



# PRODUCTION GUIDE

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## Introduction

What? An entire school made up of students who are actually zombies, and others who are just dying to get in there? Sound familiar? But these are not ordinary zombies. (I can't believe I just wrote that!) These are zombies that long to be vegetarians, or at least have a diet that includes something more delectable than an everyday, ordinary diet of brains. These are zombies that despise bullying in all its shapes and forms, and these are zombies who above all, love to sing, dance and crack silly zombie jokes. These are MY kind of zombies!

We think it will be a lot of fun to allow your students to create their own zombie costumes and make-up, act like lovable creeps and perhaps remind themselves and audiences how better to treat one another as human beings.

For those of you who may have reluctant boys and girls who don't necessarily want to be in a production full of puppies and dancing flowers, we hope that playing a zombie might get them excited about being on stage, making music together, sharing a message of inclusion and being a part of something positive.

For those of you who have produced Roger and my shows' *Pirates!*, *Pirates 2!* and *A Pirate's Christmas*, it might just be time to move on to *Zombies!*

## The Elements

We have tried to provide you with everything you will need to ensure a successful production.

All of the script and musical elements are downloadable and reproducible.

### **Piano/Conductor Score**

Should you decide to perform with live instruments instead of the recording, this piano/conductor score is fully reproducible. You can print out as many copies as you wish to help make your production successful. You may want one for your accompanist, your conductor, your director, choreographer, stage manager, etc. This score includes the full script and piano/vocal arrangements (with choreography notes).

### **Downloadable MP3's**

You will have two tracks for each song: one track with full voices to use as a demonstration for your young thespians and singers, and one track without voices to be used in your own performance.

### **Script and Vocal Songsheets**

You may duplicate as many as you would like for your cast and crew.

### **Demonstration Video**

In this video, I'll demonstrate some accessible choreography and staging suggestions you can utilize, adapt or ignore as you see fit. Feel free to post them on your own YouTube or school website if you think it will help your cast rehearse on their own. To access, use this link and password:

<https://vimeopro.com/pusher/zombies-the-musical>

password: hunter

### **Video Production Rights**

If you have purchased the rights to download *Zombies*, you have also purchased the rights to video your production as you see fit – air it on your local cable networks, share it on YouTube, sell DVD's to your fans as a fundraiser, and so on.

### **Show Logo Art**

You are also welcome to utilize our show logo art for posters to advertise your production, program covers, t-shirts and other uses.

### **Performance License**

Your performance license is good for one year. If you decide to do the musical again in your career, there will be a nominal fee to re-up for another year. In this way we can keep the costs down for everyone. In other words, what you can't do is share your license with another school or performing arts organization in order for them to stage their own production; or you can't perform it every year without renewing the rights via our website. We are trying to keep this as affordable as possible for everyone while maintaining the high-quality resource you deserve. We respectfully ask you to play by these rules.

## Cast of Characters

**Hunter:** Could be played by a boy or a girl. An ordinary kid who finds him or herself in extraordinary circumstances.

**Hunter's Mother:** Could be played by a student or a favorite teacher. This character should begin as your basic Donna Reed-style mother, but morphs into a zombie for the final punch line of the show.

**C.A. Daver:** The principal of Zombie School. He should have a flamboyant costume and hairstyle. This character could also be played by a girl or a boy. It's impossible to play this part too over-the-top!

**The Zombies:** The rest of the cast list are all zombies. Roles could be divided for a larger cast or combined for a smaller cast.

### **3 Student Hecklers (all zombies)**

**Vera**

**Tina**

**Armand**

**Shaun**

**Travis**

**Selena**

**Ana**

**Stephen**

**Dana**

**Francine**

**Henry**

**Molly**

**Samantha**

### **3 Student Zombie Bullies**

**Michael**

**Madeline**

**Rachel**

**Heloise**

**Bourdain**

**Zombies 1, 2, 3, 4**

**Zombie Cheerleaders (any number)**

## The Set

*Zombies* takes place in two places:

### Scenes 1 and 8: **Hunter's Bedroom at home**

This could simply be a bare stage with Hunter on the floor in front of a television. It would be great if he were sitting essentially in the dark with a glow from the "TV" to light him up. You could have the box of an old television, or just a square box that looks like a TV with a light inside to shine on Hunter. The audience need not see the front of the TV. In Scene 1, the mother might turn on a light as she enters. In Scene 8, she might simply have a flashlight to reveal her *Zombie* face.

