

Director's Notes

CAST (A cast of 30+ is required. Some roles may be doubled up.)

Main Characters

SOFIA / OLD SOFIA	Central role - concerned about environmental issues. (Solo singer) Thoughtful, serious, determined. 'Old Sofia' appears in Scenes 1 & 11.
BIRDWATCHER	Passionate ornithologist, a mine of information.
LANDOWNER	Pompous, money-grabbing opportunist.
SUNNI	Loves the sun.
JOE	Keen gardener.
ROWAN & ASHLEY	Planning new home.
LOGGER 1	Leader of the logging gang.
LOGGER 3	Comic role. Loves chopping - and planting, eventually! Needs a strong character actor, with good comic timing.

Minor Characters

BELL RINGER	Non-speaking part, Scene 1 only.
MAYOR	A few lines in Scenes 1 & 11.
ROBIN	Child – a few lines in Scenes 1 & 11.
TOWNSFOLK 1 & 2	One line in Scene 1.
CHILD 1 & 2	A few lines in Scene 1.
LOGGER 2	Logger 1's sidekick. (<i>lines could be taken by the other LOGGERS</i>)
TOWNSFOLK 3 & 4	A couple of lines in Scenes 4 & 7. (<i>TOWNSFOLK 1 & 2 could double</i>)
BURGER MAN	A few lines in Scene 4. (<i>could double as sheep</i>)
FARMER	A few lines in Scene 5.
BAKER	A few lines in Scene 7. (<i>could double as sheep</i>)
CHILD 3 & 4	One line each in Scene 7. (<i>CHILD 1 & 2 could double</i>)

Chorus / Non-Speaking Parts

TOWNSFOLK	Extras used e.g. to queue for Burger Man and Baker, plant trees, etc.
WIND DANCERS	Appear three times to dance greenery away. Also act as environmental protesters in Scene 8.
SIGN HOLDER	Crosses stage holding signs to indicate passage of time. 6 appearances.
COWS 1, 2, 3	Appear in Scene 5. No actual lines, but 'moo' and 'parp' on cue. This is a very popular scene with the children, but needs controlling! (<i>see advice in props/costume section</i>)
SHEEP	2 or more for a brief appearance during the song in Scene 5.

Director's Notes (contd.)

Props / Costumes

BELL RINGER	Hand bell.
SIGN HOLDER	Signs saying: '20__ * Tree Festival' (<i>indicating 50 years in the future</i>) '50 Years Previously', 'One Year Later', 'Some Years Later'.
SUNNI	Sunglasses.
BIRDWATCHER	Binoculars, notebook and outsize hanky, anorak.
LANDOWNER	Three large wads of cash. Flat cap and tweed coat (or top hat and tails) with enough pockets to conceal money.
LOGGERS	Lumberjack shirts, axes, hard hats or beanies. Large leek for Logger 3.
ROWAN & ASHLEY	BBQ equipment, tongs, aprons etc.
BUTCHER	Butcher's apron.
BAKER	Baker's hat, food vendor's tray with shoulder straps.
BURGER MAN	Baseball cap, food vendor's tray with shoulder straps. Take-away packaging - made of card, not plastic.
FARMER	Wellington boots, gilet, handkerchief.
SOFIA	Needs 'old woman' costume that is easy to change in and out of. Long 'dibber' stick and bag of seeds, plus spares to hand out.
COWS & SHEEP	Suitable onesies - headband animal masks, etc. (There are free whoopie cushion apps available on your phone, if you prefer that to vocalisation, or children may bring their own 'fart toys'!)

Set Suggestions

The play is set in and around a rural market town. *Notionally, it begins at a time 50 years in the future, at the town's Tree Festival, which can be indicated most simply by the use of festoon lighting or bunting – which can then be removed to indicate the change of scene to the '50 years previously' era.

A river is imagined to be running along the front of the whole performing area, between cast and audience.

Initially the stage should have a predominantly green background, with plenty of removable plants and/or green card/fabric 'foliage'. These are then removed in three stages by the Wind Dancers, so that gradually the scene becomes predominantly brown. Bear in mind that what is removed then needs to be restored during the planting scene (Scene 10).

Base Positions Stage Right

Mayor, Bell Ringer, Sheep
Landowner, Butcher, Burger Man
Townsfolk 1, 2, 3 & 4 and extras
Rowan, Ashley, Wind Dancers

Base Positions Stage Left

Cows, Farmer
Sofia, Birdwatcher, Loggers
Child 1, 2, 3 & 4, Robin, Baker
Sunni, Joe, Sign Holder

Director's Overview

SCENE 1 **The Tree Festival**

Incidental Music – WONDERFUL LIFE

⦿ **Track 1 / 20**

'20__ * *Tree Festival*' In a busy market town, the Mayor welcomes everyone to the Tree Festival. He/she declares that the trees help make their town the most wonderful town in the world! [** 50 years in the future.*]

Song 1 – WONDERFUL LIFE

⦿ **Track 2 / 21**

Old Sofia tells Robin that there was no Tree Festival when she was young. Then she begins to tell the children a very important story about the trees.

Incidental Music – BACK IN TIME

⦿ **Track 3 / 22**

SCENE 2 **Timber For Furniture**

'50 Years Previously' The Landowner is delighted to overhear Sunni & Joe talking with Rowan and Ashley about their plans to build a house nearby. He knows he can make money out of them, and offers trees from his woodland to provide the timber they will need. He calls the Loggers and sets them to work.

