

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Robin Hood and his Merry Band

by Les Winspear

EXTRACT

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ROBIN HOOD & HIS MERRY BAND

Frustrated by Robin Hood in his attempts to collect taxes, the Sheriff of Nottingham decides to build a ring-road around Sherwood Forest and charge everyone a toll for using it. With his new found wealth he wants to construct the biggest castle in the kingdom before the king returns from France.

To put an end to his megalomania Jill Scarlet and Friar Tuck head off to Sherwood to enlist the help of the benevolent outlaw. But their plans are thwarted when Friar Tuck is arrested and Robin is challenged by the sheriff's strong-arm man, the pungent Grotty Guy of Guisbourne. Robin looks doomed but Maid Marian has plans of her own to bring things to rights.

Robin Hood & His Merry Band was originally written for outdoor performance with the audience moving between sites to follow the action. It's a cheeky twist on the old tale with lots of laughs and six original songs that work for a very broad audience range.

It is a piece for six or more actors, (Robin Hood being female) with possible doubling indicated in cast list.

CHARACTERS

Alan A'Dale	Robin Hood
Jill Scarlet	Much the Miller
Peasants	Litter John
Chamberlain	Sir Guy of Guisbourne
Sheriff of Nottingham	Maid Marian
Friar Tuck	Soldiers

Robin Hood & His Merry Band was first produced by Theatre Alfresco in 1997 in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Hobart.

Cast:

Fiona Blackwood	Jill Scarlet/Maid Marian/Peasant
Tania Bosak	Robin Hood/Peasant/Soldier
Jackie Hallam	Sheriff of Nottingham/Much the Miller
Barry Kay	Alan A'Dale/Litter John/Peasant/Soldier
Iain Lang	Chamberlain/ /Peasant/Soldier
John Xintavelonis	Friar Tuck/ Sir Guy/Peasant

ACT 1.

THE TOWN SQUARE IN PUDDLETON

CAST ENTERS AND THEY SING

In merry merry England
Seven hundred years ago,
There lived a man called Robin Hood
Whom everyone adored.
He was hated by the Sheriff
And hunted by the law,
He took the money from the rich
And gave it to the poor.

CHORUS Robin Hood, Robin Hood
He dressed in Lincoln green,
Robin Hood, Robin Hood
The bravest ever seen.

The Sheriff and his soldiers
Could not pin Robin down,
From any place he could escape
In forest or in town.
The people came because his fame
Had spread throughout the land
With Sherwood Forest for a home
They formed a merry band.

CHORUS Robin Hood, Robin Hood
He dressed in Lincoln green,
Robin Hood, Robin Hood
The bravest ever seen.
Robin Hood, Robin Hood
He was hunted by the law,
He took the money from the rich
And gave it to the poor.

ALAN A'DALE AND THREE PEASANTS REMAIN

ALAN Good citizens of Puddleton.

Times are bad and they may get worse. But while we've got Robin Hood on our side we won't go hungry.

ALL On you Robin! Good on Robin Hood!

ALAN Here's a little something from Robin to keep you going. It seems that while the Sheriff's tax collectors were passing through Sherwood Forest this morning they lost their way... and they lost a little cash into the bargain. And now Robin Hood's passing it on to you.

PEASANTS Three cheers for Robin Hood. Hip hip hooray, hip hip hooray, hip hip hooray.

Robin Hood, Robin Hood,
He dressed in Lincoln green
Robin Hood, Robin Hood
The bravest ever seen.

WE SEE THE SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM APPROACHING WITH HIS CHAMBERLAIN. WHEN THE PEASANTS SEE THE SHERIFF THEY DROP THE WORDS OUT OF THE SONG AND MUMBLE IT TO THE END

Robin Hood, Robin Hood,
Rmn hmh Rmnhn hn
Bam bam ba ba babam ba
Bam bam Chiko roll.

CHAM All hail the Sheriff.

ALL All hail the Sheriff.

SHERIFF How delightful. Now go away and leave me in peace. I'm not ready to see you yet. Haven't you got fields to plough or dung to collect or something? Go on. Shoo! Shoo! And tidy yourselves up a bit. Absolutely no dress sense.

