

THE KIBBO KIFT

A ROCK SHOW

MUSIC

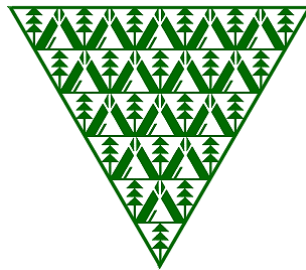
By

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LYRICS

By

JUDGE SMITH



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THE COMPANY

THE BAND

A five-piece amplified band; they play:-

Piano (not Electric Piano)

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

Saxophone

Drums

At least two of the Band are required to sing; the principal singer being identified in the text as THE BAND LEADER.

THE CAST

Ten (or more) singers are required.

Two of these are involved throughout in the roles of:

THE NARRATOR - (A mature man)

THE YOUNG MAN - (Aging from 12 to 24 in the course of the action)

The remainder form a CHORUS - (Kinsmen, K.K. Children, Hunger Marchers, Followers, etc.) and also take the numerous remaining parts.

The CHORUS should perhaps be principally male, including two of more mature years, but three women are definitely required; (two girls and one older woman).

COSTUMES

THE ORIGINAL KIBBO KIFT 'HABIT' - (DESIGNATED COSTUME 1 IN TEXT)

MEN -

Saxon jerkin and hood, Shorts (long, but not baggy, with coloured braiding down the sides), long woolen socks and stout shoes for older men, bare feet for the rest; platted leather belt with sheath knives and decorated wooden staff.

WOMEN -

Simple one-piece dress to the knee; sometimes a leather Robin Hood style hat; thick stockings and sensible shoes for the older, bare feet for the rest; belt, knife and staff like the men.

On occasion, both men and women wear long, woolen, hooded cloaks. Colours throughout are numerous natural greens.

THE 'NEW HABIT' CC 1931 - 1932 (DESIGNATED COSTUME 2 IN TEXT)

MEN -

A formalized, tailored, military version of the above, plus white webbing belts, knitted stocking caps with insignia, thick white socks, and shoes.

WOMEN -

Similar tunic and cap to the men, plus calf length skirt, with stockings and shoes. Colour is a standardized dark green throughout.

THE GREEN SHIRT UNIFORM - (DESIGNATED COSTUME 3 IN TEXT)

MEN -

The 'Green Shirt' (a high-necked tunic with pockets and epaulets) worn tucked inside non-uniform, baggy, '30s, dark, belted trousers; plus green berets with insignia.

WOMEN -

Similar green tunic to the men, green beret, plus dark skirt.

THE BAND

Coloured band jackets with black lapels and cuffs, dress trousers, wing collars and black tie; (short haircuts).

THE SET

The set is Art Deco, with Dance-Band-style, solid music stands for the Band its only furniture.

At the rear of the stage there is a large screen for slide projection,

No. 1: OVERTURE

The BAND Enter and take their seats.

Lights Up on the BAND as they play THE OVERTURE

No. 2: 'FATHER, DEAR. FATHER'

Enter the NARRATOR and the YOUNG MAN. The NARRATOR is informally dressed. The YOUNG MAN is wearing the uniform of 'The Love Commando' - white boiler suit tucked into combat boots, armband and badges with the Love Commando symbol - a large red heart.

YOUNG MAN

Father, dear Father, I'm going away
I'm going to join the Love Commando
It's all been fixed and I leave on Saturday
I'm sorry to
Spring this on you
But you know what the movement means to me
To set people free!
I wish you could...

See the things we do
'Cause we believe like you
In finding out for one's
Self. Why didn't you come
To one of our meetings then
Who knows you might understand?

(The NARRATOR makes as if to protest.)

Father, dear Father, no you don't understand
'Cause you've not met Jill, our Leader
If you'd heard her voice, or she'd touched you by the hand
Then you'd know how
I feel now,
The Love Commando's so good to be in
We're going to win
Can't wait to begin...

I'll soon be right there
In H. Q. I might see
Jill herself every day.
Will you believe me if
I say that we're all quite
Sure that she will save the world.

(The NARRATOR takes his arm.)

Yes, of course I have five minutes
No, I'm not in a hurry
But, please don't try to dissuade me
Even though I know you worry 'bout me.

No. 3: 'TUNBRIDGE WELLS'

During the first verse, the YOUNG MAN Exits unobtrusively, and the NARRATOR moves to a station at the side of the stage where he remains.

YOUNG MAN:

I was born in the market town of Tunbridge Wells
In 1914, in the first days of the war.

(NARRATOR and MOTHER enter in 1920s middle-class dress, and stand side by side as they are described.)

Father was a dentist but he left to join the infantry,
Then he came home when I was four.
This world's so different from the one we used to know
But it comes back so clear from sixty years ago.
As long as you've known me I've lived a quiet life,
But I've felt just like you, you know.

I was raised in a quite progressive atmosphere
Being in the war had changed my Dad's beliefs and dreams.
He had been a Scout Master but now he was a pacifist
And Mum wrote poems in magazines.
They both had modern views on sex, religion and war
I thought the other name for God was Bernard Shaw.
You can laugh but compared to all my friends
I was a fortunate child I'm sure.

(YOUNG MAN Enters, in 1920s schoolboy outfit, but wearing a large Scout hat.)

I always wanted adventure and I asked if I could join the Boy Scouts.
A lot of my friends were in the local troop when I was twelve or thereabouts

(NARRATOR mimes refusal. YOUNG MAN removes hat.)

But Dad said he wouldn't have a son of his in a gang of Imperialist louts.
Then he said he was sorry, and he said he'd explain,
But he looked so sad that I didn't think I'd ask again.

Now some months later he came home from his surgery,
Said...

(The tableau comes alive as NARRATOR begins to sing. Lights Down on YOUNG MAN.)

NARRATOR:

I met an old scout friend, he says there's been a rift.
Lots of scouts have broken away led by a full commissioner
And started something called the Kibbo Kift.
It seems the thing for us, and not just you and me,
They'll take your mother too, that's if she will agree.
They've got a group here and I said we'd go along,
Next Saturday at half-past three.

No. 4: 'AN EMPTY CLEARING'

A Kibbo Kift totem pole is set or flown in. Slide up of woodland glade. The Family are somewhat apprehensive.

NARRATOR:

An empty clearing in the wood behind the station;
A fire burning and a sort of post stuck in the ground,
All carved with signs and symbols, and a tom-tom's loudly beating
As four, green, hooded figures enter marching to the sound.

