

The Back To School Daze

Telling a Story, Making a Point

(About School and School Transitions)

EXCERPTS from A Series of Vignettes and Songs

Written by Robert Simon and Denise Jackson-Simon

(With Inspiration from Connie Bohannon-Roberts)

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Note:

All of the spoken parts in this presentation are written generically with the exception of the second vignette which is specifically written for the characters of a boy and his mother. All other character parts can be either male or female, and can also be combined as necessary to accommodate fewer players than the three (3) “**Narrators**” and fifteen (15) “**Students**” that are written into the scripts.

Available recordings for the seven (7) songs incorporated into the production are demonstrated in many cases with one or two lead voices and two or more background vocals. However, the voices which carry the lyrics and music of the songs can be reduced or expanded according to the talent that is available for the presentation of the material. Melodic lines in song verses etc. can easily be shared by a number of lead voices, and harmonies can either be reduced or enhanced as necessary.

The current script of “**The Back To School Daze**” is an outline rather than a full musical production with standard musical scores and specific stage directions. Directors and producers who seek to present this material independently of the writers are encouraged to experiment with the possibilities of the materials and format provided.

The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

One Act, One Scene: **School... Here and Now**

Narrator 1: When people start talking about “Back-To School Days,” spelling is everything. Now, I don’t mean that Language Arts is the most important subject you’ll study in school or anything like that. No, no no... I mean it’s all about whether “Back-To-School” is about D-A-Y-S or D-A-Z-E.

Narrator 2: That’s right! And the truth is... it’s a little bit of both. There are always those days in early fall when most people who are in school somewhere start to head back. But there’s also the other daze ...as in shock, astonishment, surprise, stupor, bewilderment, state of confusion... (*With mock drama*) as in “Oh, my God, I’m not ready for this; somebody shoot me now!”

Narrator 3: And there’s another truth, too, and that is that school is usually toughest for people who are experiencing something new about school... like pre-schoolers, and kindergartners, and high school or college freshmen, or... (*All three narrators dramatically hum the opening notes of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony*)

Narrators: ...first year middle schoolers!

Narrator 1: (*With a yelling type scream*) Aaagh! Is there anything worse than being a beginning middle schooler? Hormones do weird stuff to your body... and your voice... and your emotions... and your... (*pausing for dramatic impact*)

Narrators: FACE!

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Narrator 2: Yeah, but there’s the good stuff, too.

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Narrators 2&3: Awwwww... that’s nice!

Narrator 3: Wait a minute! Let’s not get carried away here. Those good times didn’t come right away. If we’re gonna be honest, we have to admit that there were some times early on when we probably all thought we were going...

Narrators: CRAZY!

SONG:

I Think I’m Going Crazy

Words by – Robert Simon

Music by – Robert Simon

Intro I’m crazy!
 I think I’m going crazy!
 Things are getting hazy!
 I am in a daze!
 Please, somebody, save me!
 I don’t think they gave me
 Stuff to make a brave me!
 Things are getting grave!

The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

Verse 1 Someone will graduate with honor.
Some will learn math will little pain.
Someone will swim or be a runner.
Some will, I think, have extra brains!
 But how can I do that when my little brain's exploding?
 When I feel this great foreboding?
 When I may not have the stuff?
 How can I step out front and be a brave pacesetter,
 To be called a real go-getter,
 To be sure I have enough?
Yes, tell me, how can it be
That everyone's cool except me?
Maybe I should wait and see
If there is some magic key.

 But in the meantime,
I think I'm going crazy! Crazy!

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Dream Invasion

Boy: *(From sleep, and out of a nightmare)* Help! Help! Dad! DAD! It's gonna get me!

Mom: *(Entering as if from another room)* What's gonna get you? What's the matter, baby?

Boy: Mom... where's Dad?! I think this is a job for The MAN!

Mom: Well, "The MAN" isn't back from Chicago yet; so it's just me and you kid! Now what's the matter?

