

Thank you for the Music

A musical play in two acts for the Dulverton Players

Act 2

Umbrella man

-----This scene has been choreographed by Nicola-----

[Dorothy and Lilly go into the house, take off coats etc and Dorothy sits down]

Dorothy: After that weather I'm glad I can sit down in a nice dry house.

Lilly: I could have come over on my own you know.

Dorothy: Oh don't worry, it gets me out of the house and reminds me that there is a world out there.

Lilly: There certainly is. Maybe you should get out more.

Dorothy: I am going line dancing later, what more do you want?

Lilly: How about travelling to other countries?

Dorothy: Your grandfather and I used to go to other countries quite a lot a few years ago.

Lilly: Yes but a few years ago when Granddad was visiting other countries he would be bombing them.

Dorothy: Now young lady, I have had an active life, and when you get older, sometimes all you want to do is reflect on the things that you have done. After all, I can often remember those days better than where I put my keys.

Lilly: Nan, that's just an excuse not to go out in the rain.

Dorothy: Humph.

Lilly: There is more to outside than rain, after all, where there is rain you get rainbows.

[Pause, then starts "Somewhere over the rainbow", speaking first lines, then going into the song]

Dorothy: That was so beautiful, maybe I will go out tomorrow as well.

Lilly: Why don't you try singing in the rain?

Dorothy: Now there is a thought. Anyway, how are you getting on with your O Levels?

Lilly: GCSEs!

Dorothy: Humour me.

Lilly: Not too bad. I'm doing quite well in most, but French is annoying me. How often I am I going to need to say "Je suis un fille unique" when travelling around France?

Dorothy: Well keep at it. I know that you can do it if you try.

Lilly: Also, I am not doing to bad at IT.

Dorothy: I suppose someone has to mess about with those machines. What do you think you want to do when you go out in the world?

Lilly: You sound like the options adviser. There are just so many things out there that I would like to do, I don't know if I can pick any one right now. I've got plenty of time 'till I finish my GCSEs to work that out. When I get the results I will have a better idea.

Dorothy: Don't leave it too long. If you don't know what you want to do, you can't aim for it.

Lilly: I suppose.

[Door opens with Reg carrying a box]

Dorothy: Have you been rummaging in the loft again?

Reg Well, I was looking in the loft for some tools. While I was there, I found this.

[Reg opens box, Lilly looks inside]

Lilly: That gramophone looks quite old, where did you get it?

Dorothy: [*Looks in, chuckles*] It is nearly as old as I am. I still remember the day that my parents bought this. They came home with it so proudly – gramophones being quite a luxury item back then, so of course I heard the story many times when my parents were telling their friends about buying it. It was my Mother's birthday, and while I was at my ballet lesson, [*In the background memory people come on stage*] my Mother and Father in their Sunday best, went to town.

I suppose it would be unkind to say that my Father had forgotten to buy a present for Mother, but he certainly didn't say anything about getting a gramophone until he went to the shop.

Great Grand Father: Look at this dear, I don't think that I have seen a gramophone like that before. Why don't we go and have a look?

Great Grand Mother: Ok, but we don't want to miss lunch.

Shop Keeper: Good morning Sir, Madam. Is there anything that I can help you with?

Great Grand Father: Yes, we are interested in purchasing a gramophone. Which would you suggest?

Shop Keeper: Well, we have this wonderful HMV Model 102 portable in red. If you buy the matching record carrying case, we also give you a complementary record to go start you off.

Great Grand Father: I think some music around the house would be very welcome.

Great Grand Mother: [*Touching the case*] It would go with our curtains...

Clerk: Yes it is an attractive unit, isn't it? But it sounds even better. Why don't we play a record on it to see what it is like, and that can be the one you take home with you, if you decide to take it?

Great Grand Mother: For our first record, it would have to be something special.

Great Grand Father: How about 'Back to Charleston'?

Great Grand Mother: Oh yes, that is the one. Do you have it in stock?

