



The complete Libretto can be obtained direct from: info@philipbuttall.co.uk
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Composer's Note

“Dick Whittington and his Cat” was first performed at Torpoint School, Cornwall in 1975, where Tony Bowditch, who wrote the lyrics, and I both taught. It was subsequently broadcast on *Plymouth Sound* Radio Station, at Christmas of the same year. Students at the school, an 11-16 Mixed Comprehensive, took most of the main roles, as well as providing all the chorus and dancers. The Dame, (Cicely Suett), Alderman Fitzwarren, and the Sultan were all played by staff. In pantomime tradition, the part of Dick Whittington is taken by a girl. The original accompaniment was provided by myself at the piano, with bass and drums.

The story is the conventional one of “Dick Whittington and his Cat”, with some additional colour added. The whole musical score has been specially composed, rather than assembling it from a number of different extant pieces, as is sometimes the case. As is traditional, there are some local references, as well as the occasional reference to a pertinent event or name from the 70s. These should, of course, be altered and updated accordingly. The original book and lyrics are used, and any such anachronisms or local names are shown in **red** for ease of recognition.

The full musical score is available from www.SibeliusMusic.com Full performance rights are freely granted to those who have purchased the musical score and the libretto!

For any queries, or further assistance, please contact info@philiprbuttall.co.uk

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Fairy Avalanche, fairy godmother and narrator
Dick Whittington, hero of the day,
Cat, his trusty companion, (non-singing)
Dame Cicely Suett, owns the Bakery,
Bertie Bungle, his apprentice, (non-singing)
Trial & Error, policemen, (non-singing)
Alice Fitzwarren, the heroine,
Alderman Fitzwarren, the magistrate and villain, (non-singing)
Alderman Haddock, an old merchant seeking Alice's hand, (non-singing)
1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Apprentices (non-singing)
King Rat, leader of the rats,
Captain, a nautical commander, (non-singing)
King Neptune, ruler of the waves, (non-singing)
Britannia, champion of the Britons,
Sultan, an Arabian ruler,
1st, 2nd & 3rd Ministers, part of his government (non-singing)
Harem-Scarem, one of the Sultan's wives, almost a Sultana (non-singing)

Chorus of stallholders, apprentices, customers, sailors, fish, and Dancers.

The action takes place in London, on board ship, in Neptune's Kingdom, and in Morocco. A Dick Whittington is reputed to have left his village in 1371, to find fame and fortune in London, but in pantomime, time is always relative!

Synopsis

The opening prologue by the good-natured Fairy Avalanche introduces the plot, and the main players.

Act I proper opens with Dick, and his trusty companion, Cat, just five miles outside London. They arrive in the city as the stallholders are setting out the market. Dick meets Miss Cicely Suett, and has a minor run in with the law along the way. He then sees Alice Fitzwarren, with whom he instantly falls in love, and finds her purse, full of gold, which she accidentally drops. Dick, following Suett's suggestion, asks Alderman Fitzwarren whether he might become one of his apprentices. When Dick returns the gold to Alice, her father thinks that here is an honest lad, and takes him on. Alderman Haddock is another rich merchant who wants to marry Alice, but only for her father's money. When he confronts Alice, she says that she needs time to consider his offer. Meanwhile, the apprentices are unhappy that the ruling Aldermen want to ban the current dance craze, the Maypole Rock, because it's considered unsuitable. To show their defiance, the apprentices and dancers show Dick what the Maypole Rock is all about!

King Rat then makes his entry, and declares that his main task is to get rid of Dick's Cat, and soon meets Haddock who tells him of his plight with Alice's hand. Seeing that he can kill two birds with one stone, or at least one cat, Rat suggests that he and Haddock work together, although Haddock does not suspect the real motive. We return briefly to Suett's bakery, in order to rest the plot briefly, and indulge in the customary custard pie fight! Dick then meets Alice, and declares his love for her, but whilst she reciprocates, is loathe to tell her father, who would see Dick merely as a penniless money-grabber. Haddock enters, after Alice goes, and hearing of Dick's sad predicament, decides to give him a substantial sum of money as a loan. Only then, however, does he realise that it is Alice, whom he also wants, that Dick intends to marry. Once the penny has dropped, Haddock suggests that he tell Alice to meet Dick at eight o'clock later that evening in the market square. We soon find that this was actually Rat's suggestion, who now is confident of getting Cat as well.

After the market closes, Haddock, Fitzwarren and the law conceal themselves, as Dick and Cat come by to meet Alice. Haddock has, in the meantime, told Fitzwarren that he didn't give any gold to Dick, but that he had stolen it from him. Cat is suspicious and sniffs out Haddock, biting him on the backside. They confront Dick who is swiftly arrested, despite maintaining his innocence. Rather than have Dick locked in the Tower, Fitzwarren, in a gesture to appease Alice, says that Dick must leave London within the hour, never to return. Haddock steps in to suggest that he will be just the right type of mature husband for Alice. Dick is distraught and meets Suett who, seeing his predicament, suggests that he should make the most of it and go overseas to seek fame and fortune, to which Dick agrees. Suett and Bungle ask to go along with him, and they decide to leave for Bristol to set sail. King Rat sees this as a perfect opportunity to finish off Cat once and for all, and he, too, makes up his mind to follow them on their travels, with a celebratory dance. The act closes with Dick and companions about to leave London, but not before the pealing of the bells sounds a premonition that he will ultimately return as London's Lord Mayor.

