The Dancing Spider: Light Design

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Melinda Howell

Ms. Kathryn Stephens  Good Job!

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

May, 1997

May 10, 1997
Purpose of Thesis

This is a description of a creative project which included creating a light design for the Muncie Civic Theatre's children's production *The Dancing Spider*. A description of certain portions of the design and rationale behind these decisions. The aftereffects of this project are discussed. A cue sheet, show program, script and photographs from the production are also included.
The Dancing Spider: Light Design

My main concern in creating a light design for the Dancing Spider was that it was a children's production. Knowing that the majority of the audiences would be elementary school children, I felt that the lighting should be very dramatic and obvious whenever possible in order to have more of an effect for an audience that might not notice more subtle lighting. The idea was to make the experience of the theatre more dramatic and more magical for them.

This was also appropriate for the script itself, since the story is of a fairy-tale/legend type of background. This is evidenced by the presence of a storyteller who sets up the story. When the story then begins, I used a light focused on a mirror ball to create this effect. This was set up as a magical during the first scene, and then was used as a transition into the story proper to emphasize the change to the world of the story (cues 40 and 57).

Another important lighting affect was the use of tightly focused lights to isolate the children as they were supposed to be in distant villages. Here I used amber lights (cue 80, picture #4; upstage right and left), to help separate these actors from the rest of the stage, and yet not make them the complete focus of the audience's attention. This special situation also meant that I had to take some time to explain this lighting to the actors, and insure that they could place themselves in the light correctly (being young actors they had never done this before).
A particularly dramatic cue involved a scene in which the main character burned his head by hiding hot beans in his hat. To emphasize this feeling for the audience, I used a slow fade of first orange (roscolux #23) and then red (roscolux #24). This lighting was established for the song (picture #3), and then faded again once the character removed the hat and cooled himself.

A very different effect than this once was needed in a subsequent scene when this same character was feeling quite dejected. I used a lighter blue for frontlight (roscolux #64) and a darker blue downlight (roscolux #80). The created a generally light blue effect with darker highlights and shadows. These cool colors helped convey the sadness of the character.

Possibly the most obvious lighting effect was a green/blue (roscolux #89/#80) breakup to create a "jungle-like" atmosphere. The green/blue effect was achieved by cutting the gels and using half of each color in every instrument. This was used as preshow (cue 10) to set the mood (picture #1). It then appeared during the song "I'm the Queen of the Jungle" (cue 220) and the reprise "I'm the King of the Jungle" (cue 46). In these cues I also added a palm tree gobo which projected onto the cyc.

Overall, I achieved what I had hoped in most of these effects. The village specials (cue 80) were one situation that I felt might have been better. I would have liked to isolate these areas more dramatically, but this was difficult due to the number and placement of actors on the stage during
this section. Although it was not perfect, the look of this scene did improve with some adjustment, including the actors being able to place themselves correctly.

I was very satisfied by the final look created by the orange/red lights (cue 130-150). In another context, this much emphasize might be ridiculous, but in the context of a children's production and of a story setting, I felt that this was quite appropriate.

I was by far the happiest with the look created by the jungle breakup (picture #1). I felt that this created the exact look I had wanted it to. This lighting hitting the actors who walked through it intensified the feeling that the jungle-look created. Once again this was very dramatic and prominent. This made it very fun for me to create, since I was able achieve such a noticeable effect, without interfering with the integrity and mood of the play, and, in fact, enhancing this mood.

Many of the ideas behind light design were not new to me, but in creating a design of my own I soon learned that some aspects were foreign to me. Possibly the most salient of these was the idea of direction. I had a difficult time thinking in terms of what kind of difference is achieved by whether a light comes from in front, behind, above, or beside an actor. Through making this decisions in my own design and seeing the effects, I am now able to notice these effects in other productions. Even on television this choices have an impact, and I now find myself being able to realize what choice was made and try to analyze why. How colors
can create moods and looks, and the use of isolation are also concepts that I can now understand and appreciate more fully.

My college career, and in fact my entire education, has been very eclectic. This has always been something I have enjoyed about my education. My rather unusual choice of using my honors thesis to attempt something that I had never actually done before is definitely one that I do not regret. This project is in some way meant to be a culmination of a student's college experience. I think this project could easily be said to be that. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to try a new experience in another field rather than being locked down into my major.

This has certainly given me an appreciation for an aspect of life that I have never formally studied. In addition to noticing new perspectives in relation to lighting, it has given me a chance to realize that the more you know about a subject the more you like it. This experience was most definitely an educational one for me.
Bibliography


Special Thanks:

Eric Koger
Carmen Rugerro
Tony Howell
Lora Howell
## Dancing Spider: Lighting Cue Sheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page #</th>
<th>Cue #</th>
<th>Cue Line</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Preshow</td>
<td>Green/Blue breakup; blue wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>kids enter</td>
<td>intensity increase (wash)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Let's call the storyteller!</td>
<td>storyteller special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>storyteller moves</td>
<td>special out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>...to father to son.</td>
<td>effect light up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>...time of day.</td>
<td>effect light out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>...quite an experience.</td>
<td>blackout, with effect light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>actors in place</td>
<td>amber/blue wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Let's eat! (end of song)</td>
<td>light dims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>kids move to level 5</td>
<td>amber &quot;village&quot; specials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>violet house special</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>amber wash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>end of &quot;Easy Life&quot;</td>
<td>ambers increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pinks up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Let's go.</td>
<td>amber specials out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pinks out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Now let's work. (Corn Planting Song)</td>
<td>yellows up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>end of song</td>
<td>yellows out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>...sun stroke in this heat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>I'm going right now.</td>
<td>reds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>My poor head is so hot. (takes off hat)</td>
<td>slow fade reds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>beginning of &quot;Sorry Life&quot;</td>
<td>blue wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page #</td>
<td>Cue #</td>
<td>Cue Line</td>
<td>Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Ananse moves to rock DR.</td>
<td>blue DR special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>...don't even have any friends.</td>
<td>blue DR special out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Lion and Leopard enter.</td>
<td>pinks up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>...anything this day. pinks intensify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>...find out where house/web special up Leopard is.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>...as long as I live. pinks out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>beginning of &quot;I am the Queen of the Jungle&quot;</td>
<td>green/blue breakup palm tree on cyc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>Oh, my. (end of song)</td>
<td>green/blue breakup out palm tree out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>...and then they run. intensify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>...now off we go. generals dim reds up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>You'd better hide Ms. Lion.</td>
<td>fade out reds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>Ananse is King of the Jungle.</td>
<td>green/blue breakup palm tree on cyc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>storyteller arm motion</td>
<td>blackout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>bows</td>
<td>general lighting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Young Actor's Workshop
presents
THE DANCING SPIDER
Based on West African Folk Tales
A Musical in One Act
by MARILYN OSTERMAN and MARILYN KLUGE
DECEMBER 7, 1996
AT 2 PM & 7 PM
DIRECTOR CRAIG GIBSON
PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
THE DANCING SPIDER

