

Plays for Young Audiences

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

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Go, Dog. Go!

Story by

P. D. Eastman

Adaptation by

Steven Dietz and Allison Gregory

Music by

Michael Koerner

Go, Dog. Go! was first presented by Seattle Children's Theatre for the 2002-2003 season.

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**DO NOT REPRODUCE.
NOT LICENSED FOR PRODUCTION.**

Cast (3 women, 3 men, musicians)

MC DOG (aka the LATECOMER)

RED DOG

BLUE DOG

YELLOW DOG

GREEN DOG

HATTIE (also plays SPOTTED DOG)

MUSICIAN(S)

Note on “Dogs”

One of consummate and lasting joys of P.D. Eastman’s book is that there is almost nothing “dog-like” in the behavior of these dogs! There is no evidence in the book of “barking” – no “panting” or “scratching” or “yelping” whatsoever. It is the intention of this adaptation to honor that essential quality; and, therefore, these “dog-like” traits should not be part of the performance vocabulary of the play. At heart, these characters are creatures that look like dogs – but perform their tasks in very human ways.

Setting

The stage is framed by two, actor-sized DOG HOUSES – which can be entered and climbed upon. Between them: a performance space that will change simply and quickly into a variety of locales. Complexity of design and visual effects are to be avoided. Instead: a “circus” atmosphere prevails – one of rough magic and sudden, hands-on, transformation.

Costumes

The DOGS are created in the simplest of ways – and, most importantly, in a way which “conjures” (and does *not* “depict”) an actual dog. Perhaps simple coveralls; caps with ears attached; cotton sneakers. And no face make-up. Comfortable. Simple.

Music

The musical score is composed for accordion. However, the use of additional musicians and instrumentation – drums, bass, clarinet, saxophone, etc. – is heartily encouraged.

The MUSICIANS are seen throughout the play – and are an integral part of the play’s storytelling.

Silence

Not every “moment” must be filled with music, or vocal ad-libs. Trust the actions. And the silence.

Note from the Playwrights

This play is adapted from a book renowned for its ability to generate fun, learning, adventure and surprise with a minimum of text. P. D. Eastman’s timeless work honors the joyous simplicity of the world around us. Therefore, in crafting a stage version of *GO, DOG. GO!*, it is not our intention to “fill out” or “open up” the story in the style of many traditional adaptations. (We have, in fact, added virtually no words of our own.) “Expanding” the book in this way would, we believe, rob it of its essential wondrous and loopy anarchy. Instead, we hope to celebrate and explore the *existing* words and pictures; to look not “outside the book”, but more closely “within it” – in the same way that a child (and parent) can read through Mr. Eastman’s book night after night and find something new and remarkable with every turn of the page.

ACT ONE

OPENING

As the house manager concludes his/her remarks to the audience, a LATECOMER appears. He is wearing a long coat and a hat. He is trying to read his ticket stub in the dark. He approaches the house manager and they have an urgent, whispered conversation.

The house manager shines a flashlight onto the one remaining seat. It is on the stage.

The LATECOMER slowly, reluctantly, moves to his seat onstage and sits. Facing the audience. Waiting for the play to begin.

A snippet of MUSIC/SOUND is heard. He turns and looks. There is nothing there. He waits.

Another snippet of MUSIC/SOUND is heard, from a different direction. Again, he turns. Sees nothing. Turns front again. Waits. Looks at his program.

A BLUE HAT falls from the sky and lands near him. He looks at it. Confused. Curious. As he stands to approach the hat, his coat is somehow pulled off of him – revealing white and black coveralls/pajamas, with a tail attached behind. He is unaware of this.

He lifts the hat and looks at it. Looks around. Where did it come from? Decides to try it on.

He removes his own hat, and when he does – his two floppy dog ears are revealed.

He puts on the blue hat. Smiles. He likes it.

He returns to the seat and sits to watch the play. When he does, he sits on something. What is it?

He stands and looks behind him. Looks this way and that. Begins to turn quickly in both directions – in a circle – until we realize he is, of course, chasing his tail.

Upon finally catching it, he also becomes aware of his dog ears. This is odd. It dawns on him that he may be a dog. *(Perhaps he removes a small mirror from his coat to confirm this fact.)*

Again, MUSIC is heard from offstage. As our DOG turns toward the music ---

A LONE ROLLER SKATE begins to roll across the stage. He watches it. Should he follow it? What would a dog do? He watches it intently, as ---

The SKATE stops moving. Then starts – he pounces. It stops – he freezes/points. Etc. Finally, after he approaches it once more, slowly – it races offstage. He pursues it to the edge of the stage, but it is gone.

