Plays and Tales Written by R. Rex Stephenson

Compiled by Tina L. Hanlon, Joe Ray, Jody Brown, and Avery Ardis

DVD recordings of many of the plays are archived at the Franklin County Public Library (Rocky Mount, VA) and Ferrum College (Ferrum, VA).

Appalachian Folktales


“Foolish Jack.” Published in Jack Tales Too / Jack in the Blue Ridge Mountains.


“Greasy-Beard.” In “The Jack Tales” in Eight Plays for Youth. See also “Jack and Ol’ Greasy Beard.”

“Hardy Hard Head.” Published in Jack’s Adventures with the King’s Girl.


http://www2.ferrum.edu/applit/texts/jackgiantsrs.htm.


“Jack and the Mean Old Man.” Published in Jack Tales Too / Jack in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

“Jack and Ol’ Greasy Beard.” Published in The Jack Tales. See also “Greasy-Beard.”

“Jack and the Robbers.” In published script The Jack Tales, video The Jack Tales, and “The Jack Tales” in Eight Plays for Youth.

“Jack and the Three Giants.” In “The Jack Tales” in Eight Plays for Youth.

“Jack and the Witch’s Tale.” In published script The Jack Tales.

“Jack Fear-No-Man.” In published script The Jack Tales and video The Jack Tales.

Retold in story form: “Jack and the Giants.” See also “Jack and the Three Giants.”


“Jack’s Mother’s Second Marriage.” Published in Jack Tales Too / Jack in the Blue Ridge Mountains.


“Wicked John and the Devil.” In published script The Jack Tales and video The Jack Tales.

Jack Tale Players History

Dec. 11, 1975: first Jack Tale show at Callaway Elementary School
1978-82: 8 stateside USO tours of Jack Tale Players
1979: Too Free for Me developed by Jack Tale Players, becoming first historical play in summer program later called Blue Ridge Dinner Theatre
1995: 20th anniversary show at Blue Ridge Folklife Festival
June 3, 1995: 25th anniversary show at Blue Ridge Dinner Theatre
Dec. 2005: 30th anniversary show at Callaway Elementary School
Dec. 2010: Commendation from Ferrum College faculty on 35th anniversary
July 2012: All-American, All-Star USO Show (30th anniversary reunion, BRDT)
Oct. 27, 2012: Reunion show of Jack Tale Players, Blue Ridge Folklife Festival
2013- Rex and others tell tales after his retirement as Jack Tale Storytellers
Fall 2022: Return of Jack Tale Players with Ferrum College students performing tales and songs with faculty and BRDT alumni.
Study Guides on Rex Stephenson’s Folktales

Study guides in addition to those within other published scripts listed above:


Parts of this guide are reprinted in AppLit at “Activities to Accompany Study of Dramatizations by the Jack Tale Players,” “The Script as Story Theatre,” and “Jack and the King’s Girl.”

http://www2.ferrum.edu/applit/studyg/SOLFolktale.htm

http://www2.ferrum.edu/applit/studyg/STUDYGJT.htm


Other Family Plays


Alas, Alas Where For Art Thou Bisney? Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson and music by Jon Cohn. Ferrum College, mid-1990s.
And the Rains Came…and Came. Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson and music by Gary Evans (BRDT 1999).


A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court (BRDT 1998).

Daniel (BRDT 2003).


Heidi, with music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT 2011).

Jonah and the Big Fish. Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson. Lyrics and music by Emily Rose Tucker. (BRDT 2006).


Revised reprint Tallahassee, FL: Eldridge, with music by Jon Cohn and Emily Rose Tucker (with no new copyright date, published after BRDT 2009 production).
Condensed version of Alice in Wonderland also published by Eldridge.

Life on the Mississippi by Mark Twain (BRDT 2001).


Mark Twain’s Tom Sawyer—A Musical. Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson and music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT 2007).


The Prince and the Pauper (BRDT 2002)

Rudyard Kipling’s The Jungle Book (BRDT 1997)

Treasure Island (BRDT 1994)


Other Plays

Note: Many of Stephenson’s historical plays and adaptations of classic stories, especially the musical revues, use traditional music and popular songs from the era depicted, arranged by BRDT musicians. They also contain at least one original song written by the musicians indicated in these lists.

Bar Room Smasher, with music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT 2003).


Blue Suede Shoes: A Musical Revue of the 50s, with music by Emily Rose
Blue Suede Shoes: Part Two, with music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT 2010).


Won award in National Archives Playwriting Competition.

The Conspiracy, with music by Todd Necessary (BRDT 1990, 1995).

A Cricket on the Hearth. Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson and music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT 2008).

Early’s Light (BRDT 1982).


Recorded live on September 25, 1986.

Gabriel’s Honky Tonk Angels, with music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT 2011).


Glenn Myth and the Legend of Boone’s Hill, with co-author John Beach. Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson; music by Jon Cohn and David Mitchell (BRDT 1995).


The Innocent Waif from Franklin County (BRDT 1987).

The Littlest Shepherd. Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson and music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT Dec. 2009).

Mark Twain (performed with The Mousetrap by William Dean Howells, BRDT 1982)

An Evening with Mark Twain and Emily Dickinson (BRDT1986).
An Evening With Mark Twain (BRDT 1988).
Mark Twain Joins Jack Tales (BRDT 2005).

Mark Twain show on 100th anniversary of his death, Apr. 21, 2010.

Mark Twain’s Last Lecture Tour (BRDT 2010).

An Evening of Dinner & Theatre with Mark Twain, Mar. 15, 2023.

A Movement to Lead. (Ferrum College 1993). Videocassette, 60 min.

The Night Loretta, Mother Maybelle, and Jeannie C. Spent in Jail, with music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT 2012).

O’Callahan and The Ship That Wouldn’t Die (BRDT 1993).

The President is in Shackles (BRDT 1992, retitled to Jeff! 2006).

Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson; music by Todd Necessary and John Van Patten.

The Roar of the Silence (BRDT, 1981, 1992)

Published in NYU dissertation White Column Mansions, 1983.


Trial By Jury, with co-author Phillip Stephenson (BRDT 1988).


The Vision: A Play about John Wesley and the Founding of Kingswood School, with co-author Mike Trochim (BRDT 1998)


We Band of Brothers: The Cowboy Musical, with co-author Mike Trochim. Lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson and music by Jon Cohn (BRDT 1998).

When the Lights Go On Again, with music by Emily Rose Tucker (BRDT 2008, 2012).

Wicca (BRDT 1982).


The World is My Parish, with co-author Mike Trochim (BRDT 1997, 2007).

The World is My Parish, with co-author Mike Trochim (VA and NC tours of one-act version, 1997).