A One-Act Musical Play

by
MARILYN OSTERMAN
and
MARILYN KLUGE

Based on West African Folk Tales

Music in Orff settings

Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia
THE DANCING SPIDER
A One-Act Musical
For Fifteen Characters*

CHARACTERS

ANANSE . a spider
ASO . his wife
MAMADI . his son
OSANSI . his son
CROOKY . his daughter
KAMWENDE . his daughter
BIAFU . his mother-in-law
TORTOISE
RABBIT
BIRD
BUTTERFLY
LEOPARD
LION
SPOTTED BIRD
ANTS (may vary from three to eight)
VOICES (may vary from three to eight and may also be doubled)
DANCING BUTTERFLIES (optional)

STORYTELLER

PLACE: A West African jungle
TIME: Long ago

THE DANCING SPIDER

SCENE: The auditorium is dark. We hear a fast drum beat as the curtain opens.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: A dim light shows children dressed in gay, flowing robes. The children form a circle and dance to African music or a drum beat. At the end of the dance a voice is heard shouting.

VOICE. Let’s call the storyteller! (The STORYTELLER walks over to a stump or a stool DR. Several children, who are the voices, follow him and form a circle around him. The other dancers go off L.)

VOICE. Let’s sit by the storyteller!

VOICE. He always has good things to tell.

VOICE. Tell us a story.

STORYTELLER (calmly arranging his robes; beginning to speak in a slow, deliberate voice). All right, but all of you . . . (indicating audience,) . . . will have to use your imaginations. You’ll have to pretend you live in a West African village.

VOICE. We will.

STORYTELLER. Your little round houses are empty now because everyone has gathered here in the clearing. Everyone is ready to hear a story which has been passed down from grandfather to father to son. (Very slowly.) This is a magic time of day.

VOICE. What story are you going to tell us?
The Dancing Spider

STORYTELLER. My story is about the most favorite character in all of West Africa.
VOICE. A story about Spider?
VOICE. Ananse, the Spider?
STORYTELLER. You guessed it. Spider is everyone's favorite. But what do you like about him so much?
VOICE. He's like me when I eat all the time.
VOICE. He reminds me of when I'm naughty.
VOICE. I like being lazy like him.
STORYTELLER. Yes, he is all of those things. Which is what makes him so much fun. (The STORYTELLER and the children sing the opening song. The STORYTELLER may sing a verse alone. A child or two may sing a verse alone, or all may sing together. The optional chorus may be used.)

OPENING SONG

STORYTELLER.
My, Spider, he's fancy free,
And as full of tricks as can be;
Others do his work, so you see.
(Children point to the audience and to themselves.)

VOICES.
Sometimes he's just like you and me.

VOICES.
It's the easy life he'll pursue,
And the deeds he does are so few,
Many hours of work he never knew:
(Children point to themselves and audience.)
Sometimes he's just like me and you.

Mr. Spider does love to eat
Vegetables and fruits, roasted meat:
But it's other's food he'll deplete:
Sometimes we think he's quite a cheat.

STORYTELLER. And that's why we love Spider. But, you know, all creatures change. Even Spider.
VOICE. You mean, he isn't always naughty?
STORYTELLER. Not any more than you're always naughty.
VOICE. And he isn't always lazy?
STORYTELLER. Well, I guess he still likes to be lazy some of the time. Just as we all do. But he learned it doesn't always pay to be lazy. In fact, he learned a lot of things. By the way, do you know what Mr. Spider looks like?
VOICE. He has two eyes.
VOICE. And a skinny waist.
STORYTELLER. Yes, he has a skinny waist. But Mr. Spider once had a very big waist. He was very fat, indeed.
VOICE. What happened to him?
STORYTELLER. One day, many years ago, Mr. Ananse Spider had quite an experience.
(STORYTELLER and CHILDREN exit DR.)

(ANANSE enters from L, followed by ASO, CROOKY, MAMADI, OSANSI and KAMWENDE. They are all dressed in black. Each has two extra pairs of legs coming from a cummerbund around their waists. They all wear close fitting caps. In addition, ANANSE wears a wig, which can be easily removed, and a hat. He is...
made to look very fat by having many inflated plastic bags inside his costume. See costume notes. He walks on stage with his nose in the air.)

ANANSE. Ummmmmmm! What good smells! Is it roasted hen with peanut butter sauce, or yams and cassava?

ASO. The people in the village to the West usually have roasted meat with mangos. It’s harvest festival time, you know.

ANANSE. Harvest festival! That means food time.

(ANANSE and family, plus optional chorus sing the following. The song may be broken into individual solo parts if desired.)

HARVEST SONG

ANANSE and family.

Now is the time of the harvest.
Now is the time for our treat.
We will eat roasted meat and melons sweet.
Now is the time of the harvest.

Now is the time of the harvest.
Food is all picked and all clean.
Good cuisine, soup tureen, fresh mangostine.
Now is the time of the harvest.

Now is the time of the harvest.
Happiness past all belief.
Tasty beef, lettuce leaf fit for a chief,
Now is the time of the harvest.

Now is the time of the harvest.
Now we will all entertain.
Golden grain, sugar cane, ripe green plantain,
Now is the time of the harvest.

(Spoken.) Let’s eat!

ANANSE. Where is the food for our harvest festival? Why aren’t you cooking something, Aso?

ASO. Because, Mr. Ananse Spider, you didn’t plant one single seed in the spring. Not one yam or potato. You have not pulled one single weed. And there is absolutely nothing to harvest.

ANANSE. Nothing? No corn came up with the weeds?

MAMADI. I’ve had nothing to eat for a week but berries.

CROOKY. And all I’ve had is coconut milk.

OSANSI. I’d give anything for a good, juicy mango.

KAMWENDE. Or some corn fritters.

OSANSI. How can you make fritters without corn?

ASO. You see what your laziness is doing to your whole family?

ANANSE. You mean, there is nothing to eat? Nothing for any of us?

MAMADI. We do have some friends in the towns to the East and the West. Maybe they’ll invite us to their harvest festivals.

ASO. Why should they? They’ve done all the work. Your father’s done nothing.

ANANSE. It’s true. I haven’t done any work. But the children may be right. We may get food from the other villages. It’s a rule of the jungle that nobody turns a hungry man away from his table. And I am hungry.

CROOKY. Why don’t you try?

KAMWENDE. And bring back plenty of food for us while you’re there.

ANANSE. I will. I’ll go to the festivals.

MAMADI. The food from the village to the West smells good.

KAMWENDE. Fried plantains, I think.

