

# Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404  
612-872-5108  
FAX 612-874-8119

## *Playing from the Heart*

By  
Charles Way

*Playing from the Heart* was originally commissioned and produced by the Polka Theatre for Children, Wimbledon, London in 1998.

*The license issued in connection with PYA perusal scripts is a limited license, and is issued for the sole purpose of reviewing the script for a potential future performance. All other rights regarding perusal scripts are expressly reserved by Plays for Young Audiences, including, but not limited to, the rights to distribute, perform, copy or alter scripts. This limited license does not convey any performance rights of any kind with this material. By accepting any perusal script(s), Licensee agrees to and is bound by these terms.*

## **Characters:**

- Evelyn
- Mum
- Dad
- Colin
- Roger
- Mrs. Rachlin
- Reporter
- Photographer
- Editor
- Teacher
- Doctor 1
- Doctor 2
- Careers Officer
- Woman
- Floss, the dog

Doubling is possible- originally performed with five actors.

## **Setting:**

The play is set in Scotland. The action of the play takes place in various settings, which may be suggested minimally, and non-realistically. The set can be thought of as one large percussive opportunity.

## ACT ONE

*Darkness. Sound of an orchestra tuning up. Light rises on a young woman in a concert dress:  
Evelyn. A single pure note.*

### EVELYN

I can hear you thinking-  
I can hear you thinking-  
What's going on?  
What on earth is she about to do-  
This girl in a party dress?  
This is it, you see.  
The moment.  
All my life I've worked  
for this moment.  
They say I will never be a musician  
today I will prove them wrong.  
This is it.  
The orchestra's ready.  
The audience applaud  
as the conductor walks  
in his black suit across the stage.  
I feel his steps  
in the wood beneath my feet.  
I feel the sound of clapping  
in the tense air of the concert hall.  
I watch the faces of the people,  
the movement of their hands.

Of course it could all go wrong.  
I could lose my way  
in the great forest of notes.  
No! I must concentrate.  
I must succeed.  
I will succeed.  
I am me-  
Me is a very determined person.  
This is it - the moment.  
The conductor raises his baton,  
The audience breathe in-  
(*An intake of air*)  
- the baton hovers in the air  
Holding time  
Holding time.  
A bead of sweat runs down  
the conductor's cheek.  
How slowly it falls...  
How slowly...  
(*Sound of heart beat*)  
But wait!  
What's happening?  
What sound is that?

The sound of my heart  
slowing down...  
slowing down...

*She approaches the conductor who is now frozen in time. She moves around the orchestra, then she hears whispers, voices from her childhood.*

#### EVELYN

Wait! What sound is that?  
The sound of my thoughts  
running back, running back  
to the place of beginning-  
the place where my heart  
learnt its sure rhythm. Home.  
Home. Come with me.  
It will only take a moment...

*The conductor/orchestra ensemble break out of their frozen positions. A movement section follows – transforming them into the characters in Evelyn’s life. She is whisked out of her party dress. She is now eight years old wearing wellies and a duffle coat and a bobble hat.*

#### EVELYN

When I was a child I lived on a farm.  
When I was a child  
I climbed the grain tower  
it was ever so high.  
Tall as a tower  
in a fairy story.  
When I was a child  
I had a red wheelbarrow.  
There it is.  
When I was a child  
we had a dog called Floss.  
There she is.  
When I was eight years old  
I climbed to the top of the grain tower...  
(*sound of wind*)  
I tried to pull down clouds.  
When I was a child  
I could hear fields waking up  
stretching their muddy arms.  
I could hear the wind  
comb the long grass all day.  
I could hear the world sigh  
at four o’clock  
and the slow breathing of the earth  
at night.

From the top of the tower  
I could see the whole farm  
and beyond the farm – the fields  
beyond the fields

the future...  
When I was a child  
I climbed to the top of the grain tower  
and was queen of everything I saw...

*Mum enters.*

**MUM**

Evelyn.