(Four Kibbo Kift KINSMEN [Costume 1] enter, and act as described.)

MOTHER:

They all wear shorts and strange, green, decorated jerkins;
With faces stern and serious, half-hidden by their hoods.
Laying down their ashen staves, they sit cross legged before us,
And all is silent save the measured drumming in the woods.

YOUNG MAN:

Yes, one of them is Mister Dangerfield from the Library,

(MOTHER points him out to NARRATOR.)

And yet he does not recognize us; that seems very rum.
The tom-tom beats a wild tattoo, and, leaping from the bushes,
Some thirty green clad figures rush out, chanting as they come.

(Remainder of CHORUS enter [Costume 1]. The seated four rise and all sing.)

CHORUS:

We are the Ashdown Foresters
We are the Ashdown Tribe
Hika we la ha, Hika wa ho!
We are of the Wealdthing, We are of the Wealdthing,
We are of the Wealdthing,
The woodmen of the Weald
Hika we la ha, Hika wa ho
We are the Woodcraft Kindred
The Kibbo Kift Kindred
Huh! Huh! How-ooo!'

NARRATOR:

Then men and women, boys and girls all raised their right arms,
And gave what we today would call a fascist-style salute,

(CHORUS give the Kibbo Kift salute. Slide up of K.K. troop saluting.)

Mister Dangerfield stood up and said...

BATWING

My name is Batwing.
As Tribal Chief I bid you strangers welcome to our moot.

CONT:

(Other Slides up of K.K. groups saluting.)

CHORUS:

We are the Ashdown Foresters
 We are the Ashdown Tribe
 Hika we la ha, Hika wa ho!
 We are of the Wealdthing, We are of the Wealdthing,
 We are of the Wealdthing,
 The woodmen of the Weald
 Hika we la ha, Hika wa ho
 We are the Woodcraft Kindred
 The Kibbo Kift Kindred
 Huh! Huh! How-ooo!'

CHORUS sit cross legged and indicate that the Family are to do likewise. BATWING adopts declamatory stance, hand on hip. Slide up of K.K. woodland meeting with declaiming speaker.

No. 5: 'TO LIVE IN CIVILIZATION'

BATWING:

To live in civilization
 Produces such degradation,
 But if we camp in the woods with the wind in our face,
 We could found a new and better race.

You see the habit we're wearing,
 Our tribe's allegiance declaring.
 Why should we all look like men who are chained to a desk?
 So our clothes are gay and picturesque.

Our rituals are intended
 To call up ages long ended,
 For savage tribes held the secret we now can release
 To start a Golden Age of Global Peace.

If our ways sound to your liking.
 If you like camping and hiking.
 If you could swear to be true to the Laws of the Wood,
 Join this Caste of Health and Hardyhood.

All Exit except YOUNG MAN.

No. 6: 'AND SO WE JOINED'

Slide up of K.K. family group.

YOUNG MAN:

And so we joined the Kibbo Kift
Mum, Dad and me
Sounded good,
Sounded fun.

(MOTHER enters with his costume which he eagerly starts to try on.)

Mum made our costumes very soon
We all agreed,
They looked good,
It was fun.

BOTH Exit.

No. 7: 'THE BAND SONG'

Lights Up on the Band. Slides Up of '20s photographs illustrating the song throughout.

THE BAND LEADER:

Nineteen twenty-five,
The band survived
From the War's ten million dead.
But when would appear those
Homes fit for heroes
Like they said; still,
No-one feels glum,
A New Age begun,
Let's all have some fun.
So here we go, full steam ahead . . .

. . . In cloche hats
Bobbed hair, white spats;
And though there's some trouble down the mine,
The Band don't complain;
We're sniffing cocaine
In Charleston time.
And who could dislike
The General Strike
Which seemed much more like
A Charlie Chaplin pantomime.

Lights Down on the Band.

No. 8: 'THE CHILDRENS SONG'

YOUNG MAN Enters in Costume 1.

YOUNG MAN:

So each weekend, and each day after school,
I was a Kinsman.
I made a lot of new friends, and I wanted to be
A real Eppingthingsman.

(Waves and beckons off-stage.)

For us kids there were so many things that we had to learn
To be a real Kinsman.
I liked best studying nature, Dad said I was a real...
Wings and claws and fins man.

(The younger members of the CHORUS enter as K.K. KIDS.)

A KIBBO KIFT GIRL:

They're bringing us up, they say,
The natural way,
Today we're learning the names of trees.

ALL:

They're bringing us up, they say,
The natural way,
Today we're learning the names of trees.

K K GIRL:

We go camping out on our own,
A long way from home,
Alone, and going the way we please.

ALL:

We go camping out on our own,
A long way from home,
Alone, and going the way we please.

(Short dance interlude.)

YOUNG MAN:

I learnt camp-craft, and how to live in the wild,
Trained to be a Kinsman.
Made things of birch-bark, and I made a bow and arrows as well,
Like a real red Indian.

(Red Indian-war-whoops all round.)

K K GIRL:

We go tramping for mile on mile,
In Indian file,
And smile, whatever the weather is.

CONT:

ALL:

We go tramping for mile on mile,
In Indian File,
And smile, whatever the weather is.

K K GIRL:

Other children can laugh or stare,
Or give themselves airs,
Who cares, we want to be savages.

ALL

Other children can laugh or stare,
Or give themselves airs,
Who cares, we want to be savages.

All Exit.

No. 9: 'THE SUMMER OF '26' (to the tune of 'Tunbridge Wells')

Lights Up on NARRATOR's station.

NARRATOR:

That's how it was, that Summer, back in '26
The world a ripping playground, and life a topping game.
Nonetheless I had to work hard, just the same as Mum and Dad,
To pass the tests and win my woodcraft name.

(Slides up of K.K. totem poles, initiation ceremonies etc.)

We all made totem poles that made a fine display;
Then there was meditation, five minutes a day.
At last in solemn conclave round the council fire,
My real name was burned away.

I'd won the name of Eagle Wing, and we all put out the flags,
And Mum's new name was 'Takoma', and 'Buffalo' was 'Dad's',
But could we change the modern world of Jazz and Oxford Bags?.....

(Lights up on BAND for short Charleston instrumental break.)

We learnt more of the man, John Hargrave, who we called 'White Fox',
The founder and the Headman of the Kibbo Kift.