OSANSI. I like the smells from the East better.
CROOKY. Kernels of palm nuts, I think.
ANANSE. These smells are too much for my big stomach. I'd better be off and get some food. Nobody's ever turned down good old Spider yet. But which village should I go to? They both smell terrific. I think I'll go to the West ... (He starts walking L.) ... no, on the other hand, I think I'll go to the East. (Starts to walk R and then returns.) Oh, Dear! Which way? (Sits down in helpless indecision.) Why do I have to make such terrible decisions?

KAMWENDE. You could go to both.
ANANSE. Of course, Kamwende. (Stands.) I was just about to think of that myself. I'll go to both. (Hesitates again.) But which should I go to first?

MAMADI. I'd go to whichever is serving first.
ANANSE. Of course. Again, I was just about to think of that myself. But how am I going to know who is serving first? I can't be in both places at once.

CROOKY. Maybe we could help you. Two of us could go to the East, two to the West, and we'll tell you who is serving first.

OSANSI. Your idea is good, Crooky, except for one thing. The villages are both five miles away. Can you shout that loud? I can't.
ANANSE. That is a problem. How can you children let me know who is serving first? I'll never hear you calling. I've really got to pull something out of my bag of tricks. Luckily, I've got it right here. (He picks up a large bag which has been leaning against the house.)

ASO (sarcasically). You're good at pulling tricks. Good luck this time.

ANANSE (an idea has just hit him). Pulling ... pulling. ... I was just about to think of that

myself. I just happen to have a pulling vine in my bag. (Takes a large green rope from his bag.)

ASO. What are you going to do?
ANANSE. The children are going to help me. I'm going to tie this vine around my waist. If I twist it around like this, I can feel it if anyone tugs on it. (He loops the vine once around his waist.) Now, you children will go to the villages and tell me exactly when the food is served so I'll know which one to go to first.

MAMADI. I want to go to the village to the West. The smells are great.

ANANSE. All right. Now you take this end of the vine. Loop it around me once more so I'll be sure to feel when you tug. (MAMADI walks around ANANSE with the vine, making a second loop.) Now, when the food is served you give the vine a tug and I'll come.

KAMWENDE. I'll go with him. I'll pull on the vine exactly when the first course starts.

ANANSE. But the village to the East might serve first.

OSANSI. Crooky and I will go there.
ANANSE. All right. Now, you loop your end of the rope around me, too. I wouldn't want to miss a morsel if the East served first. (OSANSI walks around ANANSE making a third loop in the vine.)

CROOKY. I'll help watch. And I'll help pull when the food's ready. But are you sure you can eat that much?

ANANSE. Me? Don't worry about me. I didn't get this big waist for nothing. Hurry, now. Go! I'm starved!

ASO. In the meantime, I'll go see if I can find any scraps. (She exits R. MAMADI and KAMWENDE go L in front of the proscenium with their end of the vine. They stand, looking
into the audience as though looking at a far village. OSANSI and CROOKY do the same on the other side of the stage.)

MAMADI. This should be easy.

KAMWENDE. Father will come quickly when he knows there's food.

OSANSI. The food smells almost ready.

CROOKY. And Father will eat soon!

ANANSE (standing C in a position of relaxation).

Well, that's good thinking on my part, if I do say so myself. I'll just take a little rest before dinner. It'll take the children a few minutes to get to the villages. A rest helps whet the appetite. Why work if you don't have to?

(The following song may be sung as indicated, or by family in unison, or by optional chorus. See production notes.)

IT'S THE EASY LIFE FOR ME

ANANSE.

As you can see, this is the easy life.
As you can see, this is the lazy life.
I never plow the soil nor work and toil,
It's the easy life for me.

REFRAIN (children plus optional chorus).

HIGH VOICES
Low voices
Easy life, easy life
It's so easy, very easy,
It's so easy, very easy,
It's so easy, very easy,
It's so easy, very easy,
It's so easy, very easy!

It's the easy, easy life.

It's the easy, easy life!

MAMADI and KAMWENDE.

As you can see his is the easy life.
As you can see his is the lazy life.
He never plants a seed or pulls a weed.

The Dancing Spider

ANANSE.

As you can see this is the easy life.
As you can see this is the lazy life.
He loves to sit and rest and work detests.

ANANSE.

As you can see this is the easy life.
As you can see this is the lazy life.

REFRAIN.

(Repeated as before.)

ANANSE.

As you can see this is the easy life.
As you can see this is the lazy life.
I never lift a hand to till the land.
It's the easy life for me.

REFRAIN.

(Repeated as before.)

ANANSE.

As you can see this is the easy life.
As you can see this is the lazy life.

MAMADI (from DL). They're putting the fish and peppers on the table. It's getting near the time to call Father.

KAMWENDE (from DL). I'll get ready to pull the vine.

OSANSI (from DR). The chicken with peanut butter sauce is served. Father will want to know.

CROOKY (from DR). I'll tug on the vine when you tell me.

MAMADI. I think it's time.

KAMWENDE. Let's call Father.

CHILDREN (in unison). The banquet is served!
(They all pull on the vine at the same time.)

ANANSE (jumping). Someone's tugging. The food's ready. But which way? (The vine begins to feel tight. ANANSE starts to let some
air out of the plastic bags with a pin.) Oh, my! I can't tell which way. I'll go to the West. I'm sure it's Mamadi and Kamwende pulling. I can't move that way. I'll go to the East. It must be Crooky and Osansi telling me it's food time. (Starts to panic.) I can't move that way, either. I can't move either way. They're pulling from both ways at once. Help! Stop pulling! I can't move! (As he wiggles to get free he presses more and more air out of the plastic bags.)

MAMADI. I wonder why Father doesn't come. People are starting to eat.
KAMWENDE. I think we'd better pull harder. I guess he doesn't know we're calling him.
OSANSI. It's strange that Father isn't on his way by now. The vine would loosen if he were.
CROOKY. I'd hate to have him miss the banquet. We'd better pull harder.
ANANSE. Stop! Help! Don't pull! I'm shrinking. My waist is wasting away. (By now ANANSE is noticeably thinner. As he wiggles in discomfort he pushes the rest of the air out of the bags.)
KAMWENDE. They're almost ready for the second course.
MAMADI. Let's pull even harder. (They throw the vine over their shoulders, turn their bodies away from ANANSE and appear to pull with all their body weight.)
CROOKY. I'd hate to have Father miss the food.
OSANSI. We've got to pull even harder so he really knows it's time to come. (They, too, throw the vine over their shoulders, turn away and appear to pull with all their might.)
ANANSE. Help! Stop!

MAMADI and KAMWENDE. One, two, three, pull!
OSANSI and CROOKY. One, two, three, pull!
ANANSE. Stop! Help! My belly's disappearing!