Boy: What's the matter??!! This big...fat...UGLY monster was trying to eat me alive right down the hall from the gym at school! That's what's the matter!! So what are you gonna do about it?

Mom: Nothing. It was just a nightmare, honey. Go back to sleep!

Boy: Unh unh!!! That funky breath crawling up my nose and that grease drippin' all over me was not a dream! Look at all this grease all over my bed!!!

Mom: That's sweat all over your bed and if you didn't brush your teeth after the onion rings you ate tonight, that would explain the breath. *(Fanning her nose)* Whew!! You better believe that will explain it.

Boy: Mom!! Give me a break! That was scary!

Mom: I'm not surprised, honey. Being in middle school can be pretty frightening. But you will handle it. Don't worry about it.

The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

Boy: Don't worry about it!!! That's like saying don't worry about Billy Jones!

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Boy: ... But, Mom?

Mom: Yes, sweetie?

Boy: You're pretty super too! I guess you're the WO-MAN!

Mom: Unh hunh... the sleepy WO-MAN. Goodnight dragon slayer.

Boy: *(To himself, after Mom leaves...)* You don't scare me, dream invader!

SONG:

Dream Invader

Words by - Robert Simon

Music by - Robert Simon

Verse 1 You don't scare me, dream invader!
 I can knock you down to size!
 At the time that I first saw you,
 I could not believe my eyes!
 But when I looked at you closer,
 I could see you were nothing at all! (You faker!)

Verse 2 I at first thought you were awesome
 When I did not understand;
 But I know now you're a turkey,
 And I'm gonna take a stand!
 Since I've seen through your disguises,
 You should know you don't scare me at all! (You turkey!)

Chorus I believe you were only in my mind,
Bridge And I can think you out!
 Other victims you're gonna have to find,
 'Cause I have too much clout!
 You're no cause for alarm;
 And you can't do anyone harm.
 And in case there's something you've missed,
 It's this simple: You just do not exist!...

End You don't scare me, dream invader!

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Taking Responsibility

Narrator 1: You know what really gets me?

Narrator 2: What?

The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

- Narrator 1: People that won't take responsibility for their own lives.. or people that act like they don't know that they can.
- Narrator 3: What do you mean?
- Narrator 1: I mean like these kids I heard talking in the cafeteria the other day. I mean it was ridiculous. I wanted to smack somebody!
- Narrators 2&3: WHAT?!!!
- Narrator 1: Relax! I'm not talking about senseless violence. I'm talking about the kind of smack upside the head that's a wake-up call... that makes people go, "Duh! What was I thinking?" Plus, you know me... I'd rather knock somebody on the head with a good idea.
- Narrator 3: But what or you talking about, exactly?
- Narrator 1: It was crazy! It was like....

(Scene shifts to cafeteria scene with a big group of kids hanging out and seven of them commiserating about the details of their school-day lives.)

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- Student 7: This conversation is depressing.
- Student 2: Life is depressing.
- Student 4: Life sucks.
- ...
- Student 5: Stop saying that. You're depressing ME!
- Student 3: Did we sign up for this?
- Student 6: Sign up for what?
- Student 3: A life that's this out-of-control thing. I mean is this what life is... just one thing after another happening to you?
- Student 6: I think so. Life is... Life is...

SONG:

Life Is Choices

Words by - Robert Simon

Music by - Robert Simon

- Verse 1 Make your, mind up that you'll wind up
 In a place where a loveliness surrounds you there.
 There's a way to make your life new.
 If you can't see the way, have faith that it can be.

The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

Bridge 1 Why do you suppose there's beauty everywhere?
So you can expose yourself to your fair, share!

Verse 2 Life is choices! Lift your voices!
Make a choice to take the good life gives to you!
Turn your sadness into gladness.
No one can make your, mind confused or your heart ache.

Bridge 2 If you don't expect your share of miracles,
Opportunities for, joy will be annulled.

