

Mini Musical

Victorian Historian History is Boring?

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EDUCATIONAL MUSICALS

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The Victorian Historian

History is Boring?

Assembly Pack

History is Boring? is a performance piece taken from the parent musical ***The Victorian Historian*** one of our large range of full scale educational musicals developed to complement the UK, Key Stage Two National Curriculum, covering historical and science based subjects. Assembly Packs are shorter, simpler versions of these shows, rewritten to be used in an assembly, performed with little rehearsal time and only small casts. Three songs taken from the larger parent musical complete the pack. These songs can be learnt by the small cast or larger groups.

Like the larger parent musical we aim to provide an excellent product that can be performed quickly and easily and can be altered or adapted according to your needs. We hope you enjoy performing ***History is Boring?***

Characters.

Total Characters, 5 main parts, assorted street traders & Victorian workers (Numbers are flexible).

Miss Smith - History teacher and time traveller.

Laura - A 21st century schoolgirl.

Faye - A 21st century schoolgirl.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel -The famous Victorian engineer.

Street Trader - A cockney street trader.

Assorted street traders and Victorian workers.

Song List.

1. History Is Boring - Faye & Laura.

2. Grim Times - Street traders & Victorian workers.

3. Engineering - Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Fact Sheet

The Steam Age.

Britain's industrial revolution had begun in the late 18th century and by 1837 steam powered machinery was beginning to appear. It is almost impossible to imagine the impact that this technology was to have world-wide, changing not only Britain itself but also the world. Through the 19th century steam power transformed the country. The technology could do the work of many people and the manufacture of goods moved into factories creating an early form of mass production. New industries emerged and Britain became the first and most powerful industrial nation in the world.

Children.

25 per cent of the country's workforce were children who worked in mines, factories and workshops. Children as young as four could be made to work. Accidents and deaths were common. The Mines Act of 1842 banned women and children from working underground in mines, but it wasn't until 1864 that the Factory Act prevented children under eight years old from working in factories. Some young boys in the cities worked as "climbing boys", climbing up the chimneys of wealthy houses to remove soot. Many died from suffocation or burns. ***The Water Babies*** by Charles Kingsley details their plight.

Great Inventors & Inventions.

Great inventors and engineers designed new advances in steam technology. Isambard Kingdom Brunel was born in 1806. Following in his father's footsteps he became an engineer, completing the first ever tunnel under a river with his father. That tunnel under the Thames is still part of the London Underground system. Surviving an accident while constructing the Thames tunnel, he went on to create the S.S. Great Western Railway and planned the Clifton Suspension Bridge over the River Avon. He also designed the S.S. Great Western, the first Trans-Atlantic steamship and the Great Britain, the first screw-propelled ocean steamship. He died of overwork in 1859.

The Victorian Legacy.

Many British people believed that this time of prosperity and empire would go on forever, but with Queen Victoria's death came a realisation that eventually the empire would recede. However, the Victorian era gave Britain some of its greatest moments and left a legacy of free education, better health and prosperity for all.

The Victorian Historian

History is Boring?

The Story.

Two 21st century schoolchildren complain about how boring history is until their history teacher, the mysterious Miss Smith, takes them through time to Victorian Britain to experience history for real. Here they find out how hard life was for the working classes and meet the world-renowned engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Isambard proudly explains why steam power and engineering will save the day.

History is Boring? is a musical created specifically for children with a musical accompaniment that will have you singing the songs for weeks after the show itself. Lively and imaginative the performance piece brings to life the Victorian era. Although fictional, the story and the factual characters and events depicted are as accurate as research can allow and give a real portrayal of some of the most important scientific, economic and social events of the Victorian era.

Performance Notes.

This show has been constructed so that no one character has more than five consecutive lines.

The show is set in 1854. Isambard Kingdom Brunel is portrayed smoking a cigar, which is historically accurate. For health reasons please feel free to omit this visual reference.

The character of Miss Smith is supposed to transport both herself and the two schoolchildren through time with portable CD players. If these are too hard to acquire any piece of 21st century portable sound technology will suffice i.e. portable radio's, mini-disc players etc.