MAMADI. Do you think something is wrong?
KAMWENDE. Let's go find out. (They rush to stage C.)
OSANSI. Something must be wrong.
CROOKY. Let's go. (They rush to stage C.)
ANANSE. I can't breathe. I'm dying. (By now all of the air is out of the bags and he falls to the floor.)
MAMADI (reaching DC). Father. What happened?
OSANSI (reaching DC). Father's fainted.
KAMWENDE (DC, pointing to ANANSE). Look at him. He's changed.
CROOKY (DC). He doesn't look the same.
MAMADI. He has no middle. He's all squished.
KAMWENDE. We'd better call Mother.
OSANSI. Mother! Come quick! Father's lost his middle!

(ASO enters R, rushes to DC.)

ASO. Oh, my poor Ananse! What happened? Quickly, children. Help take this vine off so he can breathe. (They all work to remove the vine. At this point ASO ties the sash on Ananse's costume so that his waist appears thin. She places rope behind tree RC.)
KAMWENDE. We didn't mean to pull at once.
CROOKY. You just lost your middle, Father.
ANANSE. But the harvest festivals? Where's the food? It's the food I've been waiting for.
OSANSI. The festival banquets are all over, Father.
KAMWENDE. The food's all been eaten.
ANANSE (standing up, looking around). You mean ... there's no food in the West?
MAMADI. No.
ANANSE. And there's no food in the East?
The Dancing Spider

(Takes a bite, then jumps in pain.)
Hot, hot, hot!
INTERLUDE (loudly).
Dig, plant, cover.
Dig, plant, cover.
(Four-line background softly behind solo.)
ANANSE.
Beans are really awfully hot:
Even though they hit the spot,
In my hat they'll cool a lot.
(Dips hat in pot and fills it with beans.)
Dig, plant cover.
INTERLUDE (loudly).
Dig, plant, cover.
Dig, plant, cover.
(Four-line background softly behind solo.)
ANANSE.
When they're cool enough to eat,
And the taste is honey sweet,
I will have a lovely treat.
Dig, plant, cover.
INTERLUDE (loudly).
Dig, plant, cover.
Dig, plant, cover.
(Four-line background softly behind solo.)
ANANSE.
Everyone is now at work,
If the others do not lurk,
(Starts to sneak off with the beans.)
From the job I now will shirk,
Dig, plant, cover.
(The interlude continues softly until interrupted by Aso's line. She calls just before ANANSE is able to sneak offstage with the beans. During the song the family pantomimes planting their seeds. MAMADI and KAMWENDE work a row from DR to URC. CROOKY and OSANSI work a row from DRC to UC. The rest of the family end their row UL.)

ASO (coming forward around DL tree). Ananse, have you finished your row? (ANANSE hides the hat behind his back.)
BIAFU. What are you doing over there by those beans?
ANANSE. Nothing, Biafu.
BIAFU. Put your hat on or you'll get a sun stroke in this heat. (ANANSE puts on the hat containing the hot beans. He starts to jump around wildly.)
ANANSE. Ohhhhhhh! Hot!
ASO. What's hot?
ANANSE. The weather's hot.
MAMADI. Father, you look funny jumping around like that.
CROOKY. Are you doing a dance or something?
ANANSE. Dance? Yes, a dance. That's exactly what I'm doing.
ASO. But why are you doing a dance when you're supposed to be planting corn?
OSANSI. What kind of a dance, Father?
KAMWENDE. He's shaking his head like crazy.
ANANSE. Yes. You see, I'm doing the hat shaking dance.
CROOKY. Why are you doing that?
ANANSE. Because I'm going to the hat shaking festival. It comes every year. In fact, I'm going right now. (He tries to leave the stage but the children grab him.)
MAMADI. Oh, a festival. I want to come, too.
KAMWENDE. Me, too.
ANANSE. You can't come. You don't know how to do the dance.
CHILDREN (pulling him DC). Teach us. (During this song each leader pantomimes the movement and the group follows. The response is sung by everyone plus the optional chorus. If done without solo voices, see production notes.)
CROOKY. No.
ANANSE (almost crying). The banquets are over and I didn't get any food.
OSANSE. Here comes Grandmother Biafu.

(BIAFU enters from L carrying a large pot which she puts near the fire. She is also carrying a bag which she keeps in her hand.)

BIAFU. What is going on here? Look at good-for-nothing Ananse, skinny as a rail.
ANANSE. Don't rub it in.
BIAFU. Up to your old tricks, as usual, I suppose.
ASO. You realize, Ananse, this never would have happened if you'd been doing some honest labor. If you'd done some planting we'd have our own food.
BIAFU. Well, it's never too late. I have some seeds left over. (Holds up bag.) You and your family can have these.
ANANSE (brightening, thinking of seeds as food). Seeds? Where are the seeds?
BIAFU. In this bag.
ANANSE (grabbing the bag, starting to eat the seeds). Seeds. Beautiful tasty seeds!

BIAFU (grabbing the bag back again). Oh, no, you don't. Those seeds are for planting, not for eating. Now, get off your good for nothing lazy bottom and start to plant so we can all eat.
ANANSE. But I'm weak from hunger.

BIAFU. You'll be weaker if you don't work.
Mamadi and Kamwende, you take this row over here. (Points DR and the children take some seeds and go there.) Osansi and Crooky can take this row. (Takes them DRC.) Aso and I will take this row. (Points to a spot near DC.) And you, Ananse, will take this row right here. (Moves ANANSE DC.) Be sure you dig deep and cover the seeds well.

ANANSE. If I can work on an empty stomach.
BIAFU. Never mind. I thought of everything. I knew you wouldn't have any food, even at harvest time. So, I brought along this nice pot of hot beans. All of us will be very hungry when we're finished working. (She puts the pot of beans on the fire.)
ANANSE. They smell good.
BIAFU. They have tomatoes and peppers and meat. All the things you like. I've put the pot over the fire to keep them very warm. Now, let's work.

CORN PLANTING SONG

EVERYONE plus optional chorus.
Dig, plant, cover:
Dig, plant, cover:
Dig, plant, cover:
Dig, plant, cover.
(This is repeated very softly as a background by everybody except Ananse. Ananse sings his solo at the same time. If Ananse does not have solo voice, see production notes.)
ANANSE.
Dig and plant and dance around,
Just be careful don't be found.
If they look, stay near the ground and
Dig, plant, cover!

INTERLUDE (loudly).
Dig, plant, cover
Dig, plant, cover.
(The four-line background is again sung softly behind Ananse's solo.)

ANANSE.
I've got such an appetite,
Now that no one's here in sight.
(He goes near beans.)
I could take a little bite.
THE HAT SHAKING DANCE

ANANSE (speaking). I'll try. (Sings.)
You shake your head left.
RESPONSE.
You shake your head left.
ANANSE.
You shake your head right.
RESPONSE.
You shake your head right.
ANANSE.
You turn it so slight.
RESPONSE.
You turn it so slight.
ANANSE.
Shake your head with all your might.
RESPONSE.
Your might.
MAMADI (speaking). I get the idea. I'll lead one. (Sings.)
You turn once around.
RESPONSE.
You turn once around.
MAMADI.
Put your hands on the ground.
RESPONSE.
Put your hands on the ground.
MAMADI.
New steps you have found.
RESPONSE.
New steps you have found.
MAMADI.
Everyone you will astound.
RESPONSE.
Astound.
KAMWENDE (speaking). This is fun. Let me try one. (Sings.)
You hop and you jump.

