



A musical play in one act

By Troy Townsin

## CHARACTER LIST

Story Teller	The STORY TELLER recounts and/or acts out a strange Canadian Christmas tale for the audience. Depending on casting resources, the STORY TELLER make also take on the role of THE NARRATOR.
Narrator(s):	The NARRATOR voices the text of the poem <i>The Night Before a Canadian Christmas</i> . This role can be taken by one or more students, who each enter in turn to deliver a section of the tale. The NARRATOR(S) stand Stage Right and speak to the audience.
Choir:	The CHOIR makes several entrances and sings one or more verses of several different songs (depending on the desired length of the show). They may appear dressed as forest animals or angels or in their favorite holiday season clothes, depending on costume resources. The director may substitute songs from other cultures or in other languages, as desired except for the last song. (It may be helpful to adapt the script a little to link into them.)
Moose:	MOOSE gets all tangled up in holiday lights and makes a mess.
Mom:	MOM appears in her housecoat with her TV remote and notices a lot.
Audience member:	This character interrupts the STORY TELLER in support of Rudolf.
Santa:	SANTA is proud of his distinctive outfit and his bag of gifts. (Elements of his costume will take some thought: fluffy white beard cut in the shape of a maple leaf, bushy white eyebrows, bright red tuque turtleneck under a bulky red sweater, pot belly, padded red sweat pants inside out so the fleece is showing, and with some pictures of Canada geese stuck or sown on, his big toy sack, fake snow on his clothes)

## SYNOPSIS

The story of a strange Canadian Christmas Eve provides the framework for an all-in silly celebration of holiday season songs, old and new, performed by cast and audience.

The Night before a Canadian Christmas

SCENE 1

[The CHOIR gathers on a dimly lit stage around the story-teller who is fast asleep on a chesterfield slightly Stage Right. They are singing the first verse of *Silent Night*. As they finish singing the STORY TELLER starts to yawn and stretch and sits up rubbing his/her eyes. The CHOIR (of animals or angels) nervously scatters offstage. The STORY TELLER looks up, focuses with surprise on the audience and starts speaking to them.]

**STORY TELLER**

“Oh I didn't see you there I must have fallen asleep. Strange! I was dreaming that I was surrounded by animals (or angels). And when I woke up there were all of you! You startled me! All very odd - but not as strange as last Christmas. Now that was REALLY strange!! Hmm, maybe I should tell you that story. Would you like to hear it?”

[STORY TELLER leans forward and peers at the audience, hoping for a response]

**STORY TELLER**

I can't hear you. I SAID, would you like to hear it?

[AUDIENCE says yes/claps]

**STORY TELLER**

OK - OK - not so loud! I call my tale, *The Night before a Canadian Christmas*. Here is what happened. And it's the absolute truth, eh.

T'was the night before Christmas...

[The STORY TELLER on the couch may continue speaking as the poem itself begins or he or she may begin to act the story telling part (acting and reacting as the tale is told by the NARRATOR) while a different NARRATOR steps on Stage Right facing the audience to take over speaking the verses.]

**NARRATOR**

... and all around the house,

Not a creature was stirring, *except for a moose!*

[Clattering sounds off stage. Suddenly a student in a moose costume with antlers stumbles on Stage Left. (The costume can elaborate or simple but does need antlers for the lights.) He or she is tangled up in a string of holiday lights. The STORY TELLER is startled by the noise but does not see the MOOSE who is at the back of the stage. The MOOSE is also startled and stops still for a moment while the next two lines are read, then shrugs his/her shoulders palms/hooves out in a gesture of excuse. He or she puts a finger/hoof to his lips.]

When the lights had been hung in the front yard with care,

No one had expected a moose to pass there.

The children in long johns were snug in their beds,

while visions of poutine danced in their heads.

Mom, in her housecoat, turned on the TV

and on came the hockey game on CBC.

