

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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Skitterbang Island

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Skitterbang Island

Characters

Marie
Uncle Edvard
Skitterbang
Arnie The Magic Snow Stoat

Prologue

The audience arrive to the sound of a gentle sea lapping against the pebbled shore of Skitterbang Island. A creaking mast; gulls overhead. The performers are setting up for the performance – brushing Marie's hair, cleaning the hull of the boat, setting the feather at just the right angle in the hatband of Edvard's fedora – and singing as they do so...

All:

O, Skitterbang
O, Skitterbang Island
O, Skitterbang
O, Skitterbang Island
O, Skitterbang
O, Skitterbang Island
O, Skitterbang
O, Skitterbang Island
O, Skitterbang Island
Nestled in among the icebergs.
Hear the sorry song of seabirds
Circling high
Over Skitterbang Island
O, Skitterbang
O, Skitterbang Island

The performers turn to address the audience. Nearby, we can see a little boat bobbing past an island...

All:

In the north of the world,
Where it's very very cold,
O Skitterbang,
O, Skitterbang Island
Stood a tiny-small island

In the shiver-cold sea.
O Skitterbang,
O, Skitterbang Island.
When wobble-bobbing past
Came a sailing boat.
On board was a girl called Marie.
Marie, Marie, Marie, Marie.
Her Uncle steered the sailing boat:
Dear Uncle Edvard, Uncle Edvard.
As a singer he was known across the world.
Dear Uncle Edvard, Uncle Edvard.
Her Uncle steered them home across the cold sea.
Singing a song, singing a song as they go.

Scene One – The Song and The Storm

The little boat travels peacefully across the water. Edvard and Marie can be seen on the boat. And there is a pile of belongings at one end at one end of the vessel – suitcases, snowshoes, supplies, a gramophone with large, horn-shaped speaker. Edvard and Marie sing...

Uncle Edvard & Marie:

‘If I trust in you will you trust in me?’
The salmon sang into the stream
Sang the burbling stream ‘You can trust in me;
As a team we shall journey to the sea.’
So they shimmied The Jiggle Of The Jellyfish
And they crooned The Ballad Of The True
And by fall of night they were tucked up tight
In a bed deep beneath the ocean blue.

‘If I trust in you will you trust in me?’
The snow goose warbled to the sky
Sang the wide blue sky ‘You can trust in I
To protect you and guide you as you fly.’
So they shambled The Ballet Of The Brambling Bird
And they crowed The Music Of The Free
And before sundown they were snoozing sound
In a nest nestled high within a tree.

So we bumshake The Waddle Of The Downy Duck
And we voice The Carol Of The Kind
You can trust in me and I'll trust in you
And the world is forever yours and mine!
And the world is forever yours and mine!

Edvard and Marie laugh with enjoyment. But then, quite suddenly, the weather takes a turn for the worse. The skies darken, the wind picks up, waves rock the boat and thunder rumbles...

Marie:
Uncle?

Uncle Edvard:
Stay calm, Marie, stay calm.
We'll button your rain coat up to the chin.
Stop all the rain from trickling in.
Stay calm, Marie, Stay calm.

Marie:
I'm scared.

Uncle Edvard:
I shan't let you come to harm, Marie,
Stay calm, Marie, stay calm!

Marie:
Uncle!

But a giant wave hits the boat and they both yell and scream as they are dragged under...

Scene Two – Like Ships In The Night

The storm has passed. Uncle Edvard and are clinging to separate pieces of boat, drifting towards one another. They are both in a semi-delirious state...

Marie:
Uncle Edvard.

Uncle Edvard:

Marie.

Marie:
Uncle Edvard.

Uncle Edvard:
Marie.

Marie:
O sky,
Where am I?

Uncle Edvard:
O sea,
How can this be?

Marie:
O sky,
Where am I?

Uncle Edvard:
O sea,
Where is Marie?

Marie
If I trust in you, will you trust in me too?

Wind blows them apart.

Uncle Edvard:
If I trust in you, will you trust in me too?

Wind blows them apart.

Marie:
O sky,
Where am I?

Uncle Edvard:
Marie.

Marie:
Uncle Edvard.

Uncle Edvard:

Marie.

Marie:

Uncle Edvard.

Uncle Edvard:

Marie.

Scene Three – Mysterious Mudlark

A small stony bay on Skitterbang Island. Bits of Uncle Edvard's boat and various possessions have washed up on the shore, including an old old gramophone. Skitterbang, the island's only permanent inhabitant, is searching through the items. He strikes tins and blows into bottles – anything he likes the sound of he keeps...