RESPONSE.

You hop and you jump.
KAMWENDE.
You wiggle your rump.
RESPONSE.
You wiggle your rump.
KAMWENDE.
Your right foot you thump.
RESPONSE.
Your right foot you thump.
KAMWENDE.
Now you go a'bumpity bump
RESPONSE.
Bump, bump.
OSANSI (speaking). I've got a good one. (Sings.)
You jump and you hop.
RESPONSE.
You jump and you hop.
OSANSI.
On your knees then you drop.
RESPONSE.
On your knees then you drop.
OSANSI.
Then right up you pop.
RESPONSE.
Then right up you pop.
OSANSI.
Round and round a flippity-flop.
RESPONSE.
Flip flop.
CROOKY (speaking). Follow me. (Sings.)
I'm sure you'll agree
RESPONSE.
I'm sure you'll agree.
CROOKY.
If you fall on one knee.
RESPONSE.
If you fall on one knee.
CROOKY. And then follow me.
RESPONSE. And then follow me.
CROOKY. Now we're dancing fancy free.
RESPONSE. We're free.
CROOKY (speaking). Mother, tell us how you feel about the dance?
ASO (speaking). I'm still a little upset but --
(Sings.)
Well, we won't be rude.
RESPONSE. Well, we won't be rude.
ASO. 'Cause there is no food.
RESPONSE. 'Cause there is no food.
ASO. Change your attitude.
RESPONSE. Change your attitude.
ASO. Dancing makes a good, good mood.
RESPONSE. Good mood.
KAMWENDE (speaking). What about you, Aunt Biafu? How do you like the dance?
BIAFU (singing).
I'm an autocrat.
RESPONSE. She's an autocrat.
BIAFU. You'll obey me like that.
(Snaps fingers.)
RESPONSE. We'll obey her like that.

The Dancing Spider

BIAFU. Or I'll get a brick bat.
RESPONSE. Or she'll get a brick bat.
BIAFU. And I'll knock you very flat.
RESPONSE. Yes, flat.
ALL (speaking). Lead us, Ananse.
ANANSE (singing).
You start to advance.
RESPONSE. You start to advance.
ANANSE. With a stomp and a prance.
RESPONSE. With a stomp and a prance.
ANANSE. Give a side way glance.
RESPONSE. Give a side way glance.
ANANSE. It's the great hat shaking dance.
ALL. Oh, yeah!

CROOKY. Now we all know the dance, we can all go to the festival.
ALL. Yes. Let's go.
ANANSE. No, no! Wait!
MAMADI. Why?
ANANSE. You can't go to the festival.
KAMWENDE. Why can't we go to the festival?
OSANSI. Why not?
ANANSE (with great pain). Because . . . because there is no festival. (ALL gasp.)
ASO. What do you mean, there is no festival?
ANANSE. Why were you shaking your head?
ANANSE. Because . . . because . . . oh, I can't
stand it any longer. My poor head is so hot.
(He takes off his hat and his hair, the wig, comes with it. ALL gasp.)
MAMADI. Father! You took your hair off!
CROOKY. Put your hair back on, Father.
ANANSE (feeling his head, discovering he is bald).
My hair! It's gone! The hot beans cooked my hair off.
BIAFU. So, that's why you were shaking your head. You put all my good spiced beans in your hat.
ANANSE (rubbing his head). And they burned my hair off.
BIAFU. It serves you right.
ASO. Taking food from your family while we're all working. You deserve to be bald.
KAMWENDE (giggling). Father, you do look so funny without any hair.
OSANSI. He does look funny.
ANANSE. Oh, me. I'm so miserable. I guess you're right. I'm really good for nothing. I have no waist. I have no hair. And, I didn't get anything to eat. (The refrain to the following song is sung by everyone plus optional chorus.)

IT'S THE SORRY LIFE FOR ME

BIAFU (speaking). It serves him right. And now he's sorry. (Sings.)
As you can see, his is the sorry life.
As you can see, his is the wretched life.
My beans his head did scald and now he's bald.
ANANSE.
It's the sorry life for me.

REFRAIN.

HIGH VOICES
Sorry life. He's so funny, very funny.
It's the sorry life for me.
Sorry life. He's so funny, very funny.
It's the sorry life for me.
Sorry life. He's so funny, very funny.
It's the sorry life for me.
Sorry life. He's so funny, very funny.

LOW VOICES
It's the sorry life for me.
It's the sorry life for me.
It's the sorry life for me.

CHILDREN.
As you can see, his is the sorry life.
As you can see, his is the wretched life.
We pulled the vine in haste, he lost his waist.
ANANSE.
It's the sorry life for me.
REFRAIN.
(Repeated as before.)
ASO.
As you can see, his is the sorry life.
As you can see, his is the wretched life.
There's food for those who worked, but work he shirked.
ANANSE.
It's the sorry life for me.
REFRAIN.
(Repeated as before.)
ANANSE.
As you can see, this is the sorry life.
As you can see, this is the wretched life.
I have no waist, no hair, my plate is bare, It's the sorry life for me.
REFRAIN.
(Repeated as before.)
(At the end of the song, ANANSE sits down behind tree RC.)
The Dancing Spider

ASO. Come on, children. Let's all go to your Grandmother Biafu's house. We don't want to stay around here any longer. (They start to go off L.)

BIAFU. Yes, children. Come home with me.

KAMWENDE (as she is leaving). Poor Father.

CROOKY (as she is leaving). He looks so funny.

(The stage is empty except for ANANSE.

TORTOISE and RABBIT enter R.)

TORTOISE. Slow down, Rabbit. You go too fast for me.

RABBIT. What do you want me to do? Walk backwards? I just hop fast.

(BUTTERFLY enters R.)

BUTTERFLY. But you can't fly as fast as I can.

(BIRD enters R and pretends to fly completely around the stage.)

BIRD. Or as high as I can.

TORTOISE. You're making me feel bad.

ANANSE. Not as bad as I feel. (Comes out from behind tree.)

TORTOISE (spying ANANSE for the first time).

Ananse Spider. What are you doing in the grass?

RABBIT. You look strange. What's happened to you?

BIRD. I thought you were very fat.

BUTTERFLY. I thought you had hair.

ANANSE. I don't have anything. I don't even have any friends.

(ANTS enter R.)

ANTS. What's this? Spider has no friends?

What happened?

ANT. Everybody has always loved Spider.

ANANSE. Not any more.

ANT. What did you do?