Shop Keeper: Ah, an excellent choice, one of my favourites. I will go and look for it round the back *[Goes off]*

Great Grand Mother: *[Looking at price tag]* We are going to be living on bread and dripping for the next month to afford this.

Great Grand Father: Well yes, but we will be able to listen to your new gramophone to while away the hours.

Great Grand Mother: With our one record

Great Grand Father: Quite right

[Clerk comes back on]

Shop Keeper: Here it is. I will just put it on for you.

[Music starts]

Great Grand Father: Charleston! Charleston! everybody's doing the Charleston!

-----Charleston dance scene to music-----

[End of dance. Clerk and YG clapping – perhaps joining in?]

Clerk: Wonderful. I have a soft spot for that dance. Normally I wouldn't let a machine like this go for less than £6.00, but after a performance like that, I think that I can let you have it for £5.8s.6d

Great Grand Father: We'll take it. Happy birthday dear *[Hugs]*.

[Blackout]

Dorothy: Because it was the only record we had, it got played a lot. Of course friends came round to play their records, so it did get used more. Still, what we gained in records, we lost in tea and cake entertaining people.

Lilly: Sounds like it was fun though.

Dorothy: Yes, I suppose it was. There was much more of a sense of community in those days. We used to talk to our neighbours until the cows came home over a cuppa.

[Lilly's mobile phone goes off, she answers it]

Lilly: Hello?..... Really?..... No way! Hold on, I am at my Nan's, I'll just go outside a minute.

Dorothy: Aren't mobile phones wonderful. You can contact anyone in the world. Unfortunately, you can also be contacted *by* anyone in the world – at any time.

Reg: I think that it is nice that she has friends to talk to.

Dorothy: I suppose. Still, I remember a time when a phone was used only when the person you wanted to speak to wasn't within walking distance. Now people use their phones any time the other person isn't within shouting distance.

Reg: Well, times change. People don't use gramophones any more either. They use CDs.

Dorothy: True, gramophone needles don't stick to CDs very well though.

Reg: That is true. I'll just put this back.

[Reg picks up the gramophone box and exits]

[Pause]

Dorothy: Everyone looks to simpler times.

-----Sings "It were all green hills"-----

[Lilly enters part way through the song]

Dorothy: Don't things change? I have a good life to look back on, you have one to look forward to. *[Welling up slightly]*

Lilly: *[Hugs Dorothy]* It's ok Nan.

Dorothy: Look at me getting all teary eyed. That won't do. You just make sure that you keep up with your studies. You have a lot

more opportunities than when I was your age, just make sure that you don't waste them.

Lilly: I won't.

[Reg opens the door, but doesn't walk through]

Reg: ...And here is, Flanagan and Allen!

[Reg Enters wearing the coat]

Dorothy: Oh, what have you found now?

Reg: *[Singing]* Underneath the arches...

[When finished]

Dorothy: It was quite a while ago when I last saw that.

Lilly: What was that about?

Reg: Oh, Flanagan and Allen were singer-comedians during the wartime, they used to wear coats like this for some of their acts, I just thought that I would show you.

[Reg takes off coat and puts it down]

Dorothy: I think that is enough rummaging about for one day. Come and sit down and talk with Lilly.

Reg: Ok.

Lilly: So, Nan, what did you do when you were younger?

Dorothy: Oh I am old and past it now am I?

Lilly: No-o, I mean when you were working.

Dorothy: Well, luckily I didn't really need to work, Reg has always been very good at giving us what we needed.

Reg: I have, but you did do your fair share. In addition to keeping the home nice and tidy, I think that we wouldn't have been able to have nearly as many holidays if you hadn't have gone out to work.

Dorothy: That is true. All those places we went where you criticised the person flying the plane.

Lilly: Granddad!

Reg: I maintain that had there been a war on, those pilots would have been in trouble.

Dorothy: Well it is a good thing that the Hun was busy that day then.

Lilly: I can't imagine British Airways flying around with a couple of bombs under the wings of their planes.

Dorothy: Anyway, I have had a few jobs in my time, but the last one, the one before I retired properly was quite good. I was lead secretary in the office of Johnson, Johnson, and Davies. They even threw me a surprise leaving party.