When he turns back to the stage, he is wearing the skate! He tries to walk and skate – with mixed results. He stumbles toward the other side of the stage – rests for a moment – and then turns back, realizing that he now has skates on both feet.

He tries now to make it back to his seat. He glides/falls/crawls/stumbles into the seat – and as he does, he pushes the seat offstage.

He falls on his butt.

A SPOTLIGHT hits him.

He stares front. Decides to get up. When he moves his leg to do so – MUSIC ACCOMPANIES THE MOVEMENT. He stops. MUSIC STOPS. Now, he moves an arm – MUSIC FOLLOWS. The game is on. For every movement or gesture he makes – the MUSIC RESPONDS. He begins to enjoy himself.

Emboldened, he STANDS. And he – SKATES! Terrifically! He glides across the stage.

When he reappears, he is holding two little cut-out “POOFS” OF SMOKE. He sets them on the stage and skates off.

When next he appears, he is carrying a small sign which reads: “Dog.” He sets it on the stage and skates off once again.

MUSIC BUILDS.

And now, as he appears once again, he STOPS. TIPS HIS HAT. He says, simply and proudly ---

DOG

Dog.

And the FIRST PICTURE OF THE BOOK is made!

INTRODUCTIONS

Immediately: MUSIC, and a RUSH OF MANY BLACK & WHITE DOGS – moving past, going fast – dogs on bikes, dogs on scooters, dogs on unicycles, dogs in strollers, dogs on rollers, MINIATURE CUT-OUTS of dogs – ALL going in the same direction, with glee.

Our first DOG (whom we will now call M.C. DOG) begins, like a circus barker, to introduce the dogs, one by one.

M.C. DOG

Big dog.

Little dog.

Big dogs and little dogs.

Black and white dogs.

One little dog going in.

Three big dogs going out.

And now ALL the dogs are racing past again, and calling out the following phrases ---

SPOTTED, RED, YELLOW DOGS

Big dog.

BLUE DOG

Little dog.

M.C. DOG

Big dogs and little dogs.

SPOTTED, RED, YELLOW DOGS

Black and white dogs.

BLUE DOG

One little dog going in.

SPOTTED, RED, YELLOW DOGS

Three big dogs going out.

M.C. DOG

Big dog!

Little dog!

Big dogs and little dogs!

Black and white dogs!

One little dog going in!

Three big dogs coming out!

ALL DOGS

Black dog

White dog

Black and white dogs.

Big dog

And a little dog

Black dog, white dog,

Big dog, little dog.

Black dog, white dog,

Big dog, little dog.

Black dog, white dog,

Big dog, little dog and ---

Everything comes to a screeching halt, when ---

HATTIE #1

HATTIE appears. She is wearing a dainty little hat.

MUSIC UNDER: "HATTIE'S WALTZ"

ALL the DOGS are staring at her. Then, slowly, they ALL leave, backing off the stage . . . all except for M.C. DOG.

M.C. DOG is intrigued. He approaches and circles HATTIE, looking at her and her hat, as WALTZ MUSIC CONTINUES.

M.C. DOG and HATTIE do a lovely little waltz. As it ends, they turn to one another and say ---

HATTIE

Hello.

M.C. DOG

Hello.

HATTIE

Do you like my hat?

M.C. DOG

I do not. Good-by!

HATTIE

Good-by!

And HATTIE is gone.

M.C. DOG

Dog.

Big dog. Little dog.

Big dogs and little dogs.

Black and white dogs.

One little dog going in.

Three big dogs going out.

No sooner has this happened, but ---

COLOR / MOTION

Three cut-outs of TREES are quickly pushed on stage: A RED DOG pushes a blue tree; a BLUE DOG pushes a red tree; and a GREEN DOG pushes a yellow tree. As they appear, they are introduced ---

M.C. DOG

A red dog on a blue tree.

A blue dog on a red tree.

A green dog on a yellow tree.

A YELLOW DOG enters, quickly and hopefully.

YELLOW DOG

A yellow dog on a . . .

He grows silent. He does not have a tree to sit on.