(Slide Up of Hargrave in Headman's costume.)

He'd been a top man in the Scouts, but he'd become unpopular
Because he said the idea'd gone adrift.
He talked too much about world peace and unity,
And worse, the man was Pantheist Instead of C of E !
So leaving them to march and drill and play God Save the King
He founded our Fraternity.

Lights down on NARRATOR.

No. 10: 'FIVE-FOUR'

The FAMILY enter (Costume 1), each with a large rucksack.

MOTHER:

And every Whitsun .
There would be a weekend
Tribes pack their kits and...
... Send all those they can send.
Dad said we could attend.

And the name of this great....
... Gathering was the Althing

ALL:

Going to the Althing
Going to the Althing

(CHORUS begin to enter.)

MOTHER:

We're off to Berkshire
On the Southern Railway.
The tribe is all here
We're all off till Tuesday.
We'll have fun, they all say.

And the Headman will be....
... There too, at the Althing

ALL:

Going to the Althing
Going to the Althing

(Slides up of K.K. tents being pitched. CHORUS bustle about as described.)

YOUNG MAN & NARRATOR:

There's about three hundred Kinsmen there,
Gaily coloured tents are everywhere.
All around are people meeting,
Giving the traditional greeting,
There's a great excitement in the air.

(CHORUS mime the actions described.)

MOTHER:

Dusk ceremonial starts the proceedings,
The fire is lighted with mystical chants.
And then, with the Gleemaster's violin leading,
The Iceni Tribe do their Festival Dance.

(Instrumental break. The 'Festival Dance' is performed by the CHORUS.)

CONT:

(Slide up of K K play. CHORUS act as audience.)

Later a symbolic drama is acted,
Chock full of allegory, music and masks.
The stars come like moths that our fires have attracted,

NARRATOR:

And then there is cocoa, What more could one ask?

(Slide up of Kifters exercising in loin-cloths. CHORUS do physical jerks.)

YOUNG MAN & NARRATOR:

In the morning we all greet the sun.
A daily dozen's done by everyone,
Then there's lots of exhibitions;
I went in for competitions,
Didn't win although I tried like fun.

MOTHER:

Then drums are pounding;
Crowds of people; they're all. .
... Gathering and surrounding
Timber Wolf the Herald
Gorgeously appareled...

(The HERALD, a Kinsman wearing an impressive medieval style tabard, enters. CHORUS start to gather around him.)

He is calling us all
To the Headman's Pow-wow,

ALL:

Going to the Pow-wow,
Going to the Pow-wow.

No. 11: 'HARKEN, KINDRED OF THE MARK'

All sit, ready to be addressed.

HERALD:

Hearken, Kindred of the Mark'.
Lest we forget the Sacred Fire...
It's the central symbol of the Great Totem,
So Feed the Flame!

(Slide up of the K.K. symbol ['The Great Totem'] which the HERALD indicates.)

Let the beacon of the Council Fire be seen far and wide,
And the light of the Torch, the Torch of Forever!
Let it shine in the hearts of a soul-freed youth,
As the symbol of the man who leads the way... The Outlaw, White Fox.

(Slide up of Hargrave.)

White Fox.... Spark and Flame and Fire!
The Torch of Forever!
Kindred of the Mark! Join with me in a mighty greeting
Now then, now then, all together.

(All rise and salute.)

ALL:

Huh! . . . How! . . . Huh'.
Hough-wah!
Huh! . . . How! . . . Huh!
Hough- wah!

No. 12: 'THE LEADER SONG'

Slide up of Hargrave (close-up). All turn to face it, looking up. Lights up on NARRATOR's station.

NARRATOR:

And as the echoes rang from that wild chorus,
Silence fell instantly as he stood before us.

He started quietly, speaking with clarity,
Filling his words with a quiet intensity.
Telling his plans as if speaking to each of us,
Making the future spread brightly in front of us.
That's when I realized what we were doing there.
It all made sense at last, now it was very clear.

I don't remember exactly what he said,
But I recall clearly the pounding in my head.

We were the power and we were the glory,
And we'd know the ending 'cause we wrote the story.
I knew that I looked on the face of a leader.
With him to believe in, with me as believer.
I wanted to be like him, wanted to work with him,
Wanted to give something he would think worth giving.

Soon we'd return to the suburbs, towns and cities,
Carrying his words and the memory of those campfire ditties.

Lights Down on NARRATOR.

No. 13: 'THE KIBBO KIFT SONG'

All gather as if around a campfire, and perform simple hand gestures during the first three lines of each verse (as in 'Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree')

Lines 4, 5 & 6 of each verse are sung by different individuals from the CHORUS.

ALL:

Sing all together, boys, as Empires fade and fall,
Our brotherhood will soon be greater than them all.
We won't wave their flags or heed the bugles' call.
 Old Baden-Powell's become a bore...
 We work for peace; he plays at war...
 But we're not Boy Scouts any more...
We're in the Kibbo Kift!

Sing all together, boys, a song for all Mankind.
We're international; our borders undefined.
We want no politicians; they're stupid and they're blind,
 But Revolution's not the way...
 The old Red Flag has had its day...
 We welcome Spring on the first of May...
'Cause we're the Kibbo Kift!

Sing all together, boys, the Universal Creed.
Worldwide religion, boys, from superstition freed.
Three cheers for White Fox! We'll follow where you lead.
 The Great Spirit must be obeyed...
 But we won't go to Church Parade...
 'Cause we're not in the Boys Brigade...
We're in the Kibbo Kift!

Lights dim. All Exit except the YOUNG MAN and IRENE, a young K K girl, who sit in front of an imaginary campfire.

No. 14: 'THE CAMPFIRE GLOW'

YOUNG MAN:

Sitting that night in the campfire glow,
I saw a face that I wanted to know.
Went and said 'How!' and then 'How do you do',
My name is Eagle Wing. Please, who are you?'

Her name was Firefly, we both were just thirteen,
And she was the nicest thing I'd ever seen.

IRENE:

We talked for an hour of the weekend's events,
Till both of our mums called us back to the tents.
We were together the rest of our stay,
Too soon it was time to go each our own way.

He gave me his sheath-knife, and then I gave him mine.
Love's never as sweet as it is the first time.

YOUNG MAN:

She came from Maidstone with the Icení Tribe.
From home that was just an hour's bicycle ride.

IRENE:

Our folks didn't mind us being friends, 'cause the Kin
Had up-to-date views about that sort of thing.