Chorus Life is Choices! Life is Choices!

Special So-oh-oh-oh choose what you want, and don't give up your, trying.
Use what you've got to get the things you want.
We all have power, just learn to recognize it.
At the fork in the road, take your, time to decide.

Chorus Life is Choices! Life is Choices!

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Knowing The Basics *(Narrators reappear)*

Narrator 3: Is that what you're talking about? A smack-up-side-the-head idea like "life is choices"... not something that just happens beyond your control but something that's ultimately controlled by what you choose... like your attitude, or your friends, or what you do with your time, or how you see yourself in terms of your abilities?

Narrator 1: I think so. Like the Serenity Prayer, for example.

Narrator 3: The what?

Narrator 2: The Serenity Prayer! I know all about that! My dad made me memorize it when I was seven and we talked about it all the time until I understood exactly what it meant. "Grant me the serenity to accept the things, I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Narrator 1: Yep, that's it. I saw it on a poster at church one time and asked my mom what it meant. That's how I learned about it. It's actually part of a prayer, you know.

Narrator 2: Yeah, I knew that. Ringo Kneebull or somebody like that.

Narrator 1: *(Chuckling)* Reinhold Niehbur!

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Narrator 3: ... You can tell some roads are the wrong way to go with no problem. But at other times... well... let's just say that sometimes I wish there was a little answer machine I could carry around in my pocket that knew the truth about everything... and all I had to do was ask when situations are... how does Mr. Green say it? "Perplexingly paradoxical!"

The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

Narrator 1” Well, I don’t know about an answer machine, but my mom always says that if you do a good job handling the simple straightforward stuff, it helps to build a foundation for the complicated ... uh... uh... what’s the word? Ambiguous! The complicated ambiguous stuff! Mom says even the vague confusing stuff can make sense when you know the basics.

Inappropriate Rap

Words by - Robert Simon & Denise Jackson-Simon

Music by - Robert Simon

Sometimes when we are on our way
From a time in early mornin' to the eve of day,
We're faced with things we should decide;
And if we're wise, we let our conscience be our guide.
We can fool our minds and make big mistakes,
But knowing in the heart is still what it takes.
Your brain can see if it's good or bad. . .
Right or wrong... happy or sad.
Try your best to make a safe move.
A healthy choice will surely put you in the groove.
So this can be a groove that you'll appreciate,
We'll show you choices that are inappropriate.

Reckless thinkin' can take a life!
Why put yourself through all that strife?
Drinkin' alcohol just ain't cool!
It doesn't work when you go to school.
Shoplifting has a heavy price.
If you plan to steal, you better think twice!
Don't tear up someone's property!
It's not your stuff, so let it be!
Cigarette smoke can make you choke
And make you broke. That ain't no joke!
Doing drugs can get you high,
Or lay you low if you should die.
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Name Calling *(Narrators reappear)*

Narrator 2: You were talking earlier about what really gets you, but I'd like to talk about what really bothers me!

Narrator 1: What's that?

Narrator 2: Name calling.

Narrator 3: Name calling?

Narrator 2: Yep.

Narrator 3: Why name calling?

The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

Chorus **There is no difference in the dark...**

Bridge **There are things we look at all the time,
And a lot don't matter very much.
If we could see what's inside you and me,
If we could feel what we can't touch,
Then we would know . . .**

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I'm Going Sane

(The scene shifts back to the cafeteria or some other student gathering place. Student 3 is coming to her or his senses and sharing perspectives with others – some of whom were in the original complaining group, and some who were not.)

Student 3: You know what I'm figuring out?

Student 8: What?

Student 3: That I'm learning almost as much outside of lessons in school as I am learning FROM them.

Student 8: What's that supposed to mean?

Student 3: I mean art, and science, and math, and music, and English and all that stuff is great... don't get me wrong. But what's really floating my boat is what I'm learning about myself while I'm learning all the academic stuff.