**EVELYN**

That's my mother.

**MUM**

What are you doing?

**EVELYN**

I'm fine.

**MUM**

You'll be fine down here too on solid ground. Get down! Get down.

**EVELYN**

But her voice was blown away-

*Dad enters with dog.*

**DAD**

What now?

**MUM**

Evelyn's climbed to the top of the grain tower.

**DAD**

It's not the first time.

*Floss the dog follows the father around everywhere – the dog belongs to him.*

**EVELYN**

My father-

**MUM**

She's only eight.

**DAD**

Old enough to climb up, old enough to climb down.

**MUM**

It's thirty feet.

**DAD**

Aye. It's a tall tower.

**EVELYN**

Thirty feet up – a girl in the sky. Look Mum! (*Mum screams*) No hands.

She's testing herself. **DAD**

She's testing me. **MUM**

I'm testing myself. **EVELYN**

Come down now. **MUM**

She'll come down- **DAD**

Where are you going? **MUM**

I have to fee the pigs. **DAD**

**MUM**  
Pigs, you care more about the pigs than your daughter up the grain tower.

**DAD**  
That isn't true.  
I care more about you than I care about the pigs, and I care about the pigs a great deal.

**MUM**  
Oh flattered I am.

*He grabs her momentarily and they waltz in their work clothes.*

**EVELYN**  
My parents – dancing in the yard  
Very strange.  
I watch them from the grain tower-  
My Mother  
full of fret  
worrying about the future-  
her movements quick, busy.

**MUM**  
Go on fee the pigs, before I fall down dizzy.

**EVELYN**  
My Father always walks at the same pace  
his movements measured,  
appearing calm...It's a trick.  
He says...

Patience is a virtue. **DAD**

*Enter two brothers, chasing each other.*

Slow down there. **DAD**

Why? **COLIN**

Why? Why indeed? Why not? **DAD**

*Father moves away. The boys resume their chase, which develops into a pattern.*

**EVELYN**  
Two brothers,  
chalk and cheese  
cheese and chalk-  
different,  
like low ground and high ground  
Like loud and quiet  
always fighting  
cat and dog.

**DAD**  
*(to Colin and Roger) Stop that!*

**MUM**  
Evelyn – get down.

**EVELYN**  
My family.

*Evelyn beats out a rhythm on the grain tower – initiating a movement section that is about the family: love, reprimands, patterns of behavior and support. It stops suddenly. Silence. Evelyn comes down.*

**EVELYN**  
My ears hurt.

**MUM**  
What kind of hurt?

**EVELYN**  
The kind that hurts.

**MUM**  
I'm not surprised  
hanging up there in the sky

in a howling wind,  
letting the whole of Scotland  
blow right through you.

**COLIN**

She's always complaining about her ears-

**EVELYN**

No I'm not.

**COLIN**

Are too.

**EVELYN**

Not.

**ROGER**

You said your ears hurt yesterday.

**COLIN**

After riding your bike.

**ROGER**

In the cold.

**COLIN**

And after swimming.

**EVELYN**

They just hurt, that's all.

**COLIN**

You're going deaf.

**EVELYN**

No, I'm not.

**COLIN**

Are too.

**EVELYN**

Stop saying that.

**COLIN**

Sometimes I speak to you and you don't hear a word I say.

**EVELYN**

That's cos all you say is – 'Are too! Are too!'

**COLIN**

No, I don't.

Do too! Do too!

**EVELYN**

Stop!

**MUM**

I'm not going deaf, am I Mum?

**EVELYN**

Course not – just got sore ears, that's all. But stay out of the cold wind and don't dive down deep in the swimming pool.

**MUM**

Ooooh. *(in disappointment)*

**EVELYN**

Hush now...Hush – feel that?

**DAD**

What?

**MUM**

That.

**DAD**

That what?

**MUM**

Something's coming.

**DAD**

What's coming?