YOUNG MAN:

Her father was a tribal chief of senior rank...

IRENE:

And also Head Clerk at the Maidstone Lloyd's Bank.

YOUNG MAN:

Irene was my girlfriend for almost two years
Of kisses and quarrels, of hopes and of fears,

BOTH:

We grew up together, half a century ago,
And following White Fox was a good way to grow.

Both Exit.

No. 15: 'SOCIAL CREDIT'

Lights up on the NARRATOR's station.

NARRATOR:

Time went by and all around, the Jazz Age had its day
And school seemed like a waste of time that just got in the way
The Kinsmen taught you useful things, the things that I did best,
Like art and anthropology and how a bird builds nests.

(Enter CHORUS discussing various books and pamphlets.)

Then one day Batwing got the word
Straight from the Headman, so I've heard,
About a subject we should study along with all the rest.

(Slide up of book, 'Economic Democracy' by Major C H Douglas.)

ALL:

Social Credit, Social Credit,

NARRATOR:

No-one knew what it was, but we soon would.

ALL:

Social Credit, Social Credit.

NARRATOR:

When Hargrave's keen on things, it means they're something good.

(Lights down on NARRATOR. Slide down.)

YOUNG MAN:

The grown-ups all soon got the books and study camps began.
It seemed that Social Credit was quite hard to understand.

(MOTHER and NARRATOR are looking puzzled by the literature.)

From Mum and Dad I gathered it was something of a trial;
Political Economy just wasn't quite our style.
It seemed some Scottish Engineer
Had found out what makes goods so dear
When all the shops are filled to bursting. I thought it sounded quite worthwhile.

ALL:

Social Credit, Social Credit.

YOUNG MAN:

Says Science could easily provide enough for all.

ALL:

Social Credit, Social Credit.

YOUNG MAN:

It's just the Money System that nails us to the wall.

CONT:

(A KINSMAN and four of the CHORUS as backing singers perform this in Rock 'n' Roll style.)

A KINSMAN:

There should always be just enough money
To buy everything that's for sale,
But they keep it short, so you have to chase it
Like a cat trying to catch its tail.
Now some of the Tribe really liked this stuff
But others found it very strange,

ALL:

But everything must change,
Everything must change.

NARRATOR:

We didn't really have to toe the Social Credit line
'Till the National Assembly, April 1929;
And though the family couldn't go, we soon heard how it went,
From now on Social Credit had to be our prime intent.

(A dissenter among the CHORUS is sent packing, and Exits.)

And anyone who did not approve
Could pack his tent and make a move,
'Cause this was too important to allow individual dissent.

ALL:

Social Credit, Social Credit.

NARRATOR:

Some Kinsmen weren't best pleased and made a lot of fuss.

ALL:

Social Credit, Social Credit,

NARRATOR:

Might be all very well, but what's it to do with us ?

(The Rock 'n' Roll vocal group as above.)

A KINSMAN:

White Fox explained that you don't go camping
If you don't get enough to eat .
And no-one's going to join the Kibbo Kift
While they're trying to make ends meet.
To build a civilization it's first things first,
Economics is first in line.

ALL:

(They gotta have) cash and spare time,
(Everybody needs) cash and spare time.
Social Credit, Social Credit,

CONT:

YOUNG MAN:

Then the next Saturday, Irene came to our door.

ALL:

Social Credit, Social Credit,

YOUNG MAN:

She said she'd come to say goodbye; she couldn't see me anymore.

All Exit except YOUNG MAN. IRENE enters in '20s schoolgirl outfit.

No. 16: 'SAYING GOODBYE'

YOUNG MAN (& IRENE):

Saying goodbye. She stood there
Saying goodbye. How could there,
Why should there,
Be anything wrong?
Saying goodbye. I saw the
Tear in her eye. I knew then
It's true then,
So, I must be strong.

IRENE:

I said my father had been told
To leave the Kin or lose his job.
'Cause Social Credit said that gold was worthless,
And the Banks had a license to rob

YOUNG MAN (& IRENE):

Saying goodbye. That's when she
Started to cry. I hold her,
Then I told her
All would come right.
Saying goodbye. I couldn't
Understand why, destroy a young boy and
Girl's dreams over night.

IRENE

I said I'd almost had to swear
That I'd not speak to him again.
Things might be different in a year, of course,
And of course we'd write each week 'till then.

YOUNG MAN (& IRENE):

Saying goodbye. We both knew
That was a lie, a wild dream,
But it seemed
Still the best thing to say.
Saying goodbye. I knew now
Just how much I would miss her.
I kissed her
Then turned away.

Both Exit.

No. 17: 'ONLY FIFTEEN'

Lights up on NARRATOR's station.

NARRATOR:

What do you do when you're only fifteen?
I've always found it hard enough to make a scene
So, I just did nothing. I suppose she did the same
And I still feel strange each time I hear that name.

I went out with other girls after a spell.
I really don't remember them so very well,
What's one hand more or less, on a nervous school-girl knee,
When you're helping change the course of History?

I s'pose a year or two went by,
I started doing well at school, though God alone knows why.
Ma said...

(Lights up on MOTHER [in ordinary '30s costume]).

MOTHER:

If you can understand
Those Social Credit books, young man,
Then you can pass examinations too.

(Lights down on MOTHER. She Exits.)

NARRATOR:

And that was true.

But the gales of change were beginning to blow.
The Saxon-style costume was the first to go
To be replaced by something that caused many to resign,
A military-style uniform, of strange design.

(YOUNG MAN Enters in Costume 2. Slides up of new style Kibbo Kifters in military formation.)

YOUNG MAN:

You wouldn't recognize us any more
The mystic clan of hikers of some years before,
For those who still remained, were a dedicated crew
And the snappy outfits made us look it too.

I wasn't thought a child anymore
I taught the younger kids woodcraft and nature lore.
But I felt strangely ill at ease
In uniform among the trees.
I hope White Fox knows what he's about.
We'd soon find out.

CONT:

With most of these changes Dad didn't agree.
I know now they both stayed in principally for me.
They wanted to go camping and were never going to warm
To uniforms and monetary reform.

With Ashdown's fair forest and emerald sward,
To tell the truth I started getting rather bored.
The thought of University seemed very good to me;
Adventure, fun, and then an Arts Degree.

YOUNG MAN Exits.