Skitterbang:

Skitterbing. Skitterbang. Skitterbing-bang-bong.

Skitterbing. Skitterbang. Skitterbing-bang-bong.

Skitterbing, Skitterbang, Skitterbing-bang-bong,

Skitterbing, Skitterbang, Skitterbing-bang-bong.

Over suitcase, stone and sand,

Scamper searching scabbling hands.

Skitterbing. Skitterbang. Skitterbing-bang-bong.

Skitterbing. Skitterbang. Skitterbing-bang-bong.

Rummage high, now rummage low,

If it sings we'll take it home.

Skitterbing. Skitterbang. Skitterbing-bang-bong.

Skitterbing. Skitterbang. Skitterbing-bang-bong.

Skitterbang finds the gramophone. He likes the look of it but is puzzled by it. He strikes it. He yells down the speaker. Still curious, he drags the gramophone away in the direction of his cave.

Skitterbang:

Skitterbing...bang...bong...

Marie is washed up on the beach. She coughs and wakes. She gets up and looks around. She finds some of their possessions washed up on the beach...

Marie:

Uncle Edvard.
Uncle Edvard.
Your lucky hat.
Your tennis shoe.
Your special scarf.
You can't be far.
Come out from where you're hiding.
It's all a game,
A silly game,
Come out from where you're hiding.
You can't be far.
I'll find you soon.
Uncle Edvard.

Scene Four – The Monster's Home

We find ourselves in the monster's cave – a beautiful place. Around the walls of the cave hang bottles, cans, pans, shakeable jars of stones and screws, whirring tubes, hubcaps, home-made harps and glockenspiels – a whole orchestra of found and home-made instruments, lovingly arranged. Skitterbang returns from foraging, still dragging the old gramophone. In his own environment, Skitterbang seems less chaotic – almost fastidious in his routines...

Singers:

Sleepy legs come stumble in
To the cosy heat of home,
To the soft and happy dark:
Day is done.
Skitterbing, Skitterbang, Skitterbing-bang-bong.

He pours himself a cup of Monster Tea – hot water infused with rusty screws and seaweed.

Steamy drink slosh in a tin
Steamy drink stink good and strong
Steamy drink send Skitterbang
Bouncy heart skip skitterbong.
Skitterbing, Skitterbang, Skitterbing-bang-bong
Skitterbing, Skitterbang, Skitterbing-bang-bong.

He inspects the gramophone once more. At first, he still doesn't know what it is or does. But soon he finds the handle and turns it, faster and faster. But nothing happens. Until he gives it a little whack and it comes to life, playing a professional recording of Uncle Edvard singing the song we heard earlier...

Gramophone:

...journey to the sea.'
So they shimmied The Jiggle Of The Jellyfish
And they crooned The Ballad Of The True...

At first, Skitterbang is petrified by the noise. He hides...

Gramophone:

And by fall of night they were tucked up tight
In a bed deep beneath the ocean blue.

But he gradually realises the music poses no threat, and becomes moved by its mysterious magic. He moves slowly towards the gramophone...

Gramophone:

'If I trust in you will you trust in me?'
The snow goose warbled to the sky
Sang the wide blue sky 'You can trust in I
To protect you and guide you as you fly.'
So they shambled The Ballet Of The Brambling Bird
And they crowed The Music Of The Free...

Skitterbang cuddles the gramophone...

Gramophone:

And before sundown they were snoozing sound
In a nest nestled high within a tree.

Scene Five – Close But No Cigar

Marie is traversing the awesome snowy landscape, an increasingly forlorn figure.

Marie:

Falling snow, where to go now?
Pinching wind, blow me home now.
Where to go now? Where to go?
Where o where o where to go?

Marie stops. She can hear the gramophone, carried on the wind...

Marie:

Uncle Edvard?
I can hear your song.
Over there.

She heads off in search of the source of the sound. As soon as she is gone, Edvard crawls out from beneath a pile of snow, spluttering...

Uncle Edvard:

I fell asleep in the snow.
Eyes frozen closed, snowy eyebrows.
Where to go now? Where to go?
Where o where o where to go?

He goes off in search of Marie but chooses the wrong direction...

Scene 6 - Who Are You?

Skitterbang has put the gramophone away and gone to bed. He snores peacefully. Marie, exhausted, crawls into the cave, still clutching her uncle's scarf. At first, she is just grateful for the shelter that the cave brings. But when she looks up she is amazed by the pans, bottles and tins arranged so meticulously around the cave walls. The peculiar beauty of the place charms and invigorates her. She climbs to her feet and explores...

