

## **THE BUTTONHOLE BANDIT: A SYNOPSIS**

One act musical with 10 scenes; 14 songs; 45-50 minutes

TIME: The present

PLACE: A home in a city suburb, and the five planets of the Galaxy Clesto: Gelvos, Tobos, Brelluma, Mollbath, and Vucuma.

CHARACTERS: An ensemble of no less than six actors: Phoebe Potts and her parents, Howard and Mildred; the extraterrestrials: Melf, Alphos, Narbot, Vizeer Volspar, Xanthees, Qwerkiss, Brelleya; and Phobee Moth

PLOT SYNOPSIS: The Buttonhole Bandit is a space age allegory revolving around a latchkey child who is hurled into an alien galaxy to navigate her way through fear and loneliness towards freedom and acceptance. Phoebe Potts spends her after school hours cowering in a closet. After following a moth to a buttonhole which is actually a wormhole, Phoebe is propelled to the Galaxy Clesto. The first planet she encounters is Gelvos where bizarre creatures possess huge hands with penetrating powers to see through thick densities of matter and determine the life span of all creatures. Delighted to learn she will live to the age of 103, Phoebe attempts to earn her own Gelfin hands so she can return to Earth with talents that will guarantee her future livelihood. Unfortunately, Phoebe's fretful presence soon causes an imbalance in the harmonic energies of Gelvos, and she is swiftly banished. Melf, a courageous Gelf, agrees to guide Phoebe to other planets to seek the true source of the chaos and return her to Earth. Terrified and adrift, they journey to the shrinking planet of Tobos where the two remaining inhabitants are radically split between joyous and gloomy natures. The dense gravitational field of Tobos is overcome by antigravity boots that enable Phoebe to make superhuman leaps. Eager to manufacture the boots on Earth, Phoebe agrees to take the doomed Toboites to safety. Next they flee to Brelluma, a frozen planet of amphibious creatures who breathe under water with special beanies that function as gills. Here Phoebe's compassion is tested as she is asked to dive into deep treacherous lakes to save the dying baby Brells. She finally retrieves them, and the crew continue their trek towards the planet Mollbath. Here a thick, poisonous ether has caused the Molls to fall into deep comas shrouded in pale cocoons. Soon Melf and the other passengers succumb, and Phoebe is left utterly alone. Throughout the play is a parallel journey in which Phoebe is pursued by a hideous creature visible only to herself. As her fellow travelers sink into deepening slumbers she is left to face the creature, and discovers it to be a monstrous moth named Phobee, who embodies her worst fears, feeding on her phobias, and wreaking havoc on the planets. Phoebe and Phobee finally clash and Phoebe triumphs, shrinking Phobee to her proper size and bringing harmony to the galaxy Clesto (an anagram for closet). Now she is free to return to her closet on Earth with its gloves (Gelvos), its boots (Tobos), its umbrella (Brelluma), and mothballs (Mollbath). By the end of her perilous journey, Phoebe has discovered friendship, self-esteem, and a courageous desire for further challenges.