SONG: "RED DOG, BLUE DOG, GREEN DOG, YELLOW"

This is a "call and response" SONG, sung by M.C. DOG and the FOUR COLORED DOGS.

As they sing, the DOGS move from tree to tree – and each time the MUSIC STOPS, they stop – and ONE DOG is always without a tree. It is a game of "musical trees" – and the dog that is *a/ways* without a tree is the YELLOW DOG.

RED DOG

A RED DOG ON A BLUE TREE

BLUE DOG

A BLUE DOG ON A RED TREE

GREEN DOG

A GREEN DOG ON A YELLOW TREE

YELLOW DOG

A YELLOW DOG . . .

The YELLOW DOG once again look around for his tree. There is none.

RED AND M.C. DOGS

A RED DOG ON A YELLOW TREE

BLUE AND M.C. DOGS

A BLUE DOG ON A BLUE TREE

GREEN AND M.C. DOGS
A GREEN DOG ON A RED TREE

YELLOW DOG
A YELLOW DOG . . .

Once again, the YELLOW DOG is without a tree. He walks offstage, defeated (for now) . . .

M.C. DOG / OTHER DOGS
A RED DOG ON A RED TREE
A BLUE DOG ON A YELLOW TREE
A GREEN DOG ON A BLUE TREE

And now the YELLOW DOG is back on stage, victorious. He is holding: THE SUN. He proudly says ---

YELLOW DOG
The sun is up.
The sun is YELLOW!

ALL DOGS
TADA!

ALL the dogs are impressed. Then the YELLOW DOG takes out a fan and says ---

YELLOW DOG
It is hot out here in the sun.

YELLOW DOG moves under a tree, and sits in the shade, as the SONG CONTINUES ---

GREEN DOG
A GREEN DOG OVER A TREE
YELLOW DOG
A YELLOW DOG UNDER A TREE

GREEN DOG
THE GREEN DOG IS UP

YELLOW DOG
THE YELLOW DOG IS DOWN

ALL DOGS
THE SUN IS UP
THE SUN IS YELLOW!

YELLOW
(wiping his brow)
IT IS HOT OUT HERE IN THE SUN.

The BLUE, GREEN and RED DOGS now all don their sunglasses. They sip from tropical drinks, as the SONG takes on a “cool” hipster-like feel . . .

BLUE DOG
THE BLUE DOG IS . . . IN

RED DOG
THE RED DOG IS . . . OUT

GREEN, BLUE, RED DOGS
BLUE . . . IN . . . RED . . . OUT
GREEN . . . UP . . . YELLOW
RED . . . IN . . . BLUE . . . OUT
GREEN . . . ON . . . YELLOW

GREEN, BLUE, RED, YELLOW DOGS
THE SUN IS UP!
THE SUN IS YELLOW!

YELLOW DOG
It is hot out here in the sun.

M.C. DOG appears and BLOWS A WHISTLE – which, of course, *ONLY THE DOGS can hear*.

They STOP.

M.C. DOG lifts a MEGAPHONE and says ---

M.C. DOG

It is not hot here under the house.

And, so, the TREES are removed and ---

WORK

RED DOG brings on a LONG, WOODEN PLANK. Comedy ensues as M.C. DOG tries to decide where the PLANK should go – and RED DOG tries to avoid clunking M.C. DOG as he swings the PLANK, hither and yon, into position.

Finally, the PLANK is placed across TWO LADDERS (OR METAL BARRELS).

M.C. DOG is now wearing a CONSTRUCTION HELMET. He produces a TAPE MEASURE and prepares to measure various aspects of the WORK SITE. During what follows, M.C. DOG'S measuring is continually INTERRUPTED / ALTERED by the arrival of all the WORKING DOGS.

M.C. DOG

Dogs at work.

BLUE DOG appears, wearing a tool belt (as all the dogs will during this section). BLUE DOG takes a HAMMER from his tool belt and begins to hammer a nail into the board. BLUE DOG continues this action, as ---

GREEN DOG appears, holding a SAW. He begins to saw – this SOUND joining the sound of the hammering. Then ---

SPOTTED DOG appears, carrying a SHOVEL and/or PICK AXE. She, too, goes to work, and this SOUND is also joined by ---

RED DOG, who appears and begins to operate a large DRILL.

M.C. DOG has finished/given up on hi measuring. He is now holding a set of BLUEPRINTS, which he consults during the following.