[MOM in her housecoat and holding up a TV remote enters Stage Right. MOOSE moves quietly off Stage Left. She smiles at the STORY TELLER (does not see the MOOSE) and goes over to arrange and ornament on the Christmas tree or hang and extra stocking. Then she focuses on an imaginary TV positioned in front row centre of the audience. She makes a big movement to show she is switching on the TV and the Hockey Night in Canada theme music is heard. ]

From the snow-shovelled driveway there came such a clatter,

[The MOOSE pops his/her head in Stage Left antlers still covered in lights and looks up at the sky

alarmed, then disappears again. Offstage someone rattles tin cans or pot lids loudly together. MOM and STORY TELLER look around in astonishment. STORY TELLER jumps up.]

I leapt from the chesterfield to see what was the matter.

The moose had been spooked by something in the sky,

[STORY TELLER squints up at the imagined night sky. The MOOSE now stumbles fully on stage, still entangled in lights and this time dragging all or pieces of a skidoo. He/she struggles a bit tugging at the skidoo while the next couple of lines are read and exits noisily Stage Right. (To make the skidoo, you could just draw a picture of a skidoo on the side of a cardboard box MOOSE is dragging with him somehow)].

Some thing in the distance, too far for my eyes....

As the northern lights sparkled over fresh fallen snow,

The moose fled the scene with my skidoo in tow!

[MOM points up at the night sky and makes a little noise of surprise. STORY TELLER puts his hands on his/her hips and shakes head in disbelief. Then both characters look up astonished. They follow an imaginary movement of a sleigh across the sky while the next lines are spoken.]

Mom pointed and screamed but I didn't believe her. She said

**MOM**

Look it's a sled pulled by eight flying beaver!"

**NARRATOR**

With a bearded old driver in a big bright red tuque,

Either it was Santa, or I was a kook.

Faster than an oncoming CPR train

They hurtled towards us as he called them by name:

## The Night before a Canadian Christmas

“Now, Gretzky! Now, Trudeau! Now, Shania and Loonie!

On, Bob! And on, Doug! On Suzuki and Toonie!”

[AUDIENCE MEMBER springs up and waves a hand to interrupt the story.]

### **AUDIENCE MEMBER**

Hang on, wait. STOP! THAT’S not right!! Flying BEAVER??? - What happened to Rudolf?

### **STORY TELLER**

Um....Who?

### **AUDIENCE MEMBER**

YOU know....Rudolf, the reindeer with the red nose. Everyone knows Rudolf.

### **CHOIR**

[CHOIR comes back on stage and starts to sing, *Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer*--as many verses as production time permits. STORY TELLER and MOM also take part and can dance around tap their toes etc. Then the STORY TELLER stops and shakes his head.]

### **STORY TELLER**

Nope. Rudolf must have had the night off. Or maybe the beavers take over from Rudolf when Santa gets to Canada. Delivering presents all across Canada is a big job! There is a lot of country to cover you know!

[STORY TELLER looks round at the choir nodding and getting their agreement.]

### **CHOIR**

Choir sings *Canadian Jingle Bells*

[CHOIR leaves the stage.]

### **STORY TELLER**

Yes, now where was I in the story? Oh that's right Santa and his beaver team were flying above my house.

**SANTA** offstage

“Forget the Chimney”...

**NARRATOR**

...cried Santa Claus with a roar,

**SANTA** offstage

“There’s smoke so we’d netter just use the back door!”

**NARRATOR**

For all over Canada on this cold winters night,

For warmth everyone had their fires alight.

So with a full load of toys to the back deck they flew,

Where they landed beside the old barbeque.

Then Santa came in while the beavers took rest –

It was then that I noticed how Santa was dressed...

[SANTA enters with big strides from Stage Left and stands smiling feet apart, hands on hips or on his big belly. As the NARRATOR says the next few lines he models each article of clothing as it is mentioned. He struts his stuff responding to the lines—shaking snow off, and when the NARRATOR mentions “double double”, he pulls a large-sized Tim Horton’s cup from his bag, takes a swig, and holds it up with a wink to the audience. He busies himself looking into his pack and counting items off and nodding as the poem is read.]

A turtleneck under a red Cowichan sweater,

Don Cherry’s tailor couldn’t do better.

His pants were made of red polar fleece,

Embroidered with pictures of Canada geese.

## The Night before a Canadian Christmas

A huge sack of toys was slung over his back, like a cross equipped with a pack.

I offered him some milk, said it wasn't any trouble,

But he said he would prefer a nice warm double double!