No. 18: 'THE BAND SONG' – REPRISE

Lights Up on the Band. Slides Up of '30s photographs illustrating the song throughout.

THE BAND LEADER:

Nineteen thirty-two
And there's a queue
For the dole a mile long.
The band keep on earning
Because we've learned Swing
We get along.
But many despair.
Their heroes are airmen
Flying up there
When down here we must carry on . . .

. . . In wide lapels
Slouch hats as well;
And when they close the factory
Sing 'Now is the hour'
As Herr Hitler takes power
In Germany.
To the movies they throng
We all see 'King Kong'
And learn all the songs
From 'Gold-diggers of '33'.

Lights Down on the Band.

No. 19: 'WE'RE THE GREEN SHIRTS'

Enter YOUNG MAN.

YOUNG MAN:

1932 there came a summons
Something big I knew was in the air
We were all to gather for an Al-thing
Every loyal Kinsman must be there.

(Enter MOTHER & NARRATOR [now in Costume 2])

I got Mum and Dad both to come, and off we went to Berkshire.

(Enter two other Kinsmen [Costume 2]. They salute and shake hands with MOTHER & NARRATOR.)

We met quite a lot of old chums, but
What are those strange people doing here?

(Lights up on remainder of CHORUS, a sinister group in Costume 3. Slides up of Green Shirts in formation.)

CHORUS

We're the Green Shirts
We're the Green Shirts etc.

FIRST KINSMAN:

Someone said they come from Wolverhampton
From a sort of League of Unemployed.

SECOND KINSMAN:

You can see they've never been out camping.

FIRST KINSMAN:

Yes, I'll bet the Campswarden's annoyed.

MOTHER:

I'm sure they're the salt of the earth, but they're not Kinsmen are they?

SECOND KINSMAN:

They're a shade uncouth for what it's worth.

NARRATOR:

Yes, they're not our sort of chap at all.

CHORUS:

We're the Green Shirts
We're the Green Shirts etc.

(GREEN SHIRT SPOKESMAN [with Midlands accent] steps forward.)

CONT:

GREEN SHIRT:

We're here as a fraternal deputation
 At the Head Man's personal invitation.
 You're Social Creditors like us,
 But we do things and you only discuss.
 We're demonstrating in the street
 You're busy being an elite.

(The KIBBO KIFTERS turn and appeal to their Leader.)

THE KIBBO KIFTERS:

Tell us that's not true, Headman
 Tell us what to do.
 Tell us that's not true, Headman
 Tell us what to do.

*(Lights din. Slide up of Hargrave as his theme ('The Leader Song') is played.
 The KINSMEN raise their arms in supplication and sing a wordless accompaniment.)*

(Hargrave's theme ends. Slide down. Lights up.)

FIRST KINSMAN:

No, I can't believe he really means it.
 Must be going funny in the head.

SECOND KINSMAN:

Says we won't be called the Kibbo Kift now,
 Got to all become Green Shirts instead.

FIRST KINSMAN:

Can't wear our shorts anymore...

SECOND KINSMAN:

Must all do propaganda
 As a sort of military corps...

FIRST KINSMAN:

I dunno 'bout you, I'm going home!

(The two groups face each other and sing in opposition.)

ALL:

We're the Green Shirts / We're the Kibbo Kift
 We're the Green Shirts / We're the Kibbo Kift.

All exit (K.K. one way, Green Shirts the other) except YOUNG MAN. Lights down.

No. 20: 'HOW MANY THERE'

Lights up on NARRATOR's station.

NARRATOR:

How many there thought just the same?
Half a hundred tents would not be seen there again.
And what of the rest? How did they feel?
Suddenly their purpose now was so much more real.

(Lights up on YOUNG MAN.)

NARRATOR & YOUNG MAN:

But they'd always find
There would come to mind
Sad regrets for all those things they had to leave behind.

NARRATOR:

What could I say to Ma and Pa?
I knew that for them this would be going too far.
They told me sadly that they'd be leaving,
But I didn't say that now I knew all I could do was just follow my star.

YOUNG MAN:

Suddenly I know. Suddenly I'm sure.
I feel like I did the first time, five years before.
Hearing you speak, I feel freed.
Nothing's going to stop me following on where you lead.

NARRATOR & YOUNG MAN:

There's so much to do.
We're so very few.
Still we'll be poor stuff unless we try and see it through.

YOUNG MAN and NARRATOR Exit. Lights up on BAND who play the first tune of the Overture.

END OF FIRST HALF

No. 21: 'FATHER, DEAR FATHER' – REPRISE

YOUNG MAN and NARRATOR Enter. YOUNG MAN wears Costume 3. NARRATOR wears ordinary '30s clothes. They duplicate the movements of the Young Man & the Narrator in the first song of the show.

YOUNG MAN:

Father, dear Father, I'm going away
I'm going to London with the Green Shirts.
It's all been fixed; I signed up on Saturday.
I'm sorry to
Spring this on you
But you know what the Movement means to me ...
To set people free.
What's more you agree...

With what we're trying to do.
It's hard for you to see,
But I'm afraid it's true
That we've got to have
Discipline, uniforms,
If we're really going to win.

Father, dear Father, I hope we're still friends
I'll need your help telling Mother.
I'll be all right; I can stay at Uncle Len's.
He told me
That his factory
At Battersea will take me as a clerk.
It all sounds a lark.
Well, make some remark!

It's not that bad,
I know what you wanted, Dad;
Me to Matriculate
Well, that will have to wait.
What's a degree, when the
Country's future is at stake?

Yes, I heard the Tribe's disbanding.
Yes, of course I'll come back often.
Thanks for being understanding,
What I mean is
Thanks for everything else.

NARRATOR Exits.

No. 22: 'FIVE FOUR' – REPRISE

Slides up of London cc 1932.

YOUNG MAN:

Go up to London
On the Southern Railway.
Been quite a lot, but
Only just for one day.
Now I'll be there to stay.

Wear a suit by day,
By night I'll wear the Green Shirt

(Slide up of Green Shirts on parade.)

YOUNG MAN & THE BAND

Going to be a Green Shirt
Going to be a Green Shirt

(Slide down.)

YOUNG MAN:

Uncle Len was really very kind;
Work of any sort was hard to find.
Still I thought the job he found me,
Like the other clerks around me,
Boring as the school I'd left behind.

Neither of them really understood,
But they didn't mind at all so that was good.
Auntie said the Green Shirt movement
Was a definite improvement,
'Cause we didn't dress like Robin Hood.