You were there before I arrived Reg, why don't you tell Lilly the story? You tell it so well.

Reg: *[Slightly guiltily]* Er, yes, ok. Well, I was invited by them to the party.

[Lights up on stage, Young Reg comes on stage. When Reg mentions someone, they enter the stage and strike a pose which sums up their character, until there is a full tableau of the cast for the scene]

I was pleased to see that there were some friendly faces at the party. Let me see, there was one of the other secretaries, Liza Schmitt,

[Liza comes on stage, starts filing her nails, note – has a German accent]

Dorothy: She was a right one, she made so many typos, I can only imagine why she was kept on.

Reg: There was Roger Davies, one of the directors of the company,

[Roger, a dapper gentleman comes on stage with a bowler hat and a rolled up umbrella, strikes a pose]

Dorothy: He was a proper gentleman. Always very correct, and I made double sure all his papers were set out ready for him at the start of the day.

Reg: Bill Walters from accounts.

[Bill comes on stage, a bespectacled accountant]

Dorothy: What a dear. He was always working very hard when I saw him.

Reg: and there was Gareth Jenkins, one of the legal beagles.

[Gareth comes on, a smooth solicitor, not one to rock the boat. When all people have gone into their poses, they get together as a conversational group]

Dorothy: I didn't see much of him when I worked in the company, but I must have made an impression on him since he came to my leaving party.

Roger: Thank you all for coming to this surprise party to celebrate the retirement of Dorothy. It is always a sad occasion when one of our best employees leaves the firm.

Liza: I agree, still, she has been looking forward to being able to relax.

Roger: And she has certainly earned it.

Young Reg: Thank you for putting this surprise party on for her. She will be here in a few minutes.

Roger: Oh good, I am glad that we will have time to have a little chat before she arrives. As for the party, it is the least that the company can do.

Gareth: She will be a hard one to replace, we had better start the search soon, otherwise all of the good candidates will be taken.

Bill: Liza, I hope that you will work to the same high standard that Dorothy has set.

Roger: I am sure that she will be fine.

Liza: Thank you Mr Davies.

Gareth: Reg, you must be a very lucky man to be married to a woman like Dorothy.

Young Reg: Well, what can I say, she really is a special lady. Not only kind hearted, dependable, but also very witty.

Bill: And may I say very attractive too.

Roger: No offence Liza, but she has certainly brightened up the secretarial area.

Liza: No offence taken Mr Davies. Her advice on fashion and hair-care has certainly improved my looks.

[Lilly giggles slightly]

Dorothy: *[Butting in – people on stage frozen in mid memory]* Are you sure that part is what really happened?

Reg: Well, I may have embellished it a little bit.

Dorothy: What happened next?

Reg: Then we started talking about your plans for the future.

[Unfreeze]

Gareth: Reg, what will a capable lady like Dorothy be doing with herself in retirement?

Young Reg: Don't you worry about that, I am sure that she will keep busy.

Liza: She has her wonderful dancing to keep her occupied.

Roger: And looking after you no doubt.

Young Reg: Well Dorothy is retiring early, and I'm not quite retired yet, maybe in a few more years.

Gareth: Hey look, here she is. *[Pointing off stage]*

All: SURPRISE!

[All freeze on stage]

Reg: Well, that is how I remember it.

[Blackout on stage, all exit]

Lilly: Wow, they must have really liked you at that place.

Dorothy: Well, if you work hard, and keep things orderly, the people will respect that. That is a lesson for your working life that you should learn well.

Lilly: Ok Grandma.

Dorothy: Now, do you fancy some tea?

Reg: That would be lovely.

Lilly: Yes please.

[Dorothy goes out to fix the tea, Reg watches her go, then conspiratorially to Lilly]

Reg: Do you want to know what really happened?

Lilly: What do you mean?

Reg: Well, your grandmother was very capable in her day, but when computers started taking over, some people found it hard to adjust, and it made things a bit difficult.

Lilly: I knew that she was a bit old fashioned, but I didn't know that was why she left work.

