



THE
**JUNGLE
BOOK**

by Jessica Swale

music by Joe Stilgoe

from the stories by Rudyard Kipling

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by

Jessica Swale

lyrics by

Jessica Swale and Joe Stilgoe

music by

Joe Stilgoe

based on the stories by

Rudyard Kipling



NICK HERN BOOKS

London

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Introduction

This is a story about adventure. About spirit and courage. About friendship and belonging. About asking big questions and searching for answers... and why sometimes that can be a very difficult journey to negotiate.

The Jungle Book is, in one sense, one small person's quest to work out who they are – whether they fit in, when they're different from everyone else, and how to make their way in a world where they feel like an outsider.

Yet, it is also a big story – the tale of a tribe, a great, big extended family, who must learn to love and respect each of their members as individuals if they are to survive as a community. That is why I was compelled to write this adaptation. Because *The Jungle Book* offers us a chance to think about the nature of inclusivity and diversity, and to celebrate it, in all its forms.

On a personal note, one of the reasons I jumped at the opportunity to adapt this book was because I believe in joyful storytelling, in sharing tales that allow us to laugh and, in this case, to delight in the kaleidoscope of creatures Kipling populated his jungle with. My dad was very ill when I was offered the commission, and at that time I remember he decided distinctly that he no longer wanted to watch anything bleak – he only wanted to watch life-affirming stories. I decided then that I wanted to make work that my dad would enjoy. Sadly, he never got to see this show, but the experience of walking that road with him made me appreciate the capacity of storytelling to bring joy and light into people's lives, and so ever since I've made it my mission to make work that is heart-filled and hopeful. That

doesn't mean avoiding difficult themes – quite the opposite. *The Jungle Book* is full of challenging ideas, but it is its comic bones that allow us to delve into those darker moments, and still to find a brightness and optimism in the message. At a time when issues of acceptance, immigration and community are at the heart of our daily dialogues, I think it's more important than ever to bring those conversations onto our stages, and to make sure we celebrate what a wonderfully diverse community we live in.

This version of *The Jungle Book* holds the importance of inclusivity in its heart. It is a show about kindness and acceptance. About celebrating the differences between the people of a community, in order to create a society that is multicoloured, multifaceted and multicultural. What's not to love?

I hope you enjoy reading and performing it as much as we have.

With best wishes from the jungle –

Jessica Swale
2019

A Note on Casting Actors...

Fans of the original *Jungle Book* stories will notice that I have switched the gender of several characters, most notably Akela, Bagheera, Kaa and (depending on your choice) Mowgli. This was because, in the original book, there seemed to be very few females in the jungle. This was a reflection of the norms of the society Kipling was writing in, in which women tended to be occasionally seen and rarely heard at all. No more! So I hope you enjoy the greater diversity of this jungle. Do, however, feel free to cast whoever you like in any part. Whilst they are, for the most part, gendered, I believe that an actor can play anyone, any sex, any animal, so do as you please. In our original production Mowgli was played by a young woman, which I loved – but again, over to you.

...and Puppets

In terms of how to stage the animals, in our original production we used a mixture of costumes and puppetry to capture the animal nature of the characters. Most lead characters were played by actors with hints of the animals' personalities in their outfits – rather than our attempting to make them appear as animals – ears, tails and all. Baloo, for example, was dressed as a down-and-out bar-propper-upper-cum-scarecrow. Bagheera was a slick chic mover and shaker. Shere Khan wouldn't have looked out of place in an eighties punk band.

Other characters, who were defined by their movement and pack mentality, were given accessories to change the shape of their bodies and help them capture a different way of

moving. The wolves walked on two legs but had dressed crutches in their hands to suggest their other two limbs, which they worked with in a dance-like way in order to capture a sense of group physicality.

For some characters, we used more traditional elements of puppetry. Birds, for example, were puppets on ropes and sticks. Kaa was played by an actor with four other actors manipulating her enormous body (constructed from a giant corrugated tube, rather like a slinky, courtesy of genius designer Peter McKintosh).

So as you can see, we picked and chose how to create animals depending on character. I am sure there are multiple ways of staging this production, so the more inventive you choose to be, the better. Enjoy!

J.S.

This stage adaptation of *The Jungle Book* was first performed at Royal & Derngate, Northampton, on 28 November 2017, before touring the UK. The cast was as follows:

KAA/GREY/MUSICIAN	Rachel Dawson
PERCUSSIONIST	Diogo Gomes
SHERE	Lloyd Gorman
KHAN/MISHTI/MUSICIAN	
HIRAN/MUGGER/MUSICIAN	T J Holmes
SAMAR/CHIL/DEER	Ruri James
RAKSHA/SNICKER	Avita Jay
MOWGLI	Keziah Joseph
LEELA/TWITSTER	Chipo Kureya
BALOO/MUSICIAN	Dyfrig Morris
BAGHEERA	Deborah Oyelade
AKELA/LARKER	Tripti Tripuraneni
<i>Director</i>	Max Webster
<i>Set and Costume Designer</i>	Peter McKintosh
<i>Orchestrator and Musical Supervisor</i>	Paul Herbert
<i>Choreographer</i>	Lizzi Gee
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Charles Balfour
<i>Sound Designer</i>	Tom Marshall
<i>Puppetry Director and Designer</i>	Nick Barnes
<i>Fight Director</i>	Kate Waters
<i>Associate Director</i>	Neil Bull
<i>Associate Choreographer</i>	Iona Holland
<i>Casting Director</i>	Anji Carroll CDG
<i>Costume Supervisor</i>	Mary Charlton
<i>Company Stage Manager</i>	Matthew Hales
<i>Deputy Stage Manager</i>	Cat Pewsey

*Technical Assistant Stage
Manager*

Geoff Fields

*Assistant Stage
Manager/Book Cover*

Ruth McCague

Head of Wardrobe

Timi Baer

Sound No. 1

Ian Penrose

Sound No. 2

Harry Regan

Production Electrician

Stephen Andrews

Production Carpenter

Martin Riley

A Royal & Derngate, Northampton, Children's Touring
Partnership and Fiery Angel co-production