From his head to his boots he was covered in snow,

He had frozen eyelashes, it was 30 below!

He had fluffy white eyebrows with bright eyes underneath,

And his beard had the appearance of a big white maple leaf.

He had a lumberjack's physique, except for his pot belly,

That shook when he laughed like a salad made of jelly.

He put gifts in all the stockings and around the Christmas tree –

There were wonders there for everyone, everyone but ME!

There were snowshoes for the kids that they would use on Christmas day,

And to Mom he gave a blanket which came from Hudson's Bay.

[SANTA holds up gifts -- snowshoes, Hudson's bay blanket -- (or gift boxes) as he puts them under the tree - then hands the STORY TELLER a box)

Then he handed me a present and I knew I was in luck –

A brand new set of tire chains ...

### STORY TELLER

"...for my pickup truck!"

[STORY TELLER opens the box and pulls out tire chains displays them proudly.]

### CHOIR

CHOIR enters singing, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. They have "snowballs" made of

crushed up paper behind their backs, in their pockets, etc.]

**NARRATOR**

He touched his finger to his nose and just stepped out into the night,

[SANTA touches the side of his nose with a wise nod and takes a big step towards Stage Left]

Where his beaver team were on the deck having a snowball fight.

[Members of the choir throw snowballs at Santa and the STORY TELLER)

**STORY TELLER**

Just look at all this snow. You know what that snow reminds me of?

**CHOIR**

[CHOIR sings *Frosty the Snowman*]

**STORY TELLER**

...but back to my story with Santa and his team of beavers.

**NARRATOR**

He whistled as they all took their places at the sled,

And took off through the sky in a streaking blur of red.

And this is what he shouted as they up and flew away:

**WHOLE CAST** (including all the NARRATORS if there is more than one.)

Merry Christmas, Canada and to all a good night, eh!

[Cast takes a bow and another and starts to leave. STORY TELLER spins around and catches a CHOIR member and takes in the whole audience with a look.]

**STORY TELLER**

Hang on!! Don't go anywhere! It's not over yet! You don't get out of here THAT easily. So far it's just been us singing - now we need your help with one more song. It's called *A Moose in a*

*Maple Tree - the All-Canadian 12 days of Christmas.* You already know the tune! And you'll find the words on your song sheet (or screen if one can be set up).

[The STORY TELLER conducts and everyone sings. (You may project the You-tube animation <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gw8P8L1LfDM> on a screen either at the back of the stage or somewhere else in the room. Turn the volume fairly low and let the audience read and sing along. Alternatively, the cast can hold up big pictures or cut outs of each of the twelve gifts as they are mentioned. )

Cast takes another bow.]

THE END

LYRIC SHEETS

## Silent Night

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

## Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer

*Johnny Marks (c) 1949*

Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer  
had a very shiny nose.  
And if you ever saw him,  
you would even say it glows.

All of the other reindeer  
used to laugh and call him names.  
They never let poor Rudolph  
join in any reindeer games.

Then one foggy Christmas Eve  
Santa came to say:  
"Rudolph with your nose so bright,  
won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"

Then all the reindeer loved him  
as they shouted out with glee,  
Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer,  
you'll go down in history!

## Canadian Jingle Bells

*Troy Townsin (c) 2011*

Dashing through the snow, in Santa's flying sleigh,  
over Canada we go, giving gifts along the way!

Everything's lit up, under the northern lights,  
and everywhere in Canada has such amazing sights!

We see a herd of moose, out by Dawson City,  
The Yukon takes my breath away, its glaciers are so pretty.  
Then up by Yellowknife, out by a diamond mine,  
there's a guy ice fishing, with a big one on the line!

### CHORUS:

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way -  
from Victoria to Halifax across the Hudson Bay - Hey!  
Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way -  
it's Christmas time in Canada, so Merry Christmas - Eh!

Back to BC's coast, whales are making merry,  
swimming with the salmon, beside a BC ferry.

Over in Alberta, across the mighty Rockies,  
cowboys at a rodeo are riding bulls like jockeys.

As we glide across the prairies, Santa spots a loon,  
then we see a flock of them out by Saskatoon.

