THE MUSICAL
TELLING THE STORY OF PLASTIC ON OUR PLANET

By Helen Graham

SCRIPT
PLASTIC FANTASTIC?
THE MUSICAL

Words and Music
by Helen Graham - copyright 2018

Musical arrangement
by Rob Harrison

Characters:
Leo Bakelite
An audience of Edwardian gentlemen
1920s singers and dancers
Tupperware Ladies
1960s Band
Rock and Roll Dancers
The Plastic Queen and her Assistants
Children
Boyan Slat
Litter Pickers/Protestors
PLASTIC FANTASTIC?
THE MUSICAL

**Songs ACT ONE:**
Let’s Call It Bakelite!
Plastic Fantastic

**Songs ACT TWO:**
Good Job We’ve Got Plastic!
Plastic World
A Hundred Years of Plastic

**Songs ACT THREE:**
No More!
The Ocean Clean Up
Chain Reaction
PLASTIC FANTASTIC? the musical

ACT ONE – The First Plastic On The Planet

SIGN: 1909 Washington DC

LIGHTS UP

There is a small raised area of staging centre stage back throughout the performance. An audience of men (can be girls dressed as men) gather on stage and talk animatedly to each other as they wait for the speaker.

VOICE: “Introducing to the world the well known millionaire, inventor of Velox photographic paper, with his latest innovation – Mr Leo - Hendrik - Baekeland!!!!”

The crowd cheers and claps, Leo who enters and mounts the stage, bows modestly and waves. The audience is quiet and listens to him.

LEO: “Thank you, thank you, thank you, you’re too kind!! Hhm Hhm – following several years of research based on the work of those who have gone before me, I have finally been awarded a patent for my latest innovation, which I discovered two years ago

Music begins . . .

Song One: “Let’s Call It Bakelite” (03:20)

LEO:

I find myself upon this stage addressing you today

It seems that I am lost for words and don’t know what to say!

A man of modest character, I’m hoping you’ll agree
My latest innovation should be named . . . After . . . Me!!

*Music pauses*


LEO: “No no no . . .

*Music continues . . .*

(Chorus) Let’s call it Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)

Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)

Material to make a thousand things

Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)

Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)

This is where the brave new world begins!

I’d like to introduce to you this substance in my hand

The very first material entirely made by man!

It’s cheap to make, inflammable and versatile you’ll see

I hope it will become a very useful thing indeed

(Chorus) Let’s call it Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)

Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)

Material to make a thousand things
Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)
Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)
This is where the brave new world begins!

For seven years I wrestled with this volatile compound
It fizzed and popped and multiplied and spread itself around
But when I set the temperature, and pressure was just so
The chain reaction settled down and Bingo! Hey Presto!

(Chorus) Let's call it Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)
Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)
Material to make a thousand things
Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)
Bakelite (Audience: Bakelite)
This is where the brave new world begins!

It's smooth and soft and shiny and creates a seamless form
The lines you can design are flowing, and it feels quite warm;
You'll find that nothing can dissolve it, make it rot away
This Bakelite that I've invented will be here to stay!

Chorus x 2
Leo leaves to clapping, his audience leave

LIGHTS DOWN

SIGN: 1914 -18 The Great War

Background sound track of war throughout this scene. Flashing lights representing bombing

LIGHTS UP

Two figures enter front stage left – a limping soldier and a nurse (can be two nurses) helping him – lights on them War sound track and lighting effects continue

SOLDIER: It seems as though the whole world has gone mad- there’s so much fighting everywhere and so many lives have been lost – it makes no sense to me.

NURSE: It’s not for us normal folk to understand the meaning of such a thing, we just have to be brave and cope the best we can.

SOLDIER: And now we have all these new fangled inventions like telephones and aeroplanes, I suppose it means we can fight each other even better!

NURSE: Now then, don’t get yourself upset, the Bakelite telephone is actually a very useful thing for calling the doctor in an emergency, so you should be grateful for some of these new inventions. Now then, let’s get you comfortable.

They exit front stage right, sound track fades.

LIGHTS DOWN

SIGN: The Post War 1920s

LIGHTS UP
Background music – next song playing quietly

There is a room full of people dressed 1920s style milling around and chatting

Song to full volume – dancers start to do a few Charleston moves informally

**NIGHTCLUB SINGER** - dapper gentleman or glamorous lady - with two or three girl backing singers enter back stage right They step up onto the mini stage. The soloist sings and talks through the song with the backing singers singing the ‘boobedooobedoo’s beside them

**Song Two: Plastic Fantastic (02:40)**

Chorus:

Plastic plastic, so fantastic

It’s the latest trend **(Boo bedoo bedoo doo)**

Innovation, every nation,

It will never end! **(Boo bedoo bedoo doo)**

A thousand different things that can be

Made from this great stuff

The world we’ve known is changing

Oh we just can’t get enough!

