

Notes on Producing *Penguins on Thin Ice*

For Teachers, Directors, Music Directors:

(a) Background Information. Please read the “Background Information” page on this website. It will give you some insights for presenting the show. This show is a public service.

(b) Age of Performers & Audience. *Penguins on Thin Ice* is intended for performers age 13 through 18, though college groups may be interested in producing the show as well. It is not recommended for performers or audiences below the age of 13. It’s our belief that because of the seriousness nature of global climate change, it is not an appropriate subject for younger children. (Subjects like water, forests, rainforests, animals, reduce/reuse/recycle, and pollution in general are more appropriate environmental subjects for younger children.) The show is appropriate for audiences age 13 to adult.

(c) Auditioning and Rehearsal Time. The amount of rehearsal time you have may determine the range of experience you’ll want to look for in auditions. Although it would be wonderful to open auditions to any and all young people interested in performing the show, time constraints may make it necessary to limit auditions to young people who have some experience with singing and/or some stage experience.

Our experience has been that kids learn the songs quickly because the music helps them memorize the words and they have the rehearsal CD to listen to. The text is not especially long and, except for a couple of quotes, most of it moves fast and rhymes. This will help the performers to memorize the text, but will still likely take more time than committing the songs to memory. If the quotes are too difficult to memorize, they can be read off small flash cards, as there are only a couple of them in the script. If projections are used, they can be projected and the performers can read them from the projection.

(d) Costumes. Costumes can be done simply and inexpensively. For a simple, low budget production, we recommend dressing the performers so that their costumes suggest penguins. White shirts, black pants, black jackets, and black shoes can be used. Black baseball caps with the rims painted yellow (or covered with yellow felt or other fabric) can be used to suggest the penguins’ beaks. Rasta and Mama Earth may add an extra costume piece to indicate who they are.

(e) Sets, Drops, Projections. Sets/scenery are not absolutely necessary for this musical review. Any simple sets, painted or cloth drops, suggesting Antarctica can be used. Projections of actual photos of Antarctica or some other icy wilderness can also be used. Projections can be very effective, if one has the luxury of access to the technology. This would enable you to project the page of quotes and information we have included at the end of the presentation. We recommend projecting it at the very end of the show if possible.

(f) Music: Rehearsal CDs and Accompaniment CDs. When you sign up to do a production of *Penguins on Thin Ice*, we will send you a CD with simple keyboard/vocal renditions of the songs to be used for rehearsal purposes. This CD can be duplicated so that each performer can take home their own CD to learn the songs. If you don’t have the capability of duplicating CDs, let us know and we can arrange to send you additional copies. We will also send you a CD which has the same keyboard accompaniment as the rehearsal CD, but without the vocals. You can use this CD as the accompaniment for the performers in both

rehearsals and performances. We don't have the instrument accompaniments in sheet music form at this time, but we will be creating that shortly for any group who wishes to have a live accompanist play the songs.

(g) Diction and Voice Projection. It is very important that there is someone to work with the performers to make sure their voices and words can be heard clearly all the way to the back row of the audience. If you need guidance on voice projection and diction, please contact Sharon Abreu (*"Ah-bray-oo"*) in Washington State at 360-376-5773 or by email at sharmuse@irthlingz.org. Microphones can be used if they are available.

(h) "ALL". In the script, if no character is specified to sing a particular song, then all the characters sing together. "**ALL**" indicates that all characters say those particular lines.

(i) Consultation. We are offering consultation either by phone (free) or in person (fee for travel expenses and time to be worked out with the individual group). You can contact Sharon Abreu about consulting services.

(j) Recommended Admission Fees. If the show is being produced for students at a school, obviously there would be no fee for admission. However, if the show is being produced by a school, community or religious organization inviting the larger community to attend, we recommend they charge a small fee but not to exceed \$10/ticket for general admission, and a lower admission fee for students 18 and under and seniors. You might also offer a sliding scale for low income or people out of work. Having an admission fee communicates that the show has value and is worth attending; however, no one should be turned away for lack of funds, and all should be encouraged to attend this fun and important show!

(k) Promotion. For those who have not produced a show before, promotion is the key to having an audience to see the fruits of your labors! We recommend that you begin to advertise the production at least three weeks before the first performance date. We recommend posting 8-1/2 x 11 inch fliers in schools and on as many community bulletin boards as possible. Local newspapers, school newspapers, community newsletters, and radio stations can be very helpful in promoting the show. List the show in the calendars and upcoming event listings in as many local publications as possible the week before the show, and the week before that as well if possible. **Make sure all media you contact have the correct dates, show times, and location** and include admission fees as well. Any local press you can get prior to the show is wonderful. Perhaps you can get local and school newspapers to do stories about your production with a photo of the cast. Word of mouth is very important, too. Have the cast invite everyone they know to the show!

(l) Photocopying. Please make double-sided copies of the script, on recycled paper if possible.

Notes for Choreographers:

When we produced the show, the students were involved in creating the choreography for the songs. They enjoyed being part of the creative process and incorporating dance moves familiar to their age group (and which they were comfortable performing for their peers). The time you have to work with the performers will, of course, determine whether or not you'll need to work out most or all the choreography ahead of time. Please feel free to contact us if you'd like information on the basic type of choreography we used for any of the songs.