ANANSE. Maybe you should ask what I didn't do.

I didn't do any work. That's what.

RABBIT. No work?

ANANSE. No work. I didn't plant any corn. I didn't pull any weeds. And we didn't have any harvest.

TORTOISE. Your head looks as bare as my back. How did that happen?

ANANSE. I burned it off.

BUTTERFLY. Burned it off?

ANANSE. With the hot beans I stole. It would have been easier to have done some work.

ANT. You're right. It's easier to work. If everybody works together the way we do, work can be fun.

BIRD. Sure. We all help each other.

ANT. We're all little creatures, but working together, we can do big things.

ANANSE. Is it too late for me to join you?

ANT. Of course not, Ananse. Just remember, little creatures can do big things. (See production notes regarding optional chorus on the following song.)

LITTLE CREATURES CAN DO BIG THINGS

ALL LITTLE CREATURES.

Little creatures should stick together,
That's the way they can do big things.
If little creatures all work together,
They'll inherit the power of kings.

REFRAIN.

ALL.

So have a heart.
TORTOISE.

Have a great big heart.

ALL.

Do your part.

BIRDS and BUTTERFLIES.

Yeah, yeah!

ALL.

Little creatures can do big things.

TORTOISE.

Some little creatures move mighty slowly.

RABBIT.

Other creatures get up and go.

TORTOISE and RABBIT.

If the fast ones can help the slow ones,
Slow won't seem quite so slow, you know.

REFRAIN.

(Repeated as above.)

BUTTERFLY.

Some little creatures have learned to fly low.

BIRD.

Others go way up in the sky.

BUTTERFLY and BIRD.

If they only will pull together,
All their work they will simplify.

REFRAIN.

(Repeated as above.)

ALL LITTLE CREATURES.

If little creatures help each other,
They will find that they're super strong.
If little creatures all love each other,
They'll make things right when they are wrong.

REFRAIN.

(Repeated as above.)

ALL LITTLE CREATURES.

If little creatures all help each other,
They will find out that life is good.
TORTOISE. Slow down, Rabbit. I can't keep up with you. (He waddles off L.)
ANANSE. I think I'll hide behind this tree. (He hides behind tree DL.)

(LEOPARD enters from R.)

LEOPARD. I'm so hungry I'm wasting away. I could eat anything this day. (If no solo voice is available for the following song, see production notes.)

LEOPARD'S HUNGER DITTY

LEOPARD.
I could eat a dog,
I could eat a frog,
I could even eat a funny, little polliwog.

I could eat a "tater,"
Then a little later,
I could even eat a green and tasty alligator.

I'm about to die,
I could eat a fly,
But I'd really like a piece of ripe banana pie.

(ANANSE has come out of hiding and is cautiously approaching LEOPARD.)

I'll be a confider,
My jaws I'll open wider,
Then perhaps I'll eat a teensy, weensy little...

(ANANSE is now right beside LEOPARD. LEOPARD points to him and mouths the word "Spider" so the audience can read his lips.)

ANANSE. How do you do, Mr. Leopard. Nice day, isn't it?
LEOPARD. It would be nicer if I weren't so hungry.
than that. So I'll wait until Spider comes back with his fish and then I'll eat both Spider and fish. (Looks around.) Now, where shall I wait for him? It may take him a while. I know. Even fishing is hard work for Spider, so he'll need a rest when he's through. He'll go back to his banana leaf house. I'll wait for him there. (He crawls into the house.) My goodness, it's crowded in here. I hope he doesn't take too long. I'm uncomfortable.

(ANANSE enters from L carrying some fish.)

ANANSE. At least I had some luck today. I did something for myself for a change. I held out a fishing pole and I caught all these fish in just a few minutes. You know, work really isn't too bad. (Puts fish by fire.) I'm even going to enjoy cooking my fish. (Suddenly remembers Leopard.) Oh, oh. I almost forgot. I'd like to cook my fish on my fire, but I'm afraid. I'm sure Leopard is lurking somewhere close by. I'm really scared of Leopard. (If no solo voice is available for the following song, see production notes.)

SCARED SONG

I'm as I can be. I sl
He So, I t
Th
I t, at Leopard's near.
I'm fr-fr-fr-fr-fraid, afraid he will appear.

I'm fr-fr-fr-fr-fraid, afraid he will appear.

A little more Shane's great big throat I'll slide,
His tummy then I'll be inside.
I'm sc-sc-sc-sc-scared, I'm scared I'll disappear.
There's no-no-no-no-nothing, nothing worse I fear.

ANANSE (speaking). I'm scared. I've got to do something. I can't just sit here. (Talks to himself.) Courage, Spider. You may be small, but you're not stupid. You've got to find out where Leopard is. (Walks toward house.) I think Leopard is in my house, but I'm not sure. How can I find out? I wish my wife and children were home. I know. I'll trick Leopard. (Calls.) Hear, my little banana leaf house. Is everything all right? (He pauses, then says in a loud voice.) That's strange. My little banana leaf house always answers me if everything is all right. It's only when something's wrong that she doesn't say anything. If she keeps on being silent then I'll know something's wrong. (Calls.) Hear me, my little banana leaf house. Is everything all right?

LEOPARD (in a high, disguised voice). Yes, Mr. Spider. Everything is all right.

ANANSE (leaping for joy). Ho, Leopard! I tricked you! Now I know where you are. You're on the floor of my banana leaf house. So, I will go to sleep on the roof where you can't reach me. (He crawls on platform behind house or on the roof of the house, if that is possible. He speaks in a taunting voice.) Good night, Mr. Lepard.

LEOPARD (coming out of house, angrily). Good night, indeed! I'll get you. (He tries to grab ANANSE from the right side of the house.) You're too high up for me, Spider. I'll get you from this side. (LEOPARD goes to the left
side of the house and gets caught in the large web that is between the house and the tree.
Can't you make your web out of better stuff than this? It's sticky.

ANANSE (in a teasing voice). The better to catch you with, Mr. Leopard.

LEOPARD. Stupid, sticky stuff. I'll get you if it's the last thing I do.

ANANSE. You'll have to get out of my web first, Mr. Leopard.

LEOPARD. I'll get out of here, Spider. Then I'll eat you in one big gulp.

ANANSE (still teasing). Good luck, Mr. Leopard.

LEOPARD (talking to himself in a calm, determined voice). There's got to be a way to get out of here. I've got to get unstuck. Maybe if I pulled this stuff from my legs. (He pulls the web from his legs.) There. At least I can move a part of me now.

ANANSE (teasing). You're doing fine, Mr. Leopard.

LEOPARD. Now, I've got to free my arm. (He pulls the web from one arm.) There. At least I can move a part of me now.

ANANSE (jumping down from house). Whoopee! That got rid of Leopard. (Goes to the fire. Pulls the fish out of the fire.) Now I can cook the fish I caught down by the river. I'll just get this fire a little hotter. And now I can start to put on my fish.