THE TOWNSFOLK EXIT

Why don't they wear nicer clothes, Chamberlain?

CHAM They're peasants, your aloofness. That's what peasants wear.

SHERIFF What am I going to do Chamberlain? That wretched wretch Robin Hood is making my life a misery. Robbing the tax collectors, taking all my tax money and giving it back to the peasants. How can I build the biggest castle in the kingdom if the money isn't there to pay for it?

CHAM Tax it back again.

SHERIFF What, so he'll take it off my men again as soon as they go through Sherwood Forest?

CHAM Oh, I see. Do they have to go through Sherwood Forest?

SHERIFF Of course they do.

CHAM Couldn't they go over it?

SHERIFF Over it?

CHAM Yes, if they jumped very high they could-

SHERIFF I don't think so Chamberlain.

CHAM If they inflated a pigs bladder with hot air they would float above the trees and-

SHERIFF No!

CHAM Ah ha! What if they held the legs of a very large goose, as it flapped it's wings? It would lift them above the trees. With the wind behind them they'd have the tax money there in no time at all.

SHERIFF Don't be ridiculous Chamberlain. They can't go over Sherwood forest.

CHAM Alright, have it your way, they can't go over Sherwood Forest...but they could tunnel under it.

SHERIFF Under it?

CHAM Under it. It's quite practical. Let's see. If it takes a man and a half a day and a half to dig a hole and a half, then a hundred men, with very sharp spades would probably take-

SHERIFF Will you knock it off. I don't know why I bother with you sometimes.

CHAM Well if you won't accept my help I don't see how we're going to get around this problem.

SHERIFF Around. That's it!

CHAM That's what?

SHERIFF A road around Sherwood Forest.

CHAM There isn't a road around Sherwood Forest.

SHERIFF Exactly. So we'll build one.

CHAM Will we?

SHERIFF A super highway that goes around the entire forest. A ring road that every traveller and tax collector can use, without the fear of being robbed by Robin Hood and his band of ruffians.

CHAM So no-one will have to go through Sherwood Forest any more?

SHERIFF That's right.

CHAM But then there'll be no-one left for Robin Hood to rob?

SHERIFF That's the idea. They'll all be on my new road. The money will pour into Nottingham and my new castle will be built in next to no time.

CHAM So Robin Hood will be out of a job.

SHERIFF Yes, and who knows, maybe he'll leave the wretched forest and be out of my life for ever.

CHAM There is one small problem Sheriff. The money to build the road. It could be quite expensive.

SHERIFF Money? Money? That's not a problem. I'm the Sheriff. There are ways to get around that. Get around? Brilliant. Get around. Get it?

CHAM I'll pay that one.

SHERIFF That's it. Everyone that uses the road will have to pay a fee. I'll put a tollgate at either end, then it won't matter whether they're coming or going, they'll still have to pay me.

CHAM You are a genius, your geniusness-ness.

SHERIFF I know that. Come along. We shall start planning immediately.

SHERIFF AND CHAMBERLAIN EXIT.

JILL SCARLET ENTERS RINGING A TOWN CRIERS BELL.

SCARLET Hear ye, hear ye, calling all citizens of Puddleton. You are to gather in the public square at 10 o'clock to hear a most important announcement by the Sheriff of Nottingham. All people of the town must stop their work and attend. Hear ye, hear ye-

SHE NOTICES THE AUDIENCE

Oh, most of ye are here already. That was quick. You got yourself a good spot. You'll hear everything the Sheriff has to say from there.

Oh, I should introduce myself.

I'm Jill Scarlet, some of you might know me. I live on the other side of Puddleton. We had the weaver's shop. Little place with the thatched roof. You know, weaving, dyeing, snip snip, weave weave. I'm supposed to be a weaver too, but we lost the shop.

Couldn't pay our bills so the Sheriff closed us down. It was pretty hard to make ends meet. But I've got myself a job.

Town crier. Tell everyone what's happening in all the towns around Nottingham.

Hear ye. Hear ye.