And after work
Aunt May would cook my tea, then
I'd go and change
'Cause soon I had to be at
H. Q. High Street, Battersea.

(Slide up of more Green Shirts parading.)

In my Green beret
Parading with the Green Shirts

YOUNG MAN & THE BAND:

Going to be a Green Shirt
Going to be a Green Shirt

(Slides up of Green Shirt H. Q. activity.)

That was really quite a place
So much to do so little space
So much to do so little time
It sounds ridiculous, but was sublime.

No. 23: 'MISS BEDFORD'

Enter CHORUS (Costume 3), rushing about carrying piles of pamphlets, placards, chairs etc. A GREEN SHIRT OFFICER with a swagger stick is directing operations.

GREEN SHIRT OFFICER:

There's work for me
 There's work for you
 There's always fifty urgent things to do.
 Off on patrol
 Out on the street
 And try and talk to everyone you meet.

(CHORUS form ranks and mark time.)

ALL:

Pull together boys!
 Makes you feel good.
 Nothing can stop us, that's quite understood
 It's only a matter of time.

(CHORUS come to attention. YOUNG MAN comes forward from the line.)

YOUNG MAN:

Time they say tends to fly when you have fun
 And often I didn't get home before one.
 Working to realize the dream we all shared
 And no one got paid and nobody cared.

If this seems 'pi' or naive, I can spare you a tear
 Cause you've never believed in a Big New Idea.

Many's the friend I made in our Patrol
 Businessmen, Tradespeople, Blokes on the dole.
 None of them knew that I yearned for the moon,
 Miss Bedford, the flower of the Women's Platoon.

(MISS BEDFORD marches one pace forward from the ranks.)

Radiant in uniform, she reigned like a queen
 Over the Cyclostyle printing machine.

I volunteered for a printing room post
 Because we would work so delightfully close
 For she was an officer and quite twenty-three
 And I called her Sir, when we were on duty.

(Lights up on NARRATOR's station. CHORUS take partners and break into a waltz. YOUNG MAN & MISS BEDFORD mime their romance as described.)

NARRATOR:

I got my chance sooner than I had expected;
 Our fund-raising Dance held at Brixton Town Hall.
 Her eyes shone like stars in the lights that reflected
 On high, from the rotating, bright, mirror ball.

CONT:

I asked her to dance quite convinced she'd refuse me,
 But no; so I prayed hard and made my attack.
 We danced, and then after the 'Ladies Excuse-me'
 I kissed her, and what do you know, she kissed back!

(All quickly move back into military formation and are inspected by the OFFICER.)

GREEN SHIRT OFFICER:

Out on patrol
 You lend a hand
 You've got to try and make them understand,
 They must be told
 All day and night
 That we're the only ones can put things right.

(Marking time as before.)

ALL:

Pull together boys!
 Makes you feel good.
 Nothing can stop us, that's quite understood.
 It's only a matter of work.

(They continue to mark time, now out of time with the music, turn and march off as YOUNG MAN steps forward.)

YOUNG MAN:

Working and loving, Miss Bedford and me
 I could have been happy indefinitely,
 Cause I could make two things I'd thought out of reach
 That's love to a woman, and a reasonable speech.

No. 24: 'AND SO WE JOINED' – REPRISE

Slide Up of Green Shirt women at 10 Downing Street.

YOUNG MAN:

She ran the Propaganda
Secretariat.
She was good
They all said.

(Slide down.)

I had to learn to speak
In public very soon.
I was good
They all said.

No. 25: 'THEY BOTH FOUGHT US'

This song could be sung by the YOUNG MAN, or another GREEN SHIRT.

A portable rostrum with the slogan 'Destroy The Money Power' painted on the front is brought on. The SPEAKER mounts the rostrum while two Green Shirts unfurl a long banner, 'Social Credit Is Coming'. The CHORUS, as Green Shirts protecting their Speaker, indicate, in movement and mime, the dangerous situation. Slides up of Blackshirts and members of the Red Front.

GREEN SHIRT SPEAKER:

We held street corner meetings everywhere,
And Mosley's Blackshirt bully boys were always there.
They pushed blokes around, scared them off if they could,
If things were going a bit too good.
The policemen smiled and just stood by.
I wonder why.

The Communists were just as bad,
'Cause we got more support than they had ever had.
And you run when the Reds and the Blackshirts meet.
There were riots up in Cable Street
And when fighting each other got tedious,
They both fought us.

Rostrum and Banner remain.

No. 26: 'THE HUNGER MARCHERS' (to the tune of 'An Empty Clearing')

MISS BEDFORD:

They cut the dole again and things were looking nasty
Three million unemployed had had as much as they would stand.

(Slides up of the Hunger Marchers.)

The Hunger Marchers were converging on the city,
And mounted police in blue detachments cantered down the Strand.
At Marble Arch a hundred Green Shirt boys were stationed
The Corps of Drums and fluttering banners made a splendid show.

(Slides up of Green Shirt Drum Corps.)

And as we waited, selling broadsheets to the crowds there,
We heard the marchers in the distance, coming up the Edgware Road.

(Slide up of sea of faces. CHORUS Enter as Hunger Marchers [in threadbare jackets or overcoats, mufflers, flat caps.]

CHORUS:

We are the People, speaking at last.
Have you seen us before?
We are your future, we are your past.
We are the Hungry, we are the Hungry, we are the Hungry,
we are the Poor,
We made you rich, and we won your war.
We are the silent millions
But now we say 'No More!'

MISS BEDFORD:

They came in sight; the drummers drummed, and we saluted.

(YOUNG MAN Enters. YOUNG MAN & MISS BEDFORD salute. [NB. Not the 'Sieg Heil' salute, dropped earlier when they became the Green Shirts.]

And one of them called out...

A HUNGER MARCHER:

Let's give the boys in green a cheer!

(CHORUS Cheers.)

MISS BEDFORD:

As Section Leader there I gave a speech of welcome.
And then announced a young Green Shirt would speak...

YOUNG MAN:

And I felt sick with fear.

(YOUNG MAN slowly mounts the rostrum.)

CONT:

CHORUS:

We are the People, speaking at last.
Have you seen us before?
We are your future, we are your past.
We are the Hungry, we are the Hungry, we are the Hungry,
we are the Poor,
We made you rich, and we won your war.
We are the silent millions
But now we say 'No More!'