A sound cue is required of a strange noise. This is supplied between Songs 1 & 2.

Make sure your street traders & Victorian workers don't spin too furiously during the sound cue or they will become dizzy and disorientated. Slow motion action is always an option.

History is Boring? is a small performance piece taken from the larger parent musical ***The Victorian Historian***. Its structure has been created to enable individual interpretation by teachers and young performers. The facts used about the Victorian era in Britain are as accurate as possible within the structure of a musical created to entertain and inform young children. The writer has striven wherever possible to be politically correct and inoffensive.

Have fun with and enjoy ***History is Boring?***

The Victorian Historian

History is Boring?

Laura and Faye enter. They are typical 21st century schoolchildren.

Laura. Oh no, we've got history today with that strange teacher, Miss Smith.

Faye. I don't think she's strange, I think she's quite nice.

Laura. Quite nice, quite nice! She gave us so much history homework last lesson I just gave up. I'm going to say that all my pens ran out and I couldn't do it. Did you finish yours?

Faye. Er...no, I'm going to say the dog ate my homework.

Laura. I wouldn't mind if it was interesting stuff, but it's all this history rubbish.

Faye. I know what you mean, all those names, dates and places.

Laura. History is so boring.

SONG 1: History is Boring - Faye & Laura.

Faye. History is boring

Laura. Geography is boring

Faye. Maths is pretty boring as well.
Science

Laura. Chemistry, physics and biology

Faye. Double on Thursdays

Laura. Swell.

Both. Why do they think that this is gonna help us?
I don't need to know about

Laura. Who?

Both. But of all the things that bore us
History bores us, we want something new.

Like TVs and CDs instead of all the used to be's
That's life, that's fine, that's the way to spend our time but wait.

Faye. History is humdrum

Laura. So's the National Curriculum

Faye. Music isn't my cup of tea.
Geography's

Laura. Tiresome, rather go to Belgium

Faye. Think I'd rather risk chemistry.
Laura. Swell.

Both. I don't see why knowing 'bout equations
Helps us in our daily work.
But of all the things that lose me
History lost me, lost me I went berserk.

But TVs and CDs instead of all the used to be's
That's life, that's fine, that's the way to spend our time but wait.

TVs and CDs instead of all the used to be's
That's life, that's fine, that's the way to spend our time but
Great !!!

At the end of the song the girls jump as Miss Smith enters the performance area. She is carrying three portable CD players (see performance notes). She must also wear a watch.

Laura. Oh no, here she is now.

Miss Smith. Good morning children.

Faye/Laura. Good morning Miss Smith.

Miss Smith. Have you brought in your homework Laura?

Laura. No, I'm sorry Miss, I started mine and all my pens ran out.

Miss Smith. And how about you Faye?

Faye. Sorry Miss. The dog jumped up on the table and ate mine.

Miss Smith. (*Suspiciously*)...Right...I see...Put these on.

Laura/Faye. (*Worried*) Why?

Miss Smith. Never you mind. Just put them on and press play.

Laura. Maybe Miss Smith's into(*contemporary band*)

Faye. I don't think she is...

SOUND CUE 1 (on the CD). *There is a strange noise and the three stand in the centre of the performance space. During this noise several street traders and Victorian workers enter. They swirl and spin onto the performance area until the noise stops. After the noise ends they act normally, chatting to each other and selling their wares.*

Miss Smith. Quickly, jump up and down on the spot.

The girls jump up and down.

Miss Smith. Time travel blocks your ears. I still haven't found out why yet.

Faye. Time travel! Where are we?

Miss Smith. Still in the same place. Our school will be built here in a couple of years.

Faye. But how did we get here?

Miss Smith. These CD players are actually personal time manipulators that use a tightly focused tachyon beam to move objects through the temporal universe.

Faye. You what?

Laura. She means we've travelled back in time.

Faye. Oh right.

Miss Smith. Welcome to Victorian Britain at its height, how marvellous.

Laura. She's off her trolley.

A street trader sidles up to the group.

Street Trader. 'ello darlin's, fancy an orange, luvley oranges?