Reg: Well, it was quite a shock to some people to give up their typewriters. Even so, she still helps out with the books for the local cricket club. They don't mind if their notes are handwritten or typed.

[Lights up as before, the cast on stage take the positions as when they were talking]

Roger: Thank you all for coming to this surprise party to celebrate the retirement of Dorothy. It is always a sad occasion when one of our best employees leaves the firm.

Gareth: Sorry, could you remind me who we are here for?

Bill: Dorothy Cotterel. She is the lead secretary in the secretary pool.

Liza: Not any more I am afraid.

Roger: Didn't you know we were here for Dorothy?

Gareth: Not really, I am just here for the free drinks.

Young Reg: Yes, thank you for putting this on for us Roger.

Roger: Not a problem.

Young Reg: I am glad that she had something to celebrate her retirement. What was she like at work?

Liza: She was one of the better secretaries, but it is a shame that Dorothy wasn't able to keep up with the technology. When we had the first training, she asked the lecturer whether she had to feed the mouse.

Bill: In any case, we had better start the search for a new person, otherwise all of the good candidates will be taken.

Roger: Indeed. Liza, now Dorothy is going, and we still need someone to do the work, with your computer qualifications it looks like you are in line for a promotion.

Liza: Thank you Mr Davies.

Bill: I have to say that even before the computer came along, she was a bit of a nitpicker, and a little difficult to work with.

Young Reg: Well, under her nit-picking, she has a kind heart, and quick wit which keeps me on my toes.

Liza: Mein Gott. She used to shoot people down with her one-liners at even the smallest mistakes.

Young Reg: *[Trying to be witty]* Whereas in my day my gunners would shoot German fighters if they made the smallest mistake.

[Awkward pause]

Young Reg: Er, of course the Brits and the Germans are all friends now, eh Liza?

Liza: Indeed.

Gareth: So, how will you both put up with the boredom of retirement?

Young Reg: Well, I am not actually going to retire for a couple of years, I am still working at the garage, but I am sure that we will manage.

Liza: Dorothy was always going on about her dancing, no doubt she will carry on with that.

Roger: And looking after you no doubt.

Young Reg: I hope so, I do like a tidy home.

Gareth: Hey look, here she is. *[Pointing off stage]*

All: SURPRISE!

[All freeze on stage]

Reg: And that is more or less how it was.

[Blackout on stage. All exit]

Lilly: So, Grandma left because she couldn't use a computer? Couldn't she have learned how?

Reg: Well you are lucky to have grown up with them. If you haven't, then it is like asking someone who has used a calculator all their lives to start using a slide rule and logarithmic tables.

Lilly: What are those?

Reg: Exactly. Now, not a word to your Nan, I have only ever told her the first version.

Lilly: Ok.

[Dorothy enters with tea tray, puts tray down on the table]

Dorothy: Here we are.

[Dorothy puts cup down for Reg]

Milk, two sugars for you.

Reg: Thanks love.

Dorothy: *[Puts cup down for Lilly]* Black, one sugar for you.

Lilly: Thank you.

[Dorothy puts her own cup down]

Reg: Black, fourteen sugars and a lump of yak butter for you.

Dorothy: That's right dear, except for the yak butter, twelve sugars, and I take milk with mine.

[Pause: they drink]

Well Lilly, I expect your mother will be here soon.

[Knock at door]

Dorothy: That'll be her.

Reg: I'll get it.

Lilly: How did you know that she was coming right now?

Dorothy: *[Chuckle]* I saw her coming up the garden path.

[Reg gets door, Jackie comes holding a largish bag / box]

Jackie: Hello Dad, how are you?

[Jackie hugs Reg]

Reg: Oh, not too bad.

Jackie: Hello Mum.

[Jackie hugs Dorothy]

Dorothy: Hello love. Have you had a good day?

Jackie: Oh yes, not bad.

Dorothy: Is Clive not with you making the place look untidy?

Jackie: No Mum, he decided to spare you that pleasure. Has Lilly been ok?

GM: Of course, she has been a pleasure. Listened to us ramble on for hours.