Incidental Music – LOGGERS' ENTRY

⦿ **Track 4 / 23**

Song 2 – TIMBER FOR FURNITURE

⦿ **Track 5 / 24**

Incidental Music – WIND THEME 1

⦿ **Track 6 / 25**

Wind Dancers remove greenery gently during the music.

SCENE 3 **Birdwatching**

'One Year Later' Sofia watches birds by the river with the Birdwatcher.

SCENE 4 **Living On Takeaways**

Rowan and Ashley are loving their new house. With the kitchen unfinished, they're living on takeaways. They and their friends Sunni and Joe fancy a burger. Joe joins the queue to buy one from the Burger Man, but he's run out of burgers. Landowner arrives. Burger Man explains that the town has grown so big that the Butcher keeps running out of beef. Just then the Butcher arrives. The Landowner offers to clear woodland to provide grazing land for cattle. Sofia questions the wisdom of cutting down the trees because they're close to the river – but her concerns are dismissed. The Loggers return and get to work.

Incidental Music – LOGGERS' THEME

⦿ **Track 7 / 26**

SCENE 5 **Cows Make Methane**

A farmer watches over his grazing cows, who pass a lot of wind! The Landowner visits to check all is well, and is surprised by the amount of belching and farting! Birdwatcher, always a mine of information, tells them that each cow produces several hundred litres of methane every day.

Song 3 – FIELD OF FUMES

⦿ **Track 8 / 27**

Sofia has been looking for Birdwatcher – she's worried about the number of trees that have been cut down. The two of them know that something has to be done, but neither of them know what.

Incidental Music – WIND THEME 2

⦿ **Track 9 / 28**

Wind Dancers remove greenery with more speed during the music.

SCENE 6 **Noticing Changes**

'One Year Later' Sunni is loving the sunnier weather, but Joe complains about having to water the garden and is worried about the impact of water shortage on wildlife. Birdwatcher is concerned about the water level in the river, and he has

noticed there are fewer birds around. Sofia is very worried about all this, but Ashley and Rowan dismiss her concerns. They're more interested in having a barbecue!

SCENE 7 Having A Barbecue

Song 4 – BARBECUES, BURGERS AND BUNS

⦿ Track 10 / 29

Sunni and Sofia join the Baker's queue to buy some burger buns, but he/she has run out of flour and only has meringues! The Landowner gets the Loggers to clear trees to make fields for growing wheat. Once again, Sofia expresses her concern and is dismissed.

Incidental Music – LOGGERS' THEME

⦿ Track 11 / 30

The Loggers casually mention that they have chopped down all of the trees.

Incidental Music – WIND THEME 3

⦿ Track 12 / 31

During the music, Wind Dancers remove remaining greenery, energetically.

SCENE 8 A Storm Brewing

Sofia is frustrated that no-one seems worried about the loss of trees, loss of habitat for animals and the dramatic changes in the weather. Why can't people see the signs? During the song the Wind Dancers (who see what Sofia sees) protest about the changing climate, trying to warn the Townsfolk.

Song 5 – LOOK AT THE SIGNS

⦿ Track 13 / 32

Then there is a storm...

Song 6 – THE STORM

⦿ Track 14 / 33

Sofia is despondent, but Birdwatcher encourages her that a solution is possible.

SCENE 9 Things Begin To Change

The dramatic worsening of the weather is beginning to get people's attention. Even Sunni is finding it too hot. The Landowner has decided to move on: his land is worth nothing as it's either too dry or too wet to be any use. The others realise they are partly responsible and could have made different choices, but feel it's too late now to mend things. They may have given up, but Sofia hasn't. She believes she can make a difference and starts planting seeds to grow new trees. Gradually others follow her lead.

Song 7 – SOME PEOPLE CAN LET THINGS GO

⦿ Track 15 / 34

Birdwatcher is delighted at Sofia's solution to the problem and joins in, as do Sunni, Joe, Rowan & Ashley. Even the Loggers join in, planting trees instead of chopping them down. Logger 3 just keeps on going and going...

SCENE 10 Time Passes

'Some Years Later' ...and Logger 3 is still planting! He loves planting and just keeps going as Wind Dancers replace greenery on the stage.

Incidental Music – GROWING MUSIC

⦿ Track 16 / 35

The river is back to normal, the birds' habitat is restored. Decking has been repurposed to make vegetable beds. Bees and butterflies are back in Joe's garden. Everyone is delighted, and at last they acknowledge that Sofia brought about this change. Small changes make a big difference, and we can all make small changes.

SCENE 11 Back To The Tree Festival

Scene 1 is re-set during the music. When all is ready, Old Sofia leads Scene 1 cast on.

Incidental Music – FORWARD IN TIME

⦿ Track 17 / 36

Incidental Music – WONDERFUL LIFE

⦿ Track 18 / 37

Old Sofia finishes telling her story of how the Festival of Trees began. She tells the children that it's their turn now. The trees are all still young and there is plenty still to do, to keep the environment healthy. 'It's amazing what you can do when everyone works together,' says the Mayor. During the song whole cast return.

Song 8 – CHANGE THE WORLD TOGETHER

⦿ Track 19 / 38