A Plastic Revolution’s coming

Nothing is the same
A box has now been opened
Bearing old Pandora’s name!

Chorus: Plastic plastic, so fantastic
It’s the latest trend (Boo bedoo bedoo doo)
Innovation, every nation,
It will never end! (Boo bedoo bedoo doo)

Charleston Dance Sequence (00:40)

Chorus: Plastic plastic, so fantastic
It’s the latest trend (Boo bedoo bedoo doo)
Innovation, every nation,
It will never end! (Boo bedoo bedoo doo)

An air raid siren starts up at the end of the song – the performers and the flappers run off in a panic all directions

LIGHTS DOWN

Sound effects of war continue, flashing lights and darkness

SIGN: The Second World War 1939 – 1945
ACT TWO – The Growth Of The Plastics Industry

LIGHTS UP

Sign: The Post War Era - 1950s – 60s

(The band quietly set up on the mini stage during this short scene)

Enter stage left 2 girls dressed in 1960s mini dresses carrying a stack of Tupperware boxes each. They come to the front of the stage, centre, put down their boxes and have a chat.

GIRL ONE: Look at these lovely plastic boxes!

GIRL TWO: Yes, it’s called Tupperware!

GIRL ONE: See how the lids fit so well!

GIRL TWO: Let’s have a Tupperware Party!

GIRL ONE: Yes – we can have fun with our friends and make some money too!

BOTH: LOOKS LIKE THE FUTURE IS PLASTIC!!!

Girls exit stage left

Music begins – intro to next song

The band is on the small stage with guitars, keyboard and horns and begin to mime to music – LEAD SINGER holds mic and shimmies along to the beat

Enter stage from both sides boys and girls in 1960s black and white clothes, very excited – girls looking at the band, pointing, squealing with delight etc. (echo of Beatlemania)
Song Three: “Good Job We’ve got Plastic!” (02:10)

Good job we’ve got plastic! Things are looking up!
Good job we've got plastic! Gonna have enough
It’s bright and cool - strong and smooth
It can make anything - We want it too
Hey!

Good job we've got plastic! We can have fun!
Good job we've got plastic! Stuff for everyone!
Telephones and radios, furniture and even clothes
Hey!

Jiving/Rock and Roll/Twist dance sequence (00:40) – everyone or just one couple with others watching and moving with the beat – clapping them at the end of the dance

Good job we’ve got plastic! We can have a ball!
Good job we’ve got plastic! We can have it all!
We could do anything we wanted to

Even send a rocket to the moon! Hey! Good job!!!!!

Everyone cheers the band, screaming and jumping up and down – then everyone off stage
LIGHTS DOWN

Sign: The 1970s – The Beginning Of The Environmental Movement

LIGHTS UP SLOWLY

Music – hippy music (imovie library)

Two Hippies wander on stage front left dancing in a spacey way

They come together at the front centre stage and have a chat

**HIPPY ONE:** So what do you think of all this plastic stuff everywhere?

**HIPPY TWO:** I don’t like it, it’s not natural

**HIPPY ONE:** And it doesn’t rot away!

**HIPPY ONE:** It just piles up everywhere

**BOTH:** Uh -Oh – should have seen that coming - big problem dude!

They turn to the audience and hold their hands up in despair – then make the peace sign and wander off stage left, dancing again

Hippy music fades

LIGHTS DOWN


LIGHTS UP
Children run chattering onto the stage in T-shirts and shorts/jeans - play with plastic toys, skipping ropes, older ones wearing sunglasses, headphones, drinking from plastic cups and straws etc

**DRAMATIC FLASH OF LIGHT** and **ELECTRONIC SOUND EFFECT**

**Music starts**

*Enter back stage left the PLASTIC QUEEN with her two assistants carrying plastic bags full of plastic rubbish – they walk menacingly around the children who are rooted to the spot, then they mount the mini stage and she sings – the assistants echo the chorus*

*During the verses they all move among the children picking up things as the song refers to them: plastic plates, cups, straws, sunglasses, headphones, toys, food, drinks, shoes. They drop plastic items as they go*

*The children watch the entertainment, sometimes spinning round – looking scared or excited in response to the words and actions*