The SOUNDS OF WORK continue to build – a PERCUSSIVE CACOPHONY made by all the workers and their tools. MUSIC, too, joins in with these sounds.

After a long period of working very hard: the DOGS ALL STOP, briefly. They each remove handkerchiefs from their pockets and WIPE THEIR BROWS – all together, in unison, as ---

M.C. DOG lowers his blueprints, lifts his bullhorn, and barks out the words ---

M.C. DOG
Work, dogs, work!

The DOGS immediately return to their work, as ---

BLUE DOG enters, operating a JACKHAMMER. It joins the OTHERS and the WORK MUSIC BUILDS.

After a moment, M.C. DOG BLOWS HIS WHISTLE and they ALL STOP, again. (All, that is, except for the BLUE DOG – whose body continues to “shake”, even though the JACKHAMMER is still and silent.)

All the DOGS stare at M.C. DOG: “What’s going on?”

M.C. DOG stares, hard, at the blueprints. Back at the work site. Again, at the blueprints. Then, he realizes . . .

M.C. DOG
Aha!

He TURNS THE BLUEPRINTS UPSIDE DOWN – and is pleased with the result. He then directs all the WORKING DOGS to switch positions to the opposite side of the stage (and possibly turn their tools upside down) to reflect his newfound plan. The DOGS do as he asks. Then ---

M.C. DOG

Work, dogs, work!

Now the WORK MUSIC BUILDS AND CONTINUES – the percussive rhythms growing still wilder and more intricate – and then . . .

A CAR DRIVES ACROSS THE STAGE. Inexplicably. In silence. The DOGS all STOP and WATCH – following it offstage with their eyes and ears.

When the CAR IS GONE . . . a beat . . . THEN BACK TO THE WORK MUSIC, AS IT CRESCENDOS – pounding, stomping, the jackhammer pulling BLUE DOG around the stage – the DOGS, perhaps, switching tools – juggling the handkerchiefs with which they wiped their brows – building to frenzy – all the DOGS working as ONE, as a TEAM – and then ---

M.C. DOG appears, pushing a SMALL WHEELBARROW. He BLOWS HIS WHISTLE (which, again, only the DOGS can hear) and ALL WORK STOPS. It is ---

LUNCHTIME

The DOGS gather, side by side, standing behind the PLANK (which now serves as the lunch table). A TABLECLOTH is placed on the table. A CANDLE is lit. The DOGS each don a BIB, which they fasten with elan around their necks.

From the wheelbarrow, M.C. DOG removes COLORED LUNCH BOXES, one at a time. He SLIDES the LUNCH BOXES down the plank to the DOG of corresponding color.

The DOGS – including M.C. DOG – all happily open their lunch boxes in unison. In silence, they peer inside – hopeful. They each remove a LARGE SANDWICH from their lunch box.

They look at each other . . . they look down at their sandwiches . . . and, of course, they begin to TRADE. This begins casually, calmly – then very quickly escalates into something worthy

of a HIGH STAKES AUCTION and/or the FLOOR OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE. Finally: YELLOW DOG, somehow, ends up with ALL the sandwiches and the GAME IS SUDDENLY OVER. Almost sheepishly, YELLOW DOG hands all the sandwiches back to the appropriate DOGS. In the frenzy, GREEN DOG'S sandwich had been thrown away/aside/offstage. She has nothing to eat. So: YELLOW DOG "cuts his sandwich in half" and shares with RED DOG. They're all happy and hungry now.

And they are all about to take their first, HUGE BITE, when ---

HATTIE #2

HATTIE appears, wearing a still more wonderful hat. She is riding a SMALL SCOOTER. A snippet of "HATTIE'S WALTZ" plays as she arrives.

She stops. She looks directly at M.C. DOG. The OTHER DOGS are between them, watching.

HATTIE

Hello again.

M.C. DOG tips his CONSTRUCTION HELMET, saying ---

M.C. DOG

Hello.

HATTIE

Do you like my hat?

M.C. DOG takes a longer look this time. Then ---

M.C. DOG

I do not like it. Good-by again.

HATTIE

Good-by.

HATTIE scooters off in one direction, as ---

M.C. DOG exits, opposite.

The WORKER DOGS are left alone. They return to their LUNCH. Then . . .

PLAY

RED DOG gestures for BLUE DOG to pass him the SALT SHAKER. She does. RED DOG “shakes” it – to make sure there’s something inside.