Marie:

Handlebars, pickle jars, pans, cans and spoons.

She explores some more...

Marie:

Rabbit-bone xylophone, bottles and tubes.

Marie pulls on a tube and a collection of pans and noisy items come crashing down. Skitterbang wakes. Skitterbang and Marie are scared of each other at first. Skitterbang sees Edvard's scarf on the ground. He picks it up and hands it to Marie.

Skitterbang:

Sk...

Marie:

Sk...?

Skitterbang:

Sk...

Marie (& Skitterbang):

Sq-uashy head. (Sk...)

Flappy ears and stubby tail. (Sk...)

Squishy cheeks and skin so pebble grey and pale. (Sk...)

Is it wrong to trust a monster with a silly smile? (Sk...)

Shelter in his snugsome cave for just a little while? (Sk...)

Skitterbang:

Skitterbang.

Marie:

Marie.

Skitterbang:

Skitterbang.

Marie (& Skitterbang):

Bony toes. (Skitterbang)

Scruffy, tufty, fluffy hair. (Skitterbang)

Bouncy bum and beady, kindly, steady stare. (Skitterbang)

Is it wrong to trust a monster with a silly smile?

(Skitterbang, Skitterbang)

Sleep inside his cosy home for just a little while?

(Skitterbang, Skitterbang)

Marie (Skitterbang)

Marie (Skitterbang)

Time to sleep.

He tucks her up in bed and she falls asleep. He watches over her with intense curiosity...

Scene 7 – Base Camp

Edvard is still in the snowy wilderness, searching for Marie...

Uncle Edvard:

Edvard, take control.
Cover high and low this island
She'll soon be resting beneath your wing.
But what if she's searching for me?
In circles, never to meet,
We will roam until the fall of night.

Stay and build a fire.
Set aflame these frost-clad branches.
And she'll be drawn to the rising smoke.
I'll break a hole in the lake
And catch a fish! I will boil
Up a stew to warm her frozen bones.

But how it sorely pains me to stay!
The sunlight seeping away!
Will I ever see her face again?

To the falling sun,
The aching gale,
I make this heartfelt plea
Help me find my poor Marie
O how to find Marie...

*Arnie the Snow Stoat appears, bathed in a beautiful and majestic light.
Edvard can barely believe his eyes...*

Arnie:

It is I, Arnie The Snow Stoat,
Here to lend a helping paw.
Cling on tight to my mucky-brown coat
I'll soon sniff her out I'm sure, you'll see.
Trust in me,

As the salmon fish trusts the stream,
Trust in me.

Scene 8 – Music Is A Joy

Skitterbang sets a steaming cup of monster tea down next to Marie and she wakes up. Skitterbang moves across to his found musical instruments and begins to play them. Marie is delighted by the music he makes and joins in...

Marie sees her gramophone in a corner of the cave. She is surprised to see it here. And it makes her feel sad, reminding her of her uncle.

Marie:
My gramophone.

She places the needle on the record and it plays...

Gramophone:
'If I trust in you will you trust in me?'
The salmon sang into the sea.

Still a little sad, she sings along...

Gramophone & Marie:
Sang the burbling stream 'You can trust in me;
As a team we shall journey to the sea.'

Skitterbang wants to join in (but his voice is terrible.)

Gramophone & Marie (& Skitterbang)
So they shimmied The Jiggle Of The Jellyfish
(Soga shimmshee da jigga-luvva Jellysplish)
And they crooned The Ballad Of The True
(Annacrooo dee ballee-davvee-dooo!)

Marie takes the needle from the record. She will teach him to sing...

Marie:
If I trust in you.

Skitterbang (sounds awful):
Eeva tra ick ooooooo!

Marie:

If I trust in you.

Skitterbang (sounds slightly better.):

Eefa truss ih ooh?

Marie:

If I trust in you.

Skitterbang (better again):

If uh truss in you.

Marie:

Will you trust in me?

Skitterbang (better again):

Will oo truss tin mee?

Marie:

The salmon sang into the stream.

Sang the burbling stream...

Skitterbang (not bad now):

You can trust in me.

Marie:

As a team we will journey to the sea!

(showing him the jiggle; he copies)

So they shimmied The Jiggle Of The Jellyfish

And they crooned...

Skitterbang:

The Ballad Of The True!

Marie & Skitterbang:

And by fall of night they were tucked up tight

In a bed deep beneath the ocean blue!

They laugh and hug.