Student 4: I get that. (*Bragging*) I'm learning that me ...getting dates ...is NO problem!

Student 3: And why IS that?

Student 4: Because I'm irresistible.

Student 3: And why is that?

Student 4: Isn't it obvious?

Student 3: No, it's not. And that's what I'm talking about. You could be getting lots of dates because you have money, or because you are popular, or because you are witty, or because you are considered nice arm candy...

Student 4: Arm candy?

Student 9: Yeah. Arm candy... just a little decoration that makes your date look good in front of friends! Or it could be ... because people really like being around your little sister... because SHE'S funny!

Student 4: Okay, okay! I GET it!

Student 3: No... you don't. You only get it if you get it.

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The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

Student 15: You just need to see the possibilities of your abilities! Haven't you survived so far? Aren't you still on the honor roll? Didn't you absolutely thump the city's so-called best swimmer in the last meet? What you call pressure, my sister calls stimulus. It's stimulation not stress! There are always more possibilities!

Student 14: I heard somebody say the other day that they felt like they weren't going crazy anymore. I asked them why and that's exactly what they said... because there are always more possibilities. They also said that whatever trouble that comes usually doesn't last forever, and there are always some good days around the corner somewhere.

Student 10: THAT'S what I'm talkin' about! I... for one... think I'm going... sane!

SONG:

I'm Not Going Crazy Anymore

Words By - Robert Simon

Music by - Robert Simon

Chorus I'm not going crazy.
 I'm not going crazy!
 I'm not going crazy anymore!
 There's happiness in store!
 Life just doesn't faze me,
 Though it does amaze me.
 I'm not going crazy anymore.
 I've opened up the door.

Bridge Tomorrow comes.
 It holds some special gifts,
 And knowing that just lifts me up
 To where I want to be –
 To where my mind can see
 The possibilities
 Of my abilities.
 I'm on my way! Hey!

Verse 1 We all have our troubles,
 (But) They don't last for always.
 We all have our good days,
 And we can have more.
 There are always times when
 Life seems overwhelming;
 But to keep on trying
 Is the way to grow.

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The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

Back-To-School WHAT? *(Narrators reappear)*

- Narrator 3: So... what is it for you... back-to-school D-A-Y-S or back-to-school D-A-Z-E?
- Narrator 1: For me, it's both. It's just one interesting day after another... PLUS... I think I'm in love!
- Narrator 2: Get outta here!
- Narrator 3: Are you serious?
- Narrator 1: I can tell you somebody at this school has me in a daze! What does that tell you?
- Narrator 2: That you need to get your head examined!
- Narrator 1: I think I'll just settle for getting it expanded.
- Narrator 3: Well, this is definitely the place to make that happen.
- Narrator 2: What makes you so sure?
- Narrator 3: Well... for one thing, the teachers around here care about us... even though it seems like their whole reason for existence is to drive us nuts.
- Narrator 1: And word has it that they are pretty good about teaching folks how to think and how to learn as opposed to how to parrot and memorize.
- Narrator 2: That works for me! ...

SONG:

Back To School Daze

Words by – Robert Simon

Music by - Denise Jackson-Simon
Robert Simon

- Chorus Back-to-School stays
 A Back-To School Daze;
 It can make you kind of crazy!
 Back-to-School stays
 A Back-To School Daze;
 But it cannot faze me!
- Verse 1 But don't despair! Your teachers care!
 And you've got brains and charm to spare
 You might feel dazed but soon you'll see your way out clear.
- Chorus
- Verse 2 With academics, sports and band,
 You just watch your world expand!
 All this stuff will soon make sense. Just wait and see!

The Back To School Daze Script Sampler

Chorus

Bridge 1 You may think your teachers
 Live to drive you nuts,
 But they have to check out
 If you have the guts
 To become a learner
 Way down deep inside so
 No one can hold you back... Jack!

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The End

(Of the Excerpt ... and in full form, the show.)