

Playstage

Junior

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THE BIRTH OF BUTTERFLIES



How the Aborigines explained the life cycle of the butterfly



Written by
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THE BIRTH OF BUTTERFLIES

CAST

NARRATORS (3)

THE SUN GODDESS

RAYS OF SUN (4)

INSECTS (4 caterpillars but not butterflies, ladybird, spider, etc.)

REPTILES (crocodile, snake, lizard etc.)

BIRDS (parrot, crow, eagle etc.)

ANIMALS (rabbit, bear, kangaroo etc.)

Note: The number and choice of insects, reptiles, birds and animals is really up to you – whatever, you can create a costume for. The only necessities are the caterpillars, who then transform into butterflies and also some ‘hibernators’ see the list in the script. So, in the script, the playwright has referred to INSECT 1, ANIMAL 1, BIRD 1, REPTILE 1 etc. Therefore, you can choose what creatures you will have and give them the lines you want them to speak.

At least 30 speaking parts. Unlimited non-speaking but movement and singing.

Running time approximately 20-30 minutes depending upon the ‘dance/movement’ sequences.

MUSIC

With this play we are suggesting that you make great use of music as background for the movement and actions and we recommend some YouTube tracks that can be used in rehearsal and performance.

There is one Aboriginal song included in the play, which is sung twice, and we have included a link to a YouTube performance, so that you can use it for rehearsing the children and copying the hand movements that accompany this song. It is a very simple song.

1/ MUSIC FOR THE CREATION

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdZQytU_nS0

2/ MUSIC FOR WARMTH AND LIGHT

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TO_oHxuk6c

3/ MUSIC FOR LIFE ON EARTH

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uIk_91GQYI

4/ INANAY GUPU WANA (Aboriginal song)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QJq9dN4_Do

5/ MUSIC FOR WINTER HIBERNATION

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiqLZZddZEO>

6/ FLY, FLY LITTLE BUTTERFLY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJv7vtOh-_0

THE BIRTH OF THE BUTTERFLIES

Music for the Creation (1) plays quietly. The stage is dark. The NARRATORS come in and stand on the stage, all three together, facing the audience.

NARRATOR 1

In the beginning, the Earth was created with valleys and mountains.

NARRATOR 2

There were rivers, lakes, seas and streams.

NARRATOR 3

But it was dark. Very dark and cold. There was no life because life needed warmth.

NARRATOR 1

So, it was time for the Sun Goddess to come and awake the Earth.

NARRATOR 2

It was time for her to come and spread her light and warmth everywhere.

NARRATOR 3

It was time for the Earth to bring forth life.

(The NARRATORS leave. The stage lights up a little bit. The music changes to Music for Warmth and Light (2) and the volume is raised (but not so loud that the actors cannot be heard!). Enter the SUN GODDESS and four RAYS OF THE SUN holding hands. The stage lights up even more.)

SUN GODDESS

It is time for this Earth to be filled with light and warmth! Go out into the world, my children and spread your light to the high mountains and to the valleys. Take the warmth to the seas and the rivers. Melt the ice that covers the ground.

RAYS OF THE SUN *(together)*

We will Mother Sun, we will.

(They spread out to the four corners of the stage, except for the SUN GODDESS, who stays in the centre. They perform a little dance to the gentle music. They finish their dance and turn to the SUN GODDESS, the music fades.)

RAY OF THE SUN 1

I have brought light to the mountains.

RAY OF THE SUN 2

I have brought light to the valleys.

RAY OF THE SUN 3

I have brought warmth to the seas and rivers.

RAY OF THE SUN 4

I have melted the ice that covers the earth.

SUN GODDESS

Good. Now you must each go into the four deep caves of the Earth. Each cave holds special creatures that must be brought up into the air to fill the Earth with life. You *(she points to RAY 1)* go to the East. *(RAY 1 bows and leaves)*. You *(she points to RAY 2)* go to the South. *(RAY 2 bows and leaves)*. You *(she points to RAY 3)* go to the West. *(RAY 3 bows and leaves)* And you *(she points to RAY 4)* go to the North. *(RAY 4 bows and leaves)*.

(At this point you could have some back projection of pictures of animals, birds, insects and reptiles. (optional) Music for Life on Earth plays (3). RAY 1 comes in leading all the ANIMALS. They bow to the SUN GODDESS and sit in one corner of the stage. Then, RAY 2 comes in, leading the REPTILES. They bow to the SUN GODDESS and sit in another corner of the stage. RAY 3 comes in leading all the BIRDS. They bow to the SUN GODDESS and sit in another corner of the stage. Finally, RAY 4 comes in, leading the insects. They bow to the SUN GODDESS and sit in another corner of the stage. The music fades.)

SUN GODDESS

Creatures! I have given you warmth and light. I have given you all the things that you need for life. It is now up to you to make the best of what you have.

(All the creatures stand and come together, facing the audience, to sing INANAY GUPU WANA and to do the hand actions. When the song has finished, all the creatures drop to the floor and keep still.)

SONG:

Inanay gupu wanna

Inanay gupu wanna

Ay ay oola

Oola oola ay

Yippee yay yippee yay

Goo wana goo wana

Goo wana goo wana

Goo wah - Choo!

SUN GODDESS

Come my children. Our work is done here. Creatures of the Earth, may you have a happy existence.

(She gathers her RAYS and they leave. The creatures all stand. Music for Life on Earth plays, and the creatures spend a few minutes miming how their particular creature moves and feeds. Suddenly one of the birds falls to the ground and lays very still. The other creatures gather around.)

CATERPILLAR 1 *(touching the motionless BIRD)*

What has happened to her?

BIRD 1 (*touching the BIRD*)

She is cold. She has stopped existing. There is no warmth in her.

REPTILE 1

I'm not a warm creature. But I'm breathing and moving.

ANIMAL 1

I think that this is what they call death. She has stopped being alive.

CATERPILLAR 2

So, what happens to her now?

BIRD 2

I don't know. Perhaps her life force goes somewhere else?

ANIMAL 2

Yes, that's it! Look! (*bends down and pretends to pick up a pebble*) I have a pebble in my hand, (*mimes throwing the pebble offstage*) if I throw it into the river, it disappears. Perhaps that is what will happen to her.

REPTILE 2

Look! (*points offstage*) Where you threw that pebble into the water, there is now a stick floating on top of the water. Perhaps the pebble has come back as something else!

CATERPILLAR 3

That must be it! We go to another existence and then we come back again as something else.

ANIMAL 3

What's the point in that? Why not just stay as you are?

CATERPILLAR 4

Where's the fun in that? Perhaps some creatures want to change?

ANIMAL 4

Maybe they do! Let's put her in a deep dark cave and see if she comes back to us as a different creature.

(Soft music plays. Several creatures carry off the BIRD and then return. The creatures all sit down and wait. The NARRATORS come on stage and stand behind the creatures.)

NARRATOR 1

So, the creatures waited and waited, but their friend did not come back.

NARRATOR 2

Not as herself or as another creature.

NARRATOR 3

But they were still curious about the life force.

(The NARRATORS move to the side of the stage and watch)

BIRD 3

I wonder, if you go to sleep for a long time, can you will yourself to come back as something else?

REPTILE 3

I should like to come back as an animal with lots of warm fur.

ANIMAL 4

I should like to come back as a bird and fly across the world.

INSECT 1

I should like to come back as something very, very, big, so I wouldn't get crushed underfoot.

BIRD 3

So, as I said before, perhaps you can change yourself while you sleep?

ANIMAL 1

Some of us should try it. Those of us who go to sleep for the winter.

EVERYONE

Yes!