**MUM**

Wait...there...it's arrived.

**DAD**

What?

**MUM**

The summer... *(lights change)*  
I can feel it in my bones  
smell it on the breeze.  
Besides it says so in the paper-  
Today is the first day of summer – official.  
*He exits. The youngsters stand perplexed.*

**DAD**

Stop arguing.

**MUM**

We're not arguing.

**ROGER**

You think I can't tell an argument when I hear one? Silent or not.

**MUM**

*She exits. The summer light gets stronger.*

I love the summer.

**COLIN**

We could put a tent up.

**ROGER**

Yeah, spend the night in the garden.

**COLIN**

And me.

**EVELYN**

You're too young.

**ROGER**

No I'm not.

**EVELYN**

You're afraid of the dark.

**ROGER**

That's a secret.

**EVELYN**

Not anymore.

**COLIN**

Stop it.

**EVELYN**

What?

**ROGER**

Teasing.

**EVELYN**

Tarenzeening.

**ROGER/COLIN**

Please?

**EVELYN**

No.

**COLIN**

I'll tell on you.

**EVELYN**

Tell what?

**COLIN**

There's nothing to tell.

**ROGER**

I'll make it up.

**EVELYN**

You wouldn't dare.

**ROGER**

I always dare.

**EVELYN**

*Silence.*

**ROGER**

Alright.

*They set up the tent – this action demonstrates their rivalry and affection – it's comical and musical. Roger is the practical one, Colin more of a dreamer. Night falls.*

**EVELYN**

I love my brothers.  
I hate my brothers.  
I love my brothers.

*In the tent: Roger is making a lego plane, Colin is reading.*

**COLIN**

I'm going to be an astronaut.

**EVELYN**

When?

**COLIN**

When I'm grown up, like the man in this book. He goes to different planets.

**EVELYN**

What for?

**COLIN**

To see what's there.

**ROGER**

I'm going to be a farmer, like dad. What are you going to do Ev?

**EVELYN**

Don't know...

*She decides to beat a toy drum.*

Shh! **COLIN**

Why shh? **EVELYN**

I'm trying to read. **COLIN**

Try harder. *(She plays on)* **EVELYN**

Shh. **ROGER**

Why shh? **EVELYN**

I can't hear myself think. **ROGER**

Think louder. *(She plays on)* **EVELYN**

Shh! **COLIN/ROGER**

*She plays louder. Colin storms off, comes back with a trombone. He creeps behind Evelyn and blows it in her ear. She screams. Roger falls about laughing. Evelyn hits him. Colin hides the drum.*

Where is it? **EVELYN**

Where's what? **COLIN**

My drum. **EVELYN**

I never saw a drum. Did you see a drum? **COLIN**

Well it was – no, no. **ROGER**

**EVELYN**  
(picks up the plane) Did you ever see a plane with one wing?

**ROGER**

You wouldn't dare.

*She snaps off the wing. She picks up Colin's book and is about to rip it in two. Colin swiftly gives the drum back.*

**EVELYN**

I'm going to be a musician.

**ROGER**

You broke my plane. *(He hits her with a pillow.)*

**EVELYN**

You stole my drum.

**ROGER**

He stole your drum.

**COLIN**

It's not my fault she broke your stupid plane.

**ROGER**

It's not stupid.

**COLIN**

It is now – it's only got one wing.

*(A pillow fight develops between the two brothers. Enter Mum with a rolled up newspaper.)*

**MUM**

Stop! Stop! You will stop that now.

*(They continue. Evelyn stands by in an innocent pose.)*

Stop!

*(She starts to chase them with the rolled up newspaper. Dad enters with the dog, barking – chaos.)*

**COLIN**

She started it.

**EVELYN**

I never did.

**ROGER**

She did! She did!

**EVELYN**

I hate my brothers

I love my brothers

I hate my brothers.

*The scene changes, folds into a new section. Evelyn gets on her bicycle*