

Power Play

By

Rob Simpson

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Cast*:

Harlequin

Julia

Tony A

Wayne

Julie

Tony W

Rob

Kevin

Gina

Clive

Penny

Media Anchor 1

Media Anchor 2

Joe

Christine

Chorus

*Minor roles may be multi-cast

Songs:

Overture: (Power Play)

1. Pigs at the Trough (Chorus)
2. Stuff' em (Julia)
3. Independents' Day (Tony W, Rob)
4. No more Mr Nice Guy (Tony A)
5. I Just Keep Popping up (Kevin)
6. What's Yours is Mine (Clive, Gina)
7. You Won't Hear That on the Six-o'clock News (Chorus)

INTERMISSION

8. I want so Much (Julia)
9. I Can't Say No (Tony A)
10. As Green as Brown (Christine, Chorus)
11. The Policy Rap (Tony A, Julia)
12. Faceless Men and Women (Chorus)
13. Power Play (Finale - All)

Notes on the songs:

The tracks above were recorded in a home studio with three musicians covering all instruments and vocals. The tracks are intended to do two things:

1. Provide musical backing for the performers to use when rehearsing the songs. [Copies of songs with and without vocals to be provided to each performer for rehearsal purposes.]
2. Provide a rough guide for performers regarding the songs' structure and tone. The three voices available for the recording could not hope to cover the range available to a larger and vocally broader cast. While we were able to produce some 'chorus' effects in recording, these are no substitute for the intended chorus of 4 - 6 voices.

It can be confidently expected that the songs will evolve with rehearsal as a result of the collaborative approach used to develop the project. At this stage the CD is not intended for public sale or release. This would require further production to make changes and correct flaws that we are all too painfully aware of. There have also been some minor changes in lyrics.

1. Pigs at the Trough: (PIGS) - Key: E

Set: A series of panels in a marble motif, placed to give the impression of a long passageway receding centre. Light up on a large wooden trough, set at table height centre stage. Enter four PIGS, in a tramping rhythm, dressed in tuxedos. They begin feeding sloppily from the trough.

4 bars instrumental

Intro (HEAD PIG):

Em

Oink oink, grunt grunt

Em

Who's the porker, who's the runt?

Em

Hit 'em quick with something blunt

Em

Oink oink, grunt grunt

Grunt grunt, oink oink

Save the world, but what's the point?

Why don't we just trash the joint?

Grunt grunt oink oink

8 bars instrumental

1. (HEAD PIG)

E

Got a little porker and a big fat sow

E

Gotta keep the wolf from the door somehow

E

I can't say I'm crazy about dog-eat-dog

B7

But it's hard to be fussy when you're... just a hog!

Chorus (ALL):

A

We're like pigs at the trough, we just can't get enough
E

Of what's going

A

There's plenty about, right in front of our snout
B7

So we just/keep/GROWING!

2. (HEAD PIG)

It mightn't seem right, all this appetite

Baking the cake and then taking a bite

It might be said that we're overfed

But how else is a body goin' to ... get ahead?

Chorus (ALL)

3. (HEAD PIG)

Not much giving but a lot of take
Seems like everybody's on the make
Everybody's getting' more than they could need
So what's the matter with a ... bit of greed?

4. (HEAD PIG)

Every so often we might get caught out
Someone gets busted with crumbs on their snout
Strung up like a sucker for ham and pork
But c'est la vie, and where's me fork!

Chorus (ALL)

5. (HEAD PIG)

Rumour has it there's a new regime,
A new broom coming gonna sweep us clean
So move aside now, let her in!
There's plenty of room at the feeding bin!

Chorus (ALL)

PIGS exit, repeating Intro. FADE TO BLACK.

2. Stuff 'Em (JULIA, WAYNE, PENNY) Key: C

Set: Grey marbled lighting. Enter JULIA from rear.

1. (JULIA)

C

They say politics is a dirty game

F

It's all about lies and it's all about blame

C

Who's doing who in the people's name

G7

Well, stuff 'em.

2. (JULIA)

Take a tip from a reliable source

You won't win the double on a half-dead horse

You've need to back a winner who'll stay the course

So stuff 'em.

Chorus:

F

Hold on tight to that golden bower!

C

Stick to you guns in your darkest hour!

G7

Keep a good grip on the reins of power!

C

And stuff 'em.

[WAYNE and PENNY enter from sides of the passageway]

3. (PENNY)

Today's the day we've been waiting for

Time to get rid of that man of straw

Sure, there might be some blood on the floor

But stuff 'em

4. (WAYNE)

Time to throw away that old straw broom

Sweep away all the doom and gloom

We've got the numbers in the party room

So stuff 'em.