No. 27: 'HECKLING SONG'

YOUNG MAN:

You all face near destitution.
Demanding work's no solution.
It's not just work, 'cause a job's just a means to an end.
What you want's a wage packet to spend.

This is a land of milk and honey;
The only shortage is money.
When we're in power, the first thing we will do is install
A weekly National Dividend for all.

(One of the HUNGER MARCHERS steps forward, revealing a red armband. A BLACKSHIRT FASCIST Enters [in black tunic, jackboots, peaked cap.]

COMMUNIST:

You people are just Fascists in a different coloured shirt!
To simply give the People cash will keep them in the dirt.
They've got to rise in anger, like Marx and Lenin say.
Proletarian dictatorship is still the only way.

(COMMUNIST gives clenched fist salute. CHORUS turn towards each speaker in turn. Slides change to show crowd looking one way, then another.)

FASCIST:

We know that you're all Socialists; we knew that from the start,
But you won't fool the English just by looking clean and smart.
The Blackshirt time is coming. Our great leader's day is near
And when it does, take my advice, you'd better not be here!

YOUNG MAN:

The boss seems rich and secure,
But he's as powerless as you are.
You're both controlled by the will of the Banks, nothing more.
I tell you it's the Banks that keep you poor!

The Bankers power must be ended;
Their crazy system suspended.
You have the right to demand,
job or no job, your pay;
And Social Credit is the only way.

COMMUNIST:

You say you'll kick the Bankers out, but things will stay the same,
'Cause every single Capitalist is equally to blame.
And dozens of good Socialists join you lot every day.
You'll wreck the Cause you bastards, if you keep on this way!

FASCIST:

You want to change the Banking System; well that's no bloody use!
I s'pose you hadn't noticed that the Banks are run by Jews.
There's a Zionist conspiracy to crush the British race.
You pansy fellow-travelers can't see beyond your face!

CONT:

CHORUS Exits, and during the instrumental section that follows, the YOUNG MAN climbs down from the rostrum to where MISS BEDFORD is waiting. MISS BEDFORD gives the COMMUNIST a pamphlet which he immediately tears up. She is about to begin an argument when the YOUNG MAN takes her arm and leads her away. As they start to exit, however, their way is blocked by the BLACKSHIRT, who, as they step aside, moves to block their way again. The YOUNG MAN squares up to the BLACKSHIRT, and a fight is about to begin when MISS BEDFORD kicks the BLACKSHIRT on the shin, grabs the YOUNG MAN, hauls him away and the two Exit rapidly. The COMMUNIST finds the incident very amusing, much to the annoyance of the BLACKSHIRT, who pursues him, limping, off the other side of stage.

No. 28: 'NO BLOODY FEAR'

A GREEN SHIRT CHEER LEADER harangues the audience as the YOUNG MAN and the ladies of the CHORUS move through the auditorium handing or throwing out Green Shirt leaflets explaining the Social Credit idea.

SID (A GREEN SHIRT CHEER LEADER) :

Let me ask you all a question
Would a maggot starve
Because the apple was too big?

CHORUS:

No Bloody Fear!
No Bloody Fear!
No Bloody Fear!

SID:

Tighten your belts, we're told No thanks!
We will not starve to please the banks.
Whelm on me, Ye Resurrected Men!

CHORUS:

Wake now the Dead!
Wake now the Dead!
Wake now the Dead!

SID:

No more talk!
No more delay!
'Cause we demand

CHORUS:

The People's pay!
The People's pay!
The People's pay!

YOUNG MAN and the WOMEN climb back on stage. The WOMEN exchange salutes with the CHEER LEADER and Exit.

No. 29: 'THE STREET FIGHTING SONG'

YOUNG MAN:

Just a few weeks later we were on patrol;
That's Sid Barraclough and me.

(He indicates CHEER LEADER.)

We'd been selling papers and were heading home,
When what should we see....

(Lights up on a BLACKSHIRT facing off stage. The two GREEN SHIRTS move towards him. He looks at them apprehensively and Exits.)

But a Blackshirt spouting to a crowd of a dozen,
And we thought we deserved a laugh;
So we all piped up with some awkward questions,
And made him look daft.

Well the crowd broke up and the Nazi skidaddled;
The matter slipped from our mind,
'Til ten minutes later, a lorry load jumped us,
From behind.

(The remainder of the male CHORUS enter as BLACKSHIRTS. They surround the GREEN SHIRTS and start to close in. Some carry truncheons.)

It was three to one, and they were all big bleeders,
We were really in a nasty spot,
But we stood back to back, and tried to give back
As good as we got.

(Instrumental passage during which the fight breaks out as described. YOUNG MAN knocks out one BLACKSHIRT.)

Well we couldn't have held out a moment longer;
We were literally saved by the bell.

BLACKSHIRT:

Watch out, it's the police!...

YOUNG MAN:

And the Blackshirt lorry
Took out like a bat out of Hell.

(BLACKSHIRTS Exit rapidly.)

One stayed behind, out cold on the pavement,
But there wasn't much we could do.
We couldn't be there when the police car came,
So we beat it too.

SID starts to run off but YOUNG MAN lingers with the unconscious BLACKSHIRT. SID drags him off.

No. 30: 'HOW MANY THERE' – REPRISE

Lights up on NARRATOR's station.

NARRATOR:

Running like mad; feel half dead
Must have got a rather nasty thump on the head.
Dark alleys ring to the sound of our feet
When did I decide that I would fight in the street?

(Lights up on YOUNG MAN.)

NARRATOR & YOUNG MAN:

And I'd always find
There would come to mind
The memory of that Fascist boy who we'd left behind.

(YOUNG MAN begins to 'run' towards the audience.)

NARRATOR:

All the way back, I saw his face
Back to H. Q. by the side streets, just in case . . .

And strange ideas kept reoccurring,
And I seemed to see how easily
It could be me there lying in his place.

He was my age, 'bout twenty-two.
S'pose he must believe that Fascist bilge is all true
Works for his cause, late every night
Just the same as me, except he's wrong and we're right.

(Stops to consider this.)

NARRATOR & YOUNG MAN:

But I'd always find
There would come to mind
Sad regrets for all those things I had to leave behind.

YOUNG MAN Exits.

No. 31: 'NO MORE GREEN SHIRTS' (to the tune of 'We're The Green Shirts')

Lights up on two GOVERNMENT MINISTERS and a JUNIOR OFFICIAL, (the MINISTERS in swallow-tail coats and top-hats; the OFFICIAL in black jacket and striped trousers.)