Jackie: Oh good. Lilly, I have a surprise for you. *[Opens bag / box to reveal a laptop]* Here you go.

Lilly: Oh wow! Thanks, Mum.

[Hugs Jackie, then sets up laptop on an available surface]

Jackie: Its all ready to go and comes with a mobile broadband connection.

Dorothy: Really? That is interesting. Does it make tea?

Lilly: Nan! There are so many other things that you can use computers for; watching videos, listening to music, chatting with friends...

Jackie: ...Doing your homework.

Lilly: Yeah, that as well.

Jackie: Young lady, if I think that you are spending too much time on other things with that laptop, then it will just disappear.

Lilly: Ok, Mum.

Dorothy: Computers are certainly a lot different now than when they first came in. Then they were just machines which spewed nonsense at you. What kind of music can you get on it?

Lilly: Pretty much anything. There are loads of people on the Internet who have put up music and videos that anyone can watch. For free. Name a song, and I will see if I can find it.

Dorothy: Ok *[Thinks]*, how about "What a Wonderful World"

[Lilly clicks about on the laptop for a bit]

Lilly: Ok, here is a good one. It not only has the song, but there is some guy doing shadow puppets with it as well.

Reg: That sounds interesting.

Lilly: Here it is.

[Film plays on the screen, cast looking as if they are looking at the laptop]

Dorothy: There certainly are some talented people around isn't there?

Reg: How about something funny next?

Lilly: Oh there are millions of funny videos around. How about one with cats? There are loads of them.

[Lilly clicks about on the laptop for a bit]

Reg: Oh yes, cats are quite funny. Did you hear about the cat who drank 5 bowls of water? He set a new lap record.

If lights run on electricity and cars run on petrol, what do cats run on? Their paws.

Lilly: What is this? Death by bad cat joke? Come on, I have found a good video.

Jackie: Oh well done. Lets see how the professionals do it.

[Video of various cat antics being played and displayed on the screen, all on stage reacting to them as if they are being played on the laptop]

Dorothy: Oh that is much more entertaining than homework.

Lilly: I know. The whole world at my fingertips.

Jackie: Don't encourage her.

Lilly: I don't need encouragement.

Dorothy: Come on. One last one.

Jackie: You sound like you are the teenager.

Dorothy: Well I can't work the blasted things, so once it is gone, I might not be able to have another concert in my living room.

Jackie: Ok. Actually, watching these videos reminds me of the time when music videos started taking over on the television. Wasn't there a song about that?

Lilly: Video killed the radio star?

Reg: That sounds like a good one.

Lilly: I'm on it!

[Clip of Video killed the radio star sowing on screen]

Jackie: I wonder whether someone will do another one called 'Internet killed the video star'.

Lilly: Maybe you could write one and put it online. They will let anyone make videos now.

Jackie: Maybe I will leave that up to you. Come on. Get you things together, we are going to have to go soon.

[Lilly starts getting coat / bags etc together]

Mum, are you all ready for that line dancing class you were talking about?

Dorothy: Well both my legs still work, and my head is still on my shoulders, so I think I will be fine.

Jackie: Ok Mum.

Reg: How are things with you?

Jackie: Oh the usual war on housework continues. Also, work has decided to send me on another course which will give me yet more letters after my name. Soon I'll have more letters next to my name than in it.

Dorothy: Well done. How is Clive? Is he still sticking his nose in other people's businesses?

Jackie: Oh he is fine, beavering away to help make a happy healthy lifestyle for us all. Anyway, come on young lady lets go home.

Lilly: *[Hugs Dorothy]* Thanks Grandma, thanks Granddad.

Dorothy: You are welcome.

Reg: Let's see you out.

[All Exit. Lights go down, then up to show passage of time]

[Phone rings, Dorothy enters]

Dorothy: *[Posh voice]* Hello, can I help you?

[Voice off, Line dancing tutor] – Oh Dorothy! It is only me here, just to remind you that we have our little line dancing rendezvous in half an hour.

Dorothy: It is ok; I'm not senile enough to have forgotten that.