(LION enters UR and stalks very slowly toward ANANSE. ANANSE does not see him.)

ANANSE. This one's almost ready to eat. Mmmmm, it smells good.

LION. Mmmmm, it smells good.

The Dancing Spider

Page 34

The Dancing Spider

Page 35

ANANSE. What was that? My echo? Boy, oh, boy. The aroma is delicious!

LION. Boy, oh, boy, the aroma is delicious.

ANANSE. That's funny. My echo seems to have a growly voice. These fish are all ready to eat now.

LION. All ready to eat now. (LION is now very near ANANSE.)

ANANSE (turning and seeing LION). That's no echo. Mr. Lion, it's you. What brings you here?

LION (menacingly). I thought you might invite me to supper. (The following scene is pantomimed with imaginary fish.)

ANANSE. Oh, yes. Please do join me. Sit right here. (LION eats his own fish. Then, just as ANANSE is reaching for his fish, LION grabs it, too.) Hmmm, my fish must have slipped back into the fire. Here, one more for you and another for me. (The same thing happens.)

Strange. My fish seems to have an empty taste. Well, one more for each of us. I'll put more pepper on this one. (LION again eats his fish, steals Ananse's fish and sneezes.) I suspect someone is eating my fish.

LION. I'm enjoying the fish very much, thank you. Just give me the whole pan. It'll save time.

ANANSE. Don't I get any?

LION. You can have one tail. Fatten you up before I have my dessert of spider meat.

ANANSE. Thank you. I just lost my appetite. (Jumps up.)

LION. Not me. I could eat a jungle full of food because I am King of the Jungle. (Comes DC for song. If no solo voice is available, see production notes.)

KING OF THE JUNGLE

LION.

I'm the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle.
I'm the king of the jungle, that's what I am.
In this land I have no peer,
There is no one that I fear,
I'm the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle,
I'm the king of the jungle, that's what I am.

I'm the royal master, master, master.
I'm the royal master, that's what I am.
Animals bow down to me,
'Cause they know I'm royalty.
I'm the royal master, master, master,
I'm the royal master, that's what I am.

I'm the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle.
I'm the king of the jungle, that's what I am.
I'm the lord of all this land,
Everyone I will command.
I'm the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle,
I'm the king of the jungle, that's what I am.

ANANSE. Oh, my. How am I going to get out of this predicament?

(A SPOTTED BIRD flies from DL to LION.)

SPOTTED BIRD (bowing to LION). Your majesty.
(FLIES off DR.)
LION. You see, even that beautiful bird enjoys my singing and bows down to my royalty.
ANANSE. It was a beautiful bird, wasn't it? Did you notice her lovely brown spots?
LION. Fantastic spots.
ANANSE. Did you know that I am responsible for giving her those spots?
LION. You? What do you know about giving spots?
ANANSE. It's a power I have. No bird or animal would have spots without me.
LION. Really?
ANANSE. I've noticed that your coat is rather plain.

LION. Somewhat.
ANANSE. Do you think it is fitting for the king of the jungle to have such a plain coat? Don't you think you should have a beautiful spotted coat like that bird?
LION. Of course I should have beautiful brown spots. Nothing is too good for me. How do I get them?
ANANSE. I told you, it's a power I have. But, of course, I can't help you because you're going to eat me. (Starts to walk away.)
LION. I could always eat you later.
ANANSE (tauntingly). No, that won't do. Too bad. You would have looked absolutely elegant with brown spots placed just so on your magnificent coat. But, even a lion can't have everything he wants.
LION. I certainly can. How do you go about giving me spots?
ANANSE. It's doubtful I could do a very good job on you because you're so big and you move about so much. I'm afraid my spotting would be smeared.
LION. I could hold very still.
ANANSE. Well, if you really insist, there is one way I might possibly do it. But you would have to do something for me first.
LION. Anything you say.
ANANSE. I need a very large vine. But I don't suppose you know where to find one.
LION. Oh, I can find a vine. (He hunts around and brings back a vine -- the green rope behind tree RC.) Here. Will this do?
ANANSE (testing it). It seems strong enough. Now, you must find the toughest tree in the jungle. Run into all the trees. When you find one that doesn't even bend when you run into it, that tree will do. (LION runs to tree DR,
now off we go.
(ANTS scurry off UL.)

(LION tries to stand up and finds his back still a bit crooked. He winces. At first he doesn't see the small animals as they enter L.)

BUTTERFLY (laughing). Ananse really had a great idea. Do you think Lion will fall for it?
BIRD. Shhh. Don't give it away.
RABBIT. First we've got to find Lion. Wait a minute, there he is now.
TORTOISE. Slow down, Rabbit. I can't keep up with you.
RABBIT. Take your time. I'll talk to Lion.
(Walks up to LION) How do you do, Mr. Lion. You're walking as if you had a bad back.
LION. I do. And it's all that Spider's fault. I'll get him.
BUTTERFLY. I'd be careful of Spider, if I were you.
LION. I don't worry about him. A little food and I'll feel better. You there, Tortoise! Go over to the fire. I need a little tortoise soup to warm up my innards.
TORTOISE. It'll take me a long time to walk that far. You won't find me very tasty by the time I get there.
LION. You, Rabbit. Over to the fire. I need rabbit stew for my main course.
RABBIT. Oh, no, Mr. Lion.
LION. And I may have some nice fried bird wings and butterfly legs.
BIRD and BUTTERFLY. No, Mr. Lion.
LION (furious). What do you mean? "No, no, Mr. Lion." Don't you know what I say goes? I'm the king of the jungle. If I want soup and stew, I'll have soup and stew.
RABBIT. I don't know about that, Mr. Lion.

LION. You? Stand there and defy me? Don't you know I could eat you right now in one big gulp? Why aren't you afraid? Why don't you run away?
TORTOISE. In the first place, I can't run very fast.
RABBIT. I can. But I'm more afraid of Spider than I am of you. You should be, too.
LION. Me? Afraid of Spider? Are you daft or something? Why would I be afraid of a teensy, weensy Spider?
BUTTERFLY. Suppose you were Spider's size and got caught in his web?
BIRD. Leopard got caught in Spider's web, you know, and he's still big like you.
LION. But I'm not Spider's size. And I'm not your size. How dare you talk to me this way.
RABBIT. Well, you may not know it. But I was once bigger than you are. When I hopped, I could hop right over a Kazaura tree.
TORTOISE. And my shell was so big, you could have used it as a huge umbrella.
BUTTERFLY. When I flapped my wings, I made a windstorm that tore the trees up by the roots.
BIRD. And I could fly over the sun.
LION. Wait a minute! You're pulling my leg. You could never do any of those things. You're all little creatures.
RABBIT. But we were once very big. Before Spider put his evil spell on us.
TORTOISE. The same spell he's now conjuring up for you.
BIRD. He's working on it right now. I heard him say, "When I see Lion next he will become one of the small creatures."
BUTTERFLY. I think he said you would be even smaller than us.
LION. But Spider can't do that.
RABBIT. He did it to us.
LION. Really?
TORTOISE. Yes, really.
LION. How small could he make me?
BUTTERFLY. I don't know. But I've heard of creatures that became so small they couldn't even see their own reflection in the pond.
LION. That small?
BIRD. Spider can do anything he sets his mind to. And I think he's a little angry about the fish you stole.
LION. That? I could find some more fish for him if that's all he wants. (BIRD flies around stage and looks off R.)
BIRD. I see Spider coming this way. And he doesn't look happy.
RABBIT. I'm sure he's not. You'd better hide, Mr. Lion.