### Scenes 2-7: **Zombie School**

For the school, you need mostly a bare stage decorated with normal school things, but with a twist. Perhaps you have a sign overhead that reads "ZOMBIE SCHOOL!" "People are dying to get in!" You could also include posters, desks, lockers, lunchroom tables and other regular school items. You could include skeletons hanging as in a science lab, a posted lunch menu with nothing but brains on it, coffins or any other ghoulish paraphernalia.

## Staging Suggestions

**Scene 1:** The curtain opens to the sound of Bach's "Toccatina in D Minor." We see Hunter sitting on the floor watching TV or in his bed (a mattress). He might be holding a stuffed animal or wrapping himself in a blanket as he is being frightened by what he sees on television. The "He's Alive!" voice should seem as though it is coming from the television. Hunter is rapt in attention to the scary movie so that when his mother turns on the light, he overreacts in fear!

After his mother tells him to go to sleep, he lies down. We hear the sleep music and he is asleep.

**Scene 2:** We are now at *Zombie School*. This is all Hunter's dream. Hunter is now out of bed, dressed in normal school clothes. The rest of the cast enters, acting zombie-like and dressed like zombies. Hunter is center stage as the others pass by him, some stopping to deliver their lines.

### **Song: Zombie School (Brave New Day!)**

This song introduces the idea that this is no ordinary day. Throughout the song, Hunter is realizing that something is very different here. Hunter's solo lines such as "All my friends look a little bit strange!" could be directed right at the audience, momentarily breaking the fourth wall.

We are introduced to C.A. Daver, the principal and the lovable hecklers who feed him set up lines. The zombies should feel free to insert zombie moans and howls whenever possible. These are happy zombies and the choreography will reflect that.

**Scene 3:** Hunter is center stage and all of the zombies are staring at him as though he is creeping them out. Feel free to add more bad zombie jokes whenever you see fit.

### **Song: Upside Down**

During this song, Hunter has realized that everything is not as it used to be. There could be some fun staging with zombies doing handstands, cartwheels, etc. to demonstrate upside down. The crux of the song is that as weird as Hunter thinks the zombies are, they see him as equally strange and foreign.

**Scene 4:** By now Hunter thinks these zombies are strangely cool. Of course, like any normal kid, he wants to fit in and if that means he is going to be a zombie too, so be it. Ironically, he still freaks out the zombies!

### **Song: So You Wanna Be a Zombie?**

You can use many of your favorite 1950s rock and roll moves for choreography in this song. For the "shoo bee doo" singers, you might consider the three girl singers who show up in the Broadway musical *Little Shop of Horrors*. They keep popping up like the Supremes, adding background singing and choreography, only these are Supreme zombies!

The Tango dance break is meant to be ridiculous. It could be led by Principal C.A. Daver. Be certain to freeze on the musical breaks to let the one-line jokes pop out.

By the end, Hunter should be dancing along with all the zombies. He loves this!

### **Scene 5: The Lunchroom**

Setting up the lunchroom scene. We tried to make this more fun than about actually eating brains, which we all know is what zombies do.

Feel free to add more zombie jokes such as:

*Zombie: “Hey Hunter, what do zombies have for dessert?”*

*Hunter: “I don’t know. What DO zombies have for dessert?”*

*Zombie: I scream!!!*

### **Song: Zombie Lunch**

For character, you could model this song after “Be Our Guest” from *Beauty and The Beast* or “The Waiter’s Gallop” from *Hello Dolly*. In other words, there could be zombies dressed as waiters carrying platters of food and drink, a line of zombie chefs, zombie silverware, etc. Since it’s in 3/4 time, zombies dancing the waltz together would be perfectly appropriate. They might even take turns waltzing in a comical way with Hunter. Depending on how elaborate your set is, there could be dancing on table tops, with napkins, table clothes, etc. as props.

### **Scene 6: The Bullies**

Not every zombie is automatically as lovable as we have seen so far. Much like Hunter bullied little kids at school, the zombie bullies show up to give him a taste of his own medicine. Even still, these bullies could be somewhat comical, think of the Lollipop Kids from *The Wizard of Oz* perhaps. Tough guys ... sort of. They are not actually that brave so it should be funny when they turn and run at the idea of “life” savers. Remind your cast that whenever they deliver lines that are puns or twists on words, they must overdo the important words so that the joke is clear to the audience. For instance, the word LIFE savers, should be pronounced with that sort of emphasis and pause after the word LIFE, as if you are saying “Get it? LIFE savers?”

### **Song: Open Your Heart**

This is the most important song of the show in that it really addresses the core issue of acceptance of those who are different than us. The song is sung towards Hunter with perhaps the last refrain directly toward the audience. Also, during the last refrain, some of the zombies could approach Hunter, pat him on the shoulder, put an arm around him, etc. indicating their acceptance of him no matter how different he is.