It makes NO noise. He tosses the SHAKER back to BLUE DOG – who “shakes” it: and it RATTLES LIKE A MOROCCA.

Back to RED DOG – who “shakes” it: NO SOUND. Back to BLUE DOG – and to ALL THE OTHER DOGS – who “shake” it and it RATTLES.

RED DOG starts off and the SHAKER is thrown to him again – he doesn’t want it. He THROWS IT BACK – and it is THROWN BACK AT HIM – repeatedly – until: what is thrown is no longer the SHAKER, but, instead, a BASEBALL!

When the BALL is thrown – it is now caught by a MITT. A BAT and CATCHER’S MASK and CAPS appear.

The DOGS turn to the audience and say, happily ---

DOGS

Dogs at play.

MUSIC, UNDER, as – using the barrels and planks – a BASEBALL DIAMOND is set up, facing the AUDIENCE.

The PITCHER, CATCHER, BATTER, and FIELDER take their positions. As the PITCHER winds up to throw the first pitch ---

M.C. DOG appears, carrying the bullhorn.

The DOGS STOP, busted. Afraid he'll make them stop.

M.C. DOG raises the bullhorn and says ---

M.C. DOG
Play, dogs, play!

And they do!

M.C. DOG assumes his position as the UMPIRE. ANOTHER DOG joins them in the OUTFIELD (THE AUDIENCE).

The game is played out – the balls (oversized, beachball-like) are hit into the audience – retrieved by the fielders with the audience members help – adlibs are shouted out as needed – it all is a ton of fun – it's a GRAND OLD GAME.

At some point in the GAME, EVERYTHING STOPS when, *again* ---

M.C. DOG
Stop!

A CAR DRIVES ACROSS THE STAGE. The DOGS watch in silent amazement, and curiosity. Then ---

THEY return to the GAME. As the PITCHER now pitches to the FINAL BATTER, the wind-up goes into SLOW-MOTION. Lights and sound change to reflect this.

The BALL (now imagined) comes slowly towards the HITTER – who SMACKS IT (still in slow-motion) – and ALL THE DOGS watch it sail far into the IMAGINARY DISTANCE.

As the DOGS gather on one side of the stage, still watching the FLIGHT OF THE BALL ---

M.C. DOG appears, opposite, holding a CAN OF BLUE PAINT.

As the BALL is about to “land” – M.C. DOG “tosses” the PAINT (blue glitter) ONTO THE STAGE, turning EVERYTHING TO BLUE. ALL WATER. And THE BALL “LANDS” with a “SPLASH”!

M.C. DOG turns to the audience and quietly says ---

M.C. DOG

Splash!

Now it is night.

NIGHT ON THE WATER

A LOVELY MOON DESCENDS and hovers above.

MUSIC: “THE WATER BALLET”

As YELLOW DOG and SPOTTED DOG “swim” through the “water” – enacting the WATER BALLET – M.C. DOG sits atop his DOGHOUSE, looking on through a PERISCOPE, saying . . .

M.C. DOG

A dog over the water.

THE BALLET CONTINUES.

M.C. DOG

A dog under the water.

YELLOW DOG and SPOTTED DOG look up and see M.C. DOG watching them. They point at him, saying ---

M.C. DOG

One dog up on a house.

And now, M.C. DOG tosses his periscope away, and DIVES DOWN INTO THE WATER, joining the OTHERS and saying ---

M.C. DOG

Three dogs down in the water.

THE BALLET CONCLUDES – with the SWIMMING DOGS waving a LARGE BUBBLE WAND, as ---

THE ROWBOAT comes on. In the boat are BLUE DOG, GREEN DOG and RED DOG. (*The picture is identical to page 33 of the book.*)

As the three “swimmers” leave the stage, passing the ROWBOAT, they say, quietly ---

M.C. DOG

Three dogs

At a party

On a boat

At night.

The DOGS IN THE ROWBOAT are now alone onstage. They play checkers, lick a lollipop, strum/hum a (cut-out) banjo. Very quiet; very content.

After a long moment, they ALL look up and SEE THE MOON.

Pause.

SONG: “BOW WOW ROUND” – a lovely, melodic round that is both hummed and howled.

As the SONG ENDS, one of the DOGS quietly blows out the LANTERN above them. When he/she does this . . .

The MOON GOES OUT.

End of Act One.