NARRATOR:

Well, at last the government got the message
British Nazis weren't a good idea . . .

JUNIOR OFFICIAL:

This report, sir, seems to be conclusive.

FIRST MINISTER:

Yes indeed, they must be banned, it's clear.

SECOND MINISTER:

Wish we could ban the Green Shirts too.

FIRST MINISTER:

But they're too law abiding.

SECOND MINISTER:

Yes, and a sodding nuisance...

FIRST MINISTER:

True...

JUNIOR OFFICIAL:

I know, sir, let's ban all uniforms.
No more Green Shirts.

FIRST MINISTER:

No more Blackshirts

(They grow more and more delighted at the prospect.)

ALL:

No more Brownshirts
No more Redshirts

FIRST MINISTER:

All except the Sally Army

JUNIOR OFFICIAL & SECOND MINISTER:

And the Boy Scouts, too.

(They give the Boy Scout salute.)

(The CHORUS, including the YOUNG MAN, enter, all wearing ordinary '30s clothes with the addition of green armbands, and looking very dejected. One of them addresses the audience.)

CONT:

GREEN SHIRT

Political uniforms were made unlawful
And the legislation hit us something awful.
Yes, '37 was a dreadful year
Our mass support began to disappear,
And to each meeting fewer and fewer came
In mufti we would never be the same.

CHORUS:

Tell us that's not true, Headman
Tell us what to do.
Tell us that's not true, Headman
Tell us what to do.

They turn and appeal to their Leader. Slide Up of Hargrave in civilian dress. Lights dim.

No. 32: 'THE LEADER SONG' – REPRISE

Lights up on NARRATOR's station.

NARRATOR:

Then once again he was standing there before us.
Everyone hoped he would cheer and reassure us.
He spoke defiantly; we listened avidly.
Feelings of tension replacing our apathy.
Though they had tried to destroy our identity
Nothing could alter our manifest destiny.
We would fight back with guerilla activity
Make ourselves known for outrageous publicity.

But I didn't feel the way I wanted to
I just felt weary and dull and angry too.
He called for sacrifice, hard self-denial.
We have to succeed and without it we'd fail;
And all I could think of was 'what am I doing here?'
What have we done that changed anything anywhere?
All of our toil and tears would be useless.
The job is too big; to attempt it is madness.
The world is too fixed in financial insanity.
We'll never break the great power monopolies.
Why should he feel so strong, so full of fire and fight?
I wanted all that, but all I felt was defeat.

I cheered like mad but I felt like some observer
His was the right road, I knew, but I could go no further.

Lights Down on NARRATOR. Slide Down. All Exit except YOUNG MAN and MISS BEDFORD.

No. 33: 'SAYING GOODBYE' – REPRISE

During the song he removes his armband and gives it to her.

YOUNG MAN (&MISS BEDFORD)

Saying goodbye, we stood there
Saying goodbye. Why should there
How could there
be much more to say.

Saying goodbye. You see,
Miss Bedford and I were parting
And broken-hearting
In the appropriate way.

MISS BEDFORD:

Of course we'd been just friends now for some time.
In fact I wore another's ring.
A girl of my age has to think, you know,
About the future, and that sort of thing.

YOUNG MAN (& MISS BEDFORD)

Saying goodbye; she said she
Understood why I couldn't stay
And shouldn't blame
Myself at all.

Saying goodbye, Could I see
Scorn in her eye as I kissed her?
Said I'd miss her,
And walked off, about two foot tall.

She Exits.

No. 34: 'AND SO WE JOINED' - REPRISE

YOUNG MAN:

And so I left the Kibbo Kift
The first time I'd
Felt alone
And unsure.

(Slides up of Chamberlain with Hitler.)

I joined the Navy, pretty soon...
The Munich crisis
Had shown
There'd be war.

YOUNG MAN Exits.

No. 35: 'THE KIBBO KIFT SONG' – REPRISE

CHORUS enter, in civilian dress and without armbands.

CHORUS:

Sing altogether boys, We're off to fight a war
 Just like our fathers, five and twenty years before.
 Our Daddies fought the Kaiser; our Grandpas fought the Boer.
 Since how far back we'll never know,
 'Bout every twenty years or so
 They call us up and off we go
 It must be for the best.

Sing altogether boys, for Empire, God and King.
 We've been bad at living but we'll die like anything.
 It's funny how the war has got things going with a swing.
 The factory gates are open wide,
 And everyone's at work inside
 And wages going up besides
 It must be for the best.

CHORUS Exits.

No. 36: 'THE CONCLUSION SONG'

YOUNG MAN Enters, back in his Love Commando costume. The NARRATOR leaves his station and moves onto the stage.

NARRATOR:

Well there you are, I've had my say.
It's not supposed to make a difference
'Cause I can see
You're just like me.
Yes it's hard to swallow
But we're both born to follow.

We see so clear the way things must change
But we can't lead, so we seek leaders.
We are many and they are few
We need them, but they need us too.
What's a Captain without a Crew?
It's true, and it's strange.

The two are crippled on their own
Each incomplete without the other.
The plans we've had
Might be sane or mad.
But working and waiting
Is better than spectating.

And when you feel you've done your duty
Your son will find his own messiah.
And if Mankind ever do
Get to where they are headed to
Their arrival will all be due
To you, and him, and me.

No. 37: 'FINALE'

The CHORUS slowly file on stage. They each wear a uniform identifying them as A NAZI, A MAOIST, A HARI KRISHNA, A JESUIT PRIEST, A GREEN SHIRT, A SALVATION ARMY person, A RABBI, A PLO fighter, An IRA man etc., etc. They turn to the audience.

CHORUS:

Since the dawn of time,
Us Followers
Have stayed in line.

We've always sung our song
Loud and strong,
Right or wrong.

(Three of the CHORUS step forward one at a time to speak these lines over the music.)

FIRST FOLLOWER:

No one seems to know the words
Of History's silly song.

SECOND FOLLOWER:

You dance to it for ever
Yet you seldom sing along.

THIRD FOLLOWER:

We'll never hear the chorus
For our lives will end too soon.

NARRATOR:

But though we can't recall the words
We try to sing the tune.

ALL:

La . . . la la la.
La la la
La la la

La . . . la la la.
La la la
La la la

THE END