*Towards the end of the song they are back on the mini stage and the two assistants dramatically tip the contents of the big black bin bags all the over the back half of the stage, jump off the mini stage and kick it around carelessly – the children are shocked.*

**Song Four: Plastic World**

*Chorus: Welcome (welcome) To this plastic world*

Welcome (welcome) Boys and girls

Nothing (nothing) Is what it seems

Plastic’s filling up this world we’re in!
You got plastic spoons and plastic forks
Drinking out of plastic with a plastic straw
Your toys are plastic, the shoes you’re in
Plastic seeping through your skin

*Chorus:* Welcome (welcome) To this plastic world
Welcome (welcome) Boys and girls
Nothing (nothing) Is what it seems
Plastic’s filling up this world we’re in!

You got plastic wrapped around your food and drink
Plastic wrapped around everything
Plastic in your ears and on your face
Plastic’s taking over the human race!

*Chorus:* Welcome (welcome) To this plastic world
Welcome (welcome) Boys and girls
Nothing (nothing) Is what it seems
Plastic’s filling up this world we’re in!

Plastic windows, plastic doors,
Plastic covering on your floors
Plastic bowl in your kitchen sink,
Plastic wires in everything

Chorus: Welcome (welcome) To this plastic world
Welcome (welcome) Boys and girls
Nothing (nothing) Is what it seems
Plastic’s filling up this world we’re in!

Plastic smiles on plastic faces
Plastic money to get you places
Plastic in our bodies to improve the shape
There is no way to escape

Chorus x 2: Welcome (welcome) To this plastic world
Welcome (welcome) Boys and girls
Nothing (nothing) Is what it seems
Plastic’s filling up this world we’re in!
WELCOME!!!

LIGHTS OUT WITH A FLASH AND ELECTRONIC SOUND EFFECT
Everyone leaves the stage, leaving all the plastic littered around

A moment’s silence – wind and/or wave sounds

SIGN: 2009 – A New Millenium

LIGHTS UP slowly to reveal the stage covered in plastic waste and discarded items – blowing in the wind (perhaps use hairdryers?)

The music for the next song begins and the SOLOIST comes slowly on stage, looking horrified at all the waste, wandering around it in a daze before starting to sing to the audience.

Other people come on stage a few at a time and start collecting waste in the back half of the stage in bin liners. They stop and sing during the choruses.

Song Five – A Hundred Years of Plastic

A hundred years ago a great inventor
Shared his new discovery with the world
Substance that would have a thousand uses
Hoping a great story would unfold

Chorus (everyone) Oh oh– what have we done
With this gift he gave?
What a mess we’ve made!
Oh oh – what have we done
Now we must try to put it right
A hundred years of plastic on this planet
It has been a crazy love affair
We know that we could never live without it
But living with it drives us to despair!

Chorus: *(everyone)* Oh oh – what have we done
With this gift he gave?
What a mess we’ve made!
Oh oh – what have we done
Now we must try to put it right

A hundred years from now a child will question
How the world became as it will be
Will he hear of people who have listened
Or will he hear of selfishness and greed

Chorus: *(everyone)* Oh – what have we done
With this gift he gave?
What a mess we’ve made!
Oh oh – what have we done
Now we must try to put it right

Last line repeated slowly by soloist:
Now we must try to put it right

There is the sound of wind blowing/waves

People gradually leave the stage – which is cleaner, but there is still litter, especially straws. They carry their bags away.

One LITTER PICKER remains, collecting up straws in a cup (soloist)

LIGHTS DOWN
ACT THREE – The Problem With Plastic And What Can Be Done

LIGHTS UP

Music begins

The LITTER PICKER on stage comes to front stage centre and begins to sing, as the rest of the cast come on stage – either with protest banners or just with strong sticks to thump on the ground. They fill the stage and come into a formation for the song – perhaps in three lines depending on numbers. They stand facing the audience defiantly, feet slightly apart, ready for action.

Everyone sings the choruses and there are strong, simple actions including stamping, thumping sticks and putting out a hand in front symbolizing ‘stop’.

Song Six – No More!

Chorus: No More!

Plastic waste in our town! No!
This has got to end right now!
Soon you’re gonna see there aint gonna be
A tide of plastic waste from our town!

This plastic straw explosion is way out of control

Each year we all use hundreds, everyone I know
We never even ask ourselves, what it’s coming to
Where these straws are going or the damage they will do
Woaoaoa

Chorus: No More!
Plastic waste in our town! No!
This has got to end right now!
Soon you’re gonna see there aint gonna be
A tide of plastic waste from our town!