Laura. No thanks, we've had hamburgers for breakfast.

Street Trader. Homburgers for breakfast. You've eaten hats, very tasty I must say.

Miss Smith. *(To Laura)* Homburgers are a kind of hat worn by Victorian gentlemen. *(To the trader)* We don't want any oranges thank you, we've already eaten.

Street Trader. *(Graciously)* Very well m'lady, *(the trader turns to Faye and Laura and adopts a ruder manner)*. Hats for breakfast! Suit yourselves. *(The trader carries on selling, shouting loudly)* Oranges, luvley oranges!

Faye. There's a lot of poor and tired people here. *(She points to the traders and workers).*

Miss Smith. Well, that's because Britain is becoming an industrial nation. For the first time men, women and children are working in mills, factories and foundries.

Laura. Well that's good isn't it? They're all getting paid.

Miss Smith. Yes but wages are very low and the conditions are appalling. Think yourselves lucky. Until 1833 children your age would have been working down the mines or in cotton mills.

Faye. I wouldn't have liked that very much.

Miss Smith. Very few had a choice. If you were lucky you could have ended up as servants or cleaning chimneys.

Laura. *(Horried)* No thanks, how awful.

SONG 2: Grim Times - Street Traders & Victorian Workers.

The street traders and Victorian workers move to the front of the performance space to sing their song.

Poverty's a witch, wish that I was rich,
No way out of here that we know.
From the day you're born, you know where you belong,
If you're working class there's no dawn.

Grim Times, Grim Times.

Watch your Ps and Qs, if you're poor you lose,
We just work so rich folks can play.
We all know our place, London's most disgraced,
Homeless and so hungry each day.

Grim Times, Grim Times.

Grim Times, Grim Times, Grim Times.

As the song ends the traders and workers retire to the rear of the space and a figure in a waistcoat and tall top hat appears smoking a large cigar.

I.K. Brunel. Why Miss Smith, how delightful to see you again.

He kisses Miss Smith's hand, she giggles. Faye and Laura both look at each other and then together they tease Miss Smith.

Faye & Laura. Oooooooh.

Miss Smith. *(Very embarrassed)* Er...may I introduce Faye and Laura, two pupils of mine from the future. Girls, this is one of the greatest men of the Victorian age - Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Laura. So what do you do Mr Brunel?

I.K.Brunel. Call me I.K. Well you see I'm an engineer.

Laura. Engineering, that must be very dull.

I.K. Brunel. No, no, my dear, engineering is fabulous. The new machines, the steam engines, they all mean Britain is becoming the most advanced country in the world.

Miss Smith. I.K. here is responsible for some of the greatest inventions of the Victorian age.

I.K. Brunel. Why thank you. It is true that my railways, bridges, and steamships have proved to be very popular.

Miss Smith looks at her watch.

Miss Smith. Well girls it's time we got back to our own time.

Faye. Oh do we have to Miss? History isn't so boring anymore.

I.K. Brunel. Tell you what, before you go let me explain why engineering and steam aren't as dull as you think.

Miss Smith. Well...I don't know.

Faye/Laura. Oh please Miss.

Miss Smith. Oh alright then. If you're sure it won't be too boring!

Laura. No miss, we don't think history is boring anymore.

Faye. We think it's great.

SONG 3: Engineering - Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Through the song I.K. uses Miss Smith, Faye and Laura to construct bridges, trains etc. As bridges they stand still, as trains they travel around the performance space energetically.

When I was just a little boy
My father said to me,
Isambard I need your help
Will you please come with me?
He was building tunnels
And I understood the plan,
I liked working in this field,
An engineering fan.

Engineering is the key,
I wasn't keen on tunnels
But I knew that I should be
Engineering through the land,
So I learnt and now I find that I'm the man.

A tunnel once fell on me
And I worked on higher soil.
Over bridges on the sea,
I've really tried it all.
Lots of nuts and bolts and things
They're monuments of steel,
Railways to travel on
And ships that don't need sails.

Engineering, big machines,
That do the work of fifteen men
And you know what that means.
Engineering for success,
I'm an engineer and proud that I'm the best.

