

SHAMAN (a play with music)

(synopsis)

SILA, our hero in this musical, dark comedy in two acts, is a mystical, 13-year-old boy—the afterthought child in a dysfunctional family in Bronxville, New York. It is SILA's future, and ultimately his survival itself, that are at stake here.

But all is not as it seems. This family, and indeed all of our present-day reality, is the fabrication of The Ancestors, who inhabit a Lower World. There, at the timeless time of Creation, SINGER, BUILDER and DREAMER set about creating an Upper World of harmony and delight for their amusement. Alas, there was another Ancestor as well, TRICKSTER, who slyly threw monkey wrenches into the others' plans.

The Upper and Lower worlds are converging on a collision course, and SILA finds himself unable to escape the impending crash. Fortunately, there is one member of the Bronxville household to help him: the family's factotum, Igjugarjuk, known as IGGY. IGGY is an Inuit shaman, rejected by his own people for what they considered his incompetence. He is SILA's mentor and friend as SILA unwillingly embarks on a Vision Quest from Bronxville to the Lower World of The Ancestors. It is a risky journey of self-realization that could cost him his life.

There's many a twist and turn in the action, both in the Lower and Upper worlds, as a richly varied cast of characters lock horns over getting what they want. There's guile and greed, deception and despair, seduction and suicide.

And then there's SILA's innocence: Is it enough to carry him safely through his perilous journey?

[126 pages, standard play format]

CAST

THE LOWER WORLD, in Dreamtime:

SINGER, a ditzzy, bird-like Ancestor—sings all things into Creation.

BUILDER, an earnest, beaver-like Ancestor—assembles the pieces of Creation

DREAMER, a laid-back, dormouse-like Ancestor—dreams the future.

TRICKSTER, a wily, coyote-like Ancestor— upsets everything.

PINGA, a young, black, female Ancestor—half human and horny.

THE UPPER WORLD, present day:

THE MOTHER voice off

GORDON	the mother's gay son; 40s.
DORA	the mother's bitchy daughter; 30s
SILA	the mother's innocent son; about 13.
LUKE	Dora's ne'r-do-well husband; 30s.
IGJUGARJUK ("IGGY")	an Inuit shaman; 70s.

(The following roles could be doubled: TRICKSTER, SINGER, BUILDER with LUKE, DORA, GORDON)

The action alternates between the two times and places.

SETTING

THE LOWER WORLD:

A timeless, fanciful, outdoor place.

THE UPPER WORLD:

The living room of an affluent, suburban home;

SILA's bedroom.

TIME

Present day in the Upper World, timeless in the Lower.

ABOUT THE MUSIC'S COMPOSER

DAVID TORRETTA (composer) has for many years performed and written for St. Louis's long-lived and widely-acclaimed band, "Fairchild." In 1992, his work earned him the Best Songwriter Award from the Riverfront Times.

David, in addition to being a composer, is also a musician, a producer, and a sound engineer. He has produced a wide range of musical artists in a variety of fields—Latin, gospel, blues, opera, theater, classical and classical Indian. His original compositions have aired on network television, and his numerous commercials have garnered him a full array of awards—including the Telly, the Addy and the Marconi.

David's formal training took place at the St. Louis Institute of Music and The Berklee College of Music in Boston, Mass. He is a member of BMI (Nashville).