It’s such an urgent problem we mustn’t only talk
Or think of it as something that governments should stop
We can make a start right here, do what is in our hearts
Joining hands across the world to change the way things are
Woaoaoao

Chorus x 2: No More!
Plastic waste in our town! No!
This has got to end right now!
Soon you’re gonna see there aint gonna be
A tide of plastic waste from our town!
(last time) NO MORE!!!!

The actors lay down their banners/sticks and gather as an audience, looking to the mini stage expectantly.

SIGN: 2012, Netherlands

During Song Seven the soloist BOYAN SLAT engages his stage audience and gets them to join him doing actions. For the second verse he jumps off the mini stage and gathers the stage audience around him. By the last verse and choruses he and his stage audience are front of stage engaging the theatre audience.

VOICE: Ladies and gentlemen please welcome to the stage to give his Ted Talk Dutch teenager Boyan Slat!

BOYAN SLAT: “Once there was a Stone Age, a Bronze Age, and now we are in the middle of the Plastic Age!”

Song Seven: The Ocean Clean Up

Plastic plastic everywhere now
And it seems we just don’t care
I’m thinkin’ it’s so sad!
Think I know what can be done but
People say I’m just too young
I’m thinkin’ that’s too bad!

Chorus:
Let’s go!
Oooh ooh ooh ooh - Gotta draw a line
Oooh ooh ooh ooh - We still got time
Oooh ooh ooh ooh - Plans into motion
Oooh ooh ooh ooh - Clean up the Ocean
Clean up the Ocean

(guitar) clap clap, (guitar) clap clap, (guitar) clap clap

Problem’s growing day by day it
Isn’t going to go away
You hear me out now!
I have seen a great solution
That will clean up this pollution
Hear me shout now!

Chorus:
Let’s go!
Oooh ooh ooh ooh - Gotta draw a line
Oooh ooh ooh ooh - We still got time
Oooh ooh ooh ooh - Plans into motion
Oooh ooh ooh ooh - Clean up the Ocean
Clean up the Ocean

(guitar) clap clap, (guitar) clap clap, (guitar) clap clap

Boyan takes his applause and runs off stage – the others leave the stage after him.

LIGHTS OUT
Sound of sea, waves, wind
LIGHTS UP GRADUALLY

The SOLOIST comes on stage, perhaps with a friend to address the song to. As they sing the rest of the cast come on stage one at a time behind them, forming one long line and holding hands. In the second chorus and every following chorus they do the ‘chain reaction’ movement and join in singing all the choruses. During the verses they sway thoughtfully, by the last few choruses they are waving hands in the air. If possible the theatre audience are encouraged to join in with the actions – especially the ‘chain reaction’. This can be done by one or two actors leaving the stage and joining the audience to encourage them.

Song Nine: Chain Reaction
Chorus: What if we keep on trying?
What if we don't give in?
Maybe the earth is calling, people are listening
We can cause a chain reaction with every action we take
Maybe it's not too late

Consumers, why don't we cut consuming
Make sure corporations know
Surely they would cut producing if money didn't flow

Chorus: What if we keep on trying?
What if we don't give in?
Maybe the earth is calling, people are listening
We can cause a chain reaction with every action we take
Maybe it's not too late

Protestors, why don't we ask for justice?
Lobby for government support
Surely it would slow pollution if justice was enforced

Chorus: What if we keep on trying?
What if we don’t give in?
Maybe the earth is calling, people are listening
We can cause a chain reaction with every action we take
Maybe it’s not too late

Inventors, come up with great ideas
Plastic that friendly to the earth
Surely there can be a future
Where Nature isn’t hurt

*Chorus x 2 or 3: What if we keep on trying?*
What if we don’t give in?
Maybe the earth is calling, people are listening
We can cause a chain reaction with every action we take
Maybe it’s not too late

*THE END*
PLASTIC FANTASTIC?
THE MUSICAL

This original musical is available to use free of charge, either in part or as a whole, by schools, youth groups and theatre groups.

Plastic Fantastic? was inspired by the story of Boyan Slat.

As a teenager he dared to dream he could invent a way of cleaning up the ocean from plastic waste. His dream is becoming a reality with the launch of The Ocean Clean Up in the Pacific Ocean in 2018.

Donations for the use of this material can be made to:

THE OCEAN CLEAN UP

No financial profit should be made from the performance, filming or recording of any of this material.

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FOR MORE INFO CONTACT US VIA FB: @plasticfantasticthemusical