Act II opens with Dick, Cat, Suett and Bungle, on board ship. Suett is working as the chief cook, but her menus are decidedly boring, and the sailors would

give anything for some variety in their diet! Dick receives a visit from the Fairy, who tells him that his life is in danger, but gives him a Charm, which he is to use when trouble comes. King Rat is also on the scene, and delights in telling us that a big storm is on the way, which will send Dick and company down to the bottom of the ocean, where they will be at the mercy (not that he has any!) of King Neptune.

The storm then arrives, and the ship sinks, leaving all to leap overboard and down into the depths of the sea. King Neptune makes his stern appearance and his guards seize everyone, threatening them with the severest punishment, from which there will be no escape. Despite a diversionary 'floorshow' in the form of a "Dance of the Fishes", it seems as if there will now be nothing to save them from a terrible fate. In the nick of time, however, Dick remembers the Charm which he has been given and uses it to summon Britannia whose usual job is to look after the interest of the Royal Navy. She soon makes it clear that another of her roles is to look after any Britons who are in a spot of bother. She forces Neptune to release Dick and his friends, leaving the monarch of the sea to live in splendid isolation for at least six months, and then leads the company back to the surface, and freedom.

Meanwhile, back in London, Haddock is only too pleased to pass on the news to Alice, that Dick and company have perished during a terrible storm at sea. He asks her once more to marry him, but she still refuses to give him an answer. Seeking further revenge on her family, he produces a false set of deeds, which state that her father, Fitzwarren, is not, in fact, the legal owner of Fitzwarren Supermarkets, but that they actually belong to Haddock. Trial and Error are despatched to arrest Fitzwarren.

Having found dry land, Dick and his travelling companions, turn up in Morocco, where the Sultan, who is extremely bored with his constant diet of sun, sand and sex, is also beset by a plague of rats. He will give the highest reward to anyone who could rid him of them. Dick comes up with a plan to help, using the services of Cat, and with nothing to lose, the Sultan and his Ministers agree. The plan works and the rats are chased off, but King Rat enters, proving a more difficult customer to deal with! He fights a duel with Dick, and is on the point of winning by using his extra powers, when Cat leaps on him, and disposes of King Rat, once and for all. Dick is able to name his reward, which is a return trip to London, as well as anything he wishes from the Sultan's vast Treasury! A Harem Dance, which quickly degenerates into a 'Knees Up!', concludes their adventures in the East.

Back in London, the now penniless Fitzwarren has had to take up begging in order to make ends meet, and Alice decides that the only way to help him now, is to agree to marry Haddock, and benefit from his superior financial position. She sets off to tell him the good news, just before Suett appears, telling Fitzwarren that they are all alive and well, and back in England, although Dick and Cat had stayed an extra night in Bristol, so would be in town later. Realising that Haddock had planned everything, and was behind all the mischief, Suett asks Fitzwarren to marry her, and plans to expose Haddock, as long as Dick can arrive before the Alderman is married to Alice.

Haddock has now established himself as Lord Mayor, and informs the crowds that there will shortly be a wedding, and that Alice is to be his bride. No-one is happy, living under such an oppressive regime which Haddock has put in place. Bungle, in a rhyme, nearly gives the game away about Haddock, but the two policemen can't quite work out the final word and thus the key to the verse, until just after Dick makes his well-timed entrance, and denounces Haddock, when they produce the final, and

damning evidence that the former Lord Mayor had stolen the gold, and implicated both Dick and Fitzwarren in his evil machinations.

Haddock gets his just deserts, but this, of course, then creates a vacancy as London's Lord Mayor, for which Dick is successfully nominated, and subsequently elected to the post – and they all lived happily ever after!!

SAMPLE

“DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT”

No. 1

“PROLOGUE”

(Enter Fairy Avalanche – dialogue over music)

FAIRY Welcome all, for once again it’s time
 To bid you come and watch our pantomime.
 A tale we’ll tell, of romance, thrills and fun –
 Our hero is a lad – Dick Whittington.
 And helping him, while he does this and that,
 Is – yes, you’ve guessed – his true and faithful Cat.
 He comes to London, fortune for to seek,
 And finds his true love, someone quite unique,
 Who loves him still while he’s in places foreign,
 Alice, child of Alderman Fitzwarren.
 There’s villains too – perhaps they won’t appear.
 I’ll try to see that they don’t interfere.

(Sings) If you have a wrong which you’d like to see righted,
 Then I am the Fairy to ask.
 I’m equal to every task.
 There’s no magic spell
 Which I cannot do well
 And my clients are always delighted.

(Over music) I am the Fairy Avalanche. They tried to get Fairy Snowflake again for this pantomime, but she was booked up for the whole of Christmas at Stratford on Avon.

(Sings) I’ll watch over Dick as he goes on his travels,
 The powers of darkness I’ll foil.
 For honour and justice I’ll toil.
 By the powers above
 I’ll make sure that Love
 Conquers all, as the story unravels.

(Over music) I see that Dick and his Cat are nearing London at this very moment.

 Now ‘tis time for me to be away
 To London Town, there to see fair play.

(Exit)