### **Scene 7:**

The zombie cheerleaders should be an ideal opportunity for some comic relief after the ballad. You could have as many cheerleaders as you wish – boys and girls – with appropriate zombie-like cheerleader moves. This segues into the big production number “Zombie Stomp!” Perhaps a zombie pyramid would end the cheer.

### **Song: Zombie Stomp!**

This song is a cross between funky disco, the Macarena, The Time Warp from *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and any other party dance you can remember. It might be a perfect

opportunity to get some performers out into the audience, maybe even encouraging their participation. By the end of the song, all of the zombies and Hunter are exhausted and collapse into a deep sleep.

### **Scene 8: Hunter's bedroom at home**

As the dream music plays, the Zombies exit and we find ourselves back in Hunter's bedroom where we began the program. Hunter is asleep but wakes up when his mom enters, turns on the light and wakes him to get ready for school. The mother should have her back to the audience during the first part of this scene. Then when she turns to reveal her true zombie self, there could be flashing lights, thunder claps and the final "Toccata in D Minor" punch line. Hunter screams and the curtain closes or the lights go to black.

### **Curtain Call and Bows**

We included a reprise of "Zombie Stomp!" to give you ample opportunity for curtain calls and bows.

## **Epilogue Extensions**

When we created *ZOMBIES The Musical*, we meant for it to be a light-hearted musical that would give your cast members an opportunity to make-believe, letting their imaginations and passion for performance shine. In other words, it's supposed to be fun! Yet, as teachers it is typically impossible to let such an obviously "teachable moment" slip by without taking advantage of it. If you feel that way too and you want to extend the musical to give it another level of influence, here are a few ideas for both scripting and popular song ideas intended to give you a framework for a meaningful, musical lesson. Feel free to adapt in any way that works for you and your particular cast.

### **EXTENSION 1**

Speaker 1: We hope you've enjoyed our humorous look at one person's wish to be included ... even if the group he wants to belong to is a bunch of scary zombies!

Speaker 2: By the way zombies are not real ... *(pause)* ... we think.

Speaker 3: Our musical *Zombies* is essentially about Hunter's wish to be included in this special club. He wants to fit in.

Speaker 4: The fact is that in "real" life, many "real" students often feel "left out," isolated and alone; unseen, unheard and lonely."



**Song Suggestions:**

“Stand by Me” (2pt or SAB) arranged by Roger Emerson, Hal Leonard

“Waving Through a Window” (2pt or SAB) arranged by Roger Emerson, Hal Leonard

**EXTENSION 2**

Speaker 1: There is hope! There is *always* hope! Although we may look like a bunch of zombies to you, everyone involved in our show “gets that!”

Speaker 2: All of us on this stage believe that no one is alone and nothing is ever so scary that we can’t handle it, together! We hope that you feel that way too!

**Song Suggestions:**

“Count on Me” (2pt or 3pt mixed) arranged by Janet Day, Hal Leonard

“You Will Be Found” (2pt or SAB) arranged by Mac Huff, Hal Leonard

**EXTENSION 3**

Speaker 1: Zombies kind of all look alike! But we have learned that in “real” life, it is so important to be yourself! Be honest, open and caring. After all, there is only one YOU!”

Speaker 2: And one of *you* is enough!

Speaker 1: (*insulted*) Hey!

Speaker 2: And *all* of you is perfect!

Speaker 1: (*happy zombie moan*)

(*2 speakers “high five” each other*)

**Song Suggestions:**

“This Is Me” (2pt or SAB), arranged by Mac Huff, Hal Leonard

“Stand in the Light” (SSA or SAB), arranged by Roger Emerson, Hal Leonard

#### EXTENSION 4

Speaker 1: And so today we make a pledge!

Speaker 2: From this point forward ... we will be better!

Speaker 3: Kinder!

Speaker 4: More hopeful!

Speaker 5: And more helpful!

Speaker 6: We will work to make sure everyone we meet feels they have a place to belong.

Speaker 7: Even if they are ...

All: (*in zombie voices*) Zombies!

#### **Song Suggestions:**

“A Million Dreams” (2pt or SAB), arranged by Mac Huff, Hal Leonard

(Alternate) “A Million Dreams” (SSA or 3pt mixed), arranged by Roger Emerson, Hal Leonard

“From Now On” (2pt or SAB), arranged by Roger Emerson, Hal Leonard

**The End**  
(or is it?)