(ANANSE enters L.)
ANANSE. Hello, Mr. Lion. I understand you've been hunting for me.
LION. Oh, no, Mr. Spider. You're quite wrong. I wasn't hunting for you.
ANANSE. I should hope not. If I ever hear again that you've been following me, you'll regret it. Do you know how big a mosquito is?
LION. Don't worry. There will be nothing to regret. I'm going.
ANANSE. Forever, Mr. Lion?
LION. Forever! I'm going to visit an aunt in a far away jungle. I'll never return. (LION runs offstage L. All the animals start to laugh.)
RABBIT. I can't believe it. He fell for it!
BIRD. He believed everything we said. About our once being big and you making us small.
TORTOISE. That was quite an idea you had. I'm glad you put us up to it.
BUTTERFLY. You really used your brains, Spider.

The Dancing Spider

dreaming up that idea.
RABBIT (laughing really hard). He thought he'd be the size of a mosquito!
BIRD. We may be small, but with a little courage and brain power .
BUTTERFLY. And sticking together .
ALL. We can do big things. (The following may be sung with optional chorus.)

LITTLE

ALL LITTLE

LITTLE

That's

If lit

They

TORTOISE.

Some little creatures move mighty slowly.
RABBIT.

Other creatures can get up and go.
TORTOISE and RABBIT.

If the fast ones can help the slow ones,
Slow won't seem quite so slow, you know.

REFRAIN.

(Repeated as above.)
The Dancing Spider

BUTTERFLY.
Some little creatures have learned to fly low.

BIRD.
Others go way up in the sky.

BUTTERFLY and BIRD.
If they only will pull together,
All their work they will simplify.

REFRAIN.
(Repeated as above.)

ALL LITTLE CREATURES.
If little creatures help each other,
They will find that they're super strong.
If little creatures all love each other,
They'll make things right when they are wrong.

REFRAIN.
(Repeated as above.)

ALL LITTLE CREATURES.
If little creatures all help each other,
They will find out that life is good.
So help your neighbor, help your friend now,
Things will turn out the way they should.

REFRAIN.
(Repeated as above.)

(Ananse's family enter stage L following the song.)

ASO. Ananse, are you all right? You've been gone so long that we've been worried about you.

ANANSE. It took a long time because I had a big job to do.

BIAFU. You? A job? You did some work?

RABBIT. He certainly did. He scared Leopard by catching him in his web.

BIRD. And he got rid of Lion by dreaming up a fantastic idea to scare him.

TORTOISE. He made the jungle safe for little creatures that don't run so fast.

The Dancing Spider

(ANTS enter UL.)

ANTS. And he made the jungle safe for all little creatures. Little creatures like us that could be stepped on.

BUTTERFLY (flapping wings). He made the jungle safe for delicate creatures like me.

ANT. It was against my better judgment ever to let Lion loose, but I guess everything turned out all right.

BIRD (flying around). He made the jungle safe for all creatures.

MAMADI. What'd you do, Father?

OSANSI. How'd you ever get rid of Lion? He's so big.

ANANSE. With the help of all of my friends here, I tricked him. He thought I had a magic spell that would make him tiny.

CROOKY. So you really used your brains.

KAMWENDE. Oh, Father, you are so clever.

ANANSE. I couldn't have done it without my friends' help. They made him think I had an all powerful spirit.

RABBIT. In a way, you are all powerful. Using your head like that.

TORTOISE. Lion sure didn't use his head.

BUTTERFLY. Lion is obviously no longer king of the jungle.

BIRD (flying around). Who is king of the jungle? Who is the smartest one among us?

ALL. Ananse. Ananse is king of the jungle.

CHILDREN. Oh, Father. We're so proud of you.

ANANSE. Me? I'm king of the jungle?

ANIMALS. Yes. Ananse is king of the jungle.

(LEOPARD, LION, STORYTELLER and chorus also enter for final song. ANANSE may sing part of this as a solo, the remaining part sung by entire cast plus optional chorus. With slight word changes from "I" to "he" the entire
song may be sung by everybody.)

I'M THE KING OF THE JUNGLE
(reprise)

ANANSE.
I'm the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle,
I'm the king of the jungle, that's what I am.

ALL.
He's the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle,
He's the king of the jungle, that's what he is.

ANANSE.
In this land I have no peer,
There is no one that I fear.

ALL.
He's the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle,
He's the king of the jungle, that's what he is.

He's the royal master, master, master,
He's the royal master, that's what he is.

ANANSE.
Animals bow down to me,
'Cause they know I'm royalty.

ALL.
He's the royal master, master, master,
He's the royal master, that's what he is.

He's the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle,
He's the king of the jungle, that's what he is.

ANANSE.
I'm the lord of all this land,
Everyone I will command.

ALL.
He's the king of the jungle, jungle, jungle,
He's the king of the jungle, that's what he is.

CURTAIN

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play can be presented in a variety of ways to suit the group of children presenting it and the room or auditorium in which it is presented. Almost all parts can be played by either girls or boys. If few children are available, the voices can easily be doubled with the small animals. (The children can wear robes over their animal costumes for the voices.) The parts for voices and for ants should be divided according to the number of children available. If there are many children, a chorus adds dimension to the play, but is not necessary. The chorus, if used, should be in sight of the audience, either in front of the stage or on either side of the stage, depending on the shape of the room and the height of the stage. It is also effective to have all characters join the chorus when not on stage, making entrances and exits from their chorus position.

If many children are involved, a large group can be in the opening dance. This can be a simple affair, done in a circle using recorded music or a drum. Several children may also join in the "Chase" dance as dancing butterflies. This dance is mainly character pantomime, showing Lion and Leopard chasing all the little animals.

If enough children have strong solo voices, the play is most effective produced as written. Some children can "talk" a song to music most effectively. If the children's voices are weak, or they prefer not to sing alone, there are several alternatives:

Opening Song. Either all voices can sing together or entire chorus can sing entire song.

It's the Easy Life For Me and It's A Sorry Life For Me. Half of the chorus can sing Ananse's or