But in Manitoba, we had a little scare,  
when Santa almost landed on a sleeping polar bear!

Up in Nunavut, among the caribou,  
we see an inuksuk and a seal-skin canoe!

Ontario's lit up, with Christmas lights and balls,  
and the hockey fans roar louder than Niagara Falls!

When we get to Quebec, it's a perfect Christmas scene.  
Kids are making snowmen and eating chocolate!

Onward to New Brunswick, and music fills the air.  
It's a kitchen party, with fiddlers fiddling there!

CHORUS

Out on PEI, Mounties are in the stables  
eating turkey dinner with Anne of Green Gables!

We're in Nova Scotia, just one thing left to do,  
fill the Christmas stockings for the crew of Bluenose Two!

The presents are delivered, Santa says "Enough!"  
so we land in Newfoundland for a scoff and a scuff.

It's great to be Canadian! Anyone can see,  
it's the coolest country in the world—the true north strong and free!

CHORUS

## We Wish you a Merry Christmas

We wish you a Merry Christmas;  
We wish you a Merry Christmas;

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.  
Good tidings we bring to you and your kin;  
Good tidings for Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Oh, bring us a figgy pudding;  
Oh, bring us a figgy pudding;

Oh, bring us a figgy pudding and a cup of good cheer

We won't go until we get some;  
We won't go until we get some;

We won't go until we get some, so bring some out here

We wish you a Merry Christmas;  
We wish you a Merry Christmas;

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## Frosty the Snowman

*Walter Rollins and Steve Nelson © 1950*

Frosty the snowman was a jolly happy soul,  
With a corncob pipe and a button nose,  
And two eyes made out of coal.

Frosty the snowman is a fairy tale, they say,  
He was made of snow but the children  
know how he came to life one day.

There must have been some magic in that  
Old silk hat they found.  
For when they placed it on his head,  
He began to dance around.

Oh, Frosty the snowman  
Was alive as he could be,  
And the children say he could laugh  
And play just the same as you and me.

Thumpetty thump thump,  
Thumpetty thump thump,  
Look at Frosty go.

Thumpetty thump thump,  
Thumpetty thump thump,  
Over the hills of snow.

Frosty the snowman knew  
The sun was hot that day,  
So he said, 'Let's run and  
we'll have some fun  
now before I melt away.'

Down to the village,  
With a broomstick in his hand,  
Running here and there all  
Around the square saying,  
Catch me if you can.

He led them down the streets of town  
Right to the traffic cop.  
And he only paused a moment when  
He heard him holler 'Stop!'

For Frosty the snowman  
Had to hurry on his way,  
But he waved goodbye saying,  
'Don't you cry,  
I'll be back again some day.'

Thumpetty thump thump,  
Thumpetty thump thump,  
Look at Frosty go.

Thumpetty thump thump,  
Thumpetty thump thump,  
Over the hills of snow.

## A Moose in a Maple Tree

*Troy Townsin © 2007*

**On the first day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** a moose in a maple tree.

**On the second day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the third day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the fourth day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** four totem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the fifth day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** five hockey sticks, four totem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the sixth day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** six whales breaching, five hockey sticks, four totem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the seventh day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** seven beavers building, six whales breaching, five hockey sticks, four totem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the eighth day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** eight lobsters nipping, seven beavers building, six whales breach-ing, five hockey sticks, four totem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the ninth day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** nine Mounties riding, eight lobsters nipping, seven beavers build-ing, six whales breaching, five hockey sticks, four totem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the tenth day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** ten salmon leaping, nine Mounties riding, eight lobsters nipping, seven beavers building, six whales breaching, five hockey sticks, four to-tem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the eleventh day of Christmas, a Canuck sent to me:** eleven sled dogs mushing, ten salmon leaping, nine Mounties riding, eight lobsters nipping, seven beavers building, six whales breaching, five hockey sticks, four totem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree.

**On the twelfth day of Christmas a Canuck sent to me:** twelve skiers skiing, eleven sled dogs mushing, ten salmon leaping, nine Mounties riding, eight lobsters nipping, seven beavers building, six whales breaching, five hockey sticks, four to-tem poles, three snowmen, two polar bears and a moose in a maple tree!