Engineering's so much fun,
And when you see the grand results
You know what you have done.
Engineering, learn the key,
Then you'll find you can be somebody like me.

At the end of the song the entire cast come to the front of the performance space and bow.

THE END

42

A

E⁷

A

Voice

Voice

Pno

45

E⁷

A

Voice

Voice

Pno

Great!!!

Great!!!

2. Grim Times

(Street Traders and Victorian Workers)

From the Musical "The Victorian Historian"
Music & Lyrics by Tim J. Spencer

♩=100

Gm E^b Gm D⁷/G Gm E^b Gm D⁷/G Gm E^b

Voice

Piano

1. Po - ver - ty's a witch
2. Watch your Ps and Qs

8

Gm E^b E^b F⁷ B^b Am D⁷

Voice

Wish that I was rich No way out of here that we know
If you're poor you lose We just work so rich folks can play

Pno

14

Gm E^b Gm E^b E^b F⁷

Voice

From the day you're born You know where you be - long If you're working class there's no
We all know our place Lon - don's most dis - graced Home - less and so hun - gry each

Pno

20

B^b Am D⁷ Gm E^b Gm E^b

Voice

dawn Grim Times Grim
day Grim Times Grim

Pno

Grim Times

26

Gm E^b Gm E^b Gm E^b

Voice

Times Times

Pno

32

Gm E^b E^b F⁷ B^b Am D⁷

Voice

Grim

Pno

38

Gm E^b Gm E^b Gm

Voice

Times Grim Times

Pno

43

E^b Gm E^b Gm

Voice

Grim Times

Pno

3.Engineering

(Isambard Kingdom Brunel)

From the Musical "The Victorian Historian"
Music & Lyrics by Tim J. Spencer

Music score for "3.Engineering" (Isambard Kingdom Brunel) from the Musical "The Victorian Historian". The score is written for Voice and Piano (Pno).

The score is divided into four systems, each with a key signature change indicated by a chord diagram above the staff:

- System 1:** Key signature: C major. Tempo: $\text{♩} = 120$. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- System 2:** Key signature: C major. The voice part begins with the lyrics: "1. When I was just a little boy my 2. A tunnel once fell on me and I".
- System 3:** Key signature: F major. The voice part continues with the lyrics: "fa - ther said to me I - sam - bard I need your help will you please come with worked on hi - gher soil O - ver brid - ges on the sea I've rea - lly tried it".
- System 4:** Key signature: D major. The voice part concludes with the lyrics: "me all He was buil - ding tu - nnels and I un - der - stood the plan. Lots of nuts and bolts and things they're mo - nu - ments of steel".

The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, primarily using chords and single notes.

21

D **G** **G⁷** **F**

Voice

I liked vor-king in this field an en - gi - nee - ring fan En - gi - nee - ring is the
 Rai - ways to tra - vel on and ships that don't need sails En - gi - nee - ring big ma

Pno

27

C **G** **C** **Dm** **C**

Voice

key _____ I was - n't keen on tu - nnels but I knew that I should be En - gi -
 chineses _____ That do the work of fif - teen men and you know what that means En - gi -

Pno

33

F **C** **A** **Dm**

Voice

nee - ring _____ through the land _____ So I learnt and now I
 nee - ring _____ for su - ccess _____ I'm an en - gi - neer and

Pno

38

G⁷ **C** **G⁷** **No Chords**

Voice

find that I'm the man _____
 proud that I'm the best _____

Pno

44

Voice

Pno

50

Voice

Pno

56

Voice

Pno

G⁷ F

En - gi - nee - ring's

62

Voice

Pno

C G⁷

so much fun And when you see the grand re - sults you

67

C Dm C F C A⁷

Voice

know what you have done En - gi - nee - ring Learn the key then you'll

Pno

73

Dm G⁷ C

Voice

find that you can be some - bo - dy like me.

Pno

77

C/B^b A^b B^b C

Voice

Pno

Potty Pantos

Goldilocks and the Three Scares
Daring Dick Whittington
Jack and the Big Stork!
Aladdin's Lump

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