fun!

W.G. Grace

In 1896 I was Wisden Cricketer of the Year. An honour I well deserved, perhaps every year I played the game. I could bat, no one better, I could bowl, no one finer, and I could field. Excuse me, I didn't notice you there your majesty. William Gilbert Grace at your service.

I am famous for my cricket, my beard and my temper. I am tall and generally considered to be the most wonderful cricketer to have ever handled a bat. I started playing cricket when I was no higher than the wicket with my father and my brothers.

I've heard people say that its not the winning that counts it's the taking part. What utter piffle, winning is the only thing that matters. I am notorious for arguing with the umpires but that don't always have the right answer do they?

Narrator

But umpires know the rules of the game! These games were played long ago, of course, but we sorted out the rules, so now we can have leagues and tests and cups.

Song: *The Rules Of The Game*

Song: *Queen Victoria Dreams*