Off: Great! I will see you there then.

Dorothy: Only if you are looking.

Off: Alright then, come along and we will get those old bones moving. Bye for now!

Dorothy *[Puts phone down]* Forget line dancing, I'll have some of what she is having; I wouldn't have any problems keeping moving then. Busybody.

Reg, I am just going out to walk along a line and tread on other people's toes. I should be back in a couple of hours.

Reg: *[Off]* Ok, see you later.

[Dorothy exits, lights go off in the living room]

[Lights up on main stage, music starts, line dancers go into their sequence. After about 30 seconds, Dorothy enters]

[In darkness, Reg enters living room and sits down with glass]

[Ben enters step behind or so]

Jean: Just join the girls and we will do that again.

[Ben Looks Confused]

Dorothy: *[Over the music]* Is this the line dancing group?

Jean: Yes Dorothy. Everyone, this is Dorothy.

All: Hello Dorothy. Nice hat, (introductions)

Line dancer 1: I'm Lucy

Line dancer 2: Don't worry about her; you will get to know all about her.

Jean: Ok, we are going to start with this easy one the Charleston just follow if you can.

Dorothy: Is there a beginners part of the line, or shall I just start unravelling one end?

So if its the Charleston step that's double heel tap and left half turn.

Then repeat see simple.

Lucy: Don't watch me I don't know what I'm doing

[General confusion and bumbling about]

Ben: which way am I turning?

Line dancer: is it time for a cup of tea?

Jean: Well, that was quite good for a first attempt. Don't worry we will try that one again later. Let's have a break and then we will do Lucy's favourite: California breeze, with lots of tingles!

All: Ooooh.

[General chit chat, and off]

[Blackout – end scene]

[GM comes in from line dancing. Grandfather in sitting room in dressing gown, with a decanter of brandy.]

Reg: How was that love?

Dorothy: Oh, what a shambles. I think I need to go regularly to sort them out.

Reg: Oh that is shame.

Dorothy: No, they're a really good bunch.

Reg: Oh, I am glad. Sounds like it has been a nice way to end the day.

Dorothy: Absolutely. It's been quite a musical day hasn't it? What have you been up to?

[Dorothy Takes off coat and hat]

Reg: Oh, just watching the Discovery Channel with a small tippie.

Dorothy: Looks a bit more than that.

Reg: Well the first glass got a bit lonely. Would you like one dear?

Dorothy: Ok, I could use a nightcap.

[GF Pours another glass]

Reg: *[Raises glass]* Good elf

Dorothy: Good health

[Both drink]

Dorothy: To family.

Reg: To family.

[Both drink]

Reg: Absent friends

[Both drink]

Dorothy: To the love of my life

Reg: I love you too

[Both drink, pause, hug]

We met at Gill's

 Twas on the bus

We were a group

 There was just us

Oh yes - I can see it all now

We walked through town

 No – by the sea

I sang you songs

 No that was me

Oh yes – I can see it all now

That sizzling hot sun

 It was rather cool

 And we shared a bun

Oh dear I'm such a fool

 It makes me smile

 To hear you say

 That you recall

 That special day

Oh yes - I can see it all now

I often remember our wedding day

And how we were plastered that night

And I wonder if ever you try to replay

The luck we had getting it all right!

That hotel room

At Auntie Ruth's?

We had such fun

Ain't that the truth

Oh yes – I can see it all now

Your dress was silver-grey

My suit was pretty rose

Have I lost my way?

Oh no! – they're only clothes

How smart you were

A joy to see

And how you meant

So much to me...

Oh yes! – I can see it all now

[Hugs]

Dorothy: Time for bed then

Reg: Yes, lights out.

Dorothy: It hasn't been a bad life so far has it? I wonder what tomorrow will bring.

[Both exit, GF turns lights out]

[Off]

Dorothy: *[Sensuously]* Oh Reg!

[First few bars of the song "Thank you for the music" - finale]

[All singing, but Dorothy has the first words of the song. Dorothy comes on wearing a nightie (Over other clothes probably)]