Chorus

5. (JULIA)

It's never easy when a coup goes down

But somebody's got to turn this ship around

Hard left rudder or we'll run aground

And stuff 'em.

Chorus (ALL) Repeat as set darkens and WAYNE, JULIA and PENNY exit.]

3. Independents' Day (TONY W, ROB) Key: Am

Set: Bright, "festive" lighting. Enter Tony W.

1.

(TONY W, slow)

Am

Who would have thought it would come to this
(ROB)

G

The point of decision, the edge of the abyss
(TONY W)

F

Years of being marginalised, years without a voice
(ROB)

Em

And now suddenly, this CHOICE!

Enter ROB, from opposite side of stage.

2.

(ROB)

I wasn't quite ready, when this came around
To find myself here in the middle ground
But democracy's broken, our government's stalled
I don't know if I've got the right to make the call

Chorus (BOTH)

F

It's Independents' Day

C

Independents' Day,

G7

Will we go for the quinella, or have a bet each way?

F

G7

We're standing at the crossroads, and it's/hard/to/say

F

G7

C

If we'll ever have another Independents' Day

3

(TONY W)

The decision's not simple; it's complex, I know
But I stood for independence a long time ago
When you take out the greedy, and hateful and fast
The good of the country means something at last

4.

(ROB)

They've both been to see us and offered their deals
They've promised us power, to see how it feels
But after you take out the power and lust
I guess it's a matter of who you can trust.

Chorus

5. (BOTH)

They tell us two people don't have the right
To play referee in this bare-knuckle fight
But somebody's got to, and here's where we stand
Making a choice for the good of the land!

Repeat chorus as exit.

4. No more Mr Nice Guy (TONY A, JULIE, JOE) Key: Am

Set: As previous, darker. Enter TONY.)

Intro: 4 bars instrumental

1. (TONY)

Am

There's got to be a way to stop that sneaky bitch
G

Just looking at her makes my fingers twitch
Am

If she was sitting in the chair I'd throw the switch

G Am

Leave her face down in some roadside ditch.

2. (TONY)

Those friggin' independents, how could they do it?

If I still had my cross, I'd nail them to it

They could've made history, and both of them knew it

I gave them the chance, but they went and blew it!

Chorus (TONY) :

F

No More Mr Nice Guy, I know that I'm the
C

right guy for the job

F

A bit of bullshit's all I need, a line or two that I

can feed

C

The mob

F

No more Mr Nice Guy, I know that I'm the
C

right guy for the task

F

A single chance, that's all I need, to cut the vein

and watch it bleed

G

That's all/ I/ ask.

Dance sequence (8 bars of chorus)

3. (JOE)

All this time you've been seeking power

This was supposed to be your finest hour

Two lousy votes and it's all gone sour

Dreamers sitting in some ivory tower.

Bridge: (ALL)

F

If you have to play dirty, I won't pre-judge it

C

If you have to tell a lie, I won't begrudge it

F

If the punters want facts, you'll have to fudge it

G7

C

Tell them that it's all in next year's budget

Instrumental/Chorus [ALL dancing]

5. (JULIE)

Don't let them turn up any hollow logs

Keep them baying like a pack of dogs

If all else fails, you can stir the blogs

By showing up at Bondi in a pair of togs

Chorus

(Repeat Chorus. Music continues as TONY, JOE and JULIE exit)

5. I Just Keep Popping Up (KEVIN) Key: D

Set: Panels as previous, in chequerboard black-and-white.

8 bars intro. Enter KEVIN after 4 bars, alternately smiling and scowling.

1. (KEVIN)

D C
I used to be the captain, the master of the ship
D C
I used to hold the wheel but I lost my grip
D C
And now they say I ought to just call it a day
D C
Accept it with grace and just fade away

(Pause)

Chorus: (KEVIN)

D A D
But I just keep popping up
D A D
Yes, I just keep popping up
G D
A bit like a rabbit or a jack-in-the-box
G D
A bit like the funny guy in Fox in Socks
G D
A bit like the little men in cuckoo clocks
A D
I just keep popping up

Repeat chorus, with offstage backing vocals

2. (KEVIN)

I'm sorry if my hissy fits seemed certain to offend
I may not have been popular, especially at the end
My fortunes were quite clearly on a ... downhill run
But that doesn't justify the injury they've done!

3. (KEVIN)

The knife between my shoulder blades is there for all
to see
It's a pretty powerful argument, especially on TV
They keep on trying to ask me if and when I'm coming
back
I say I've got no plans, but who knows what lies down
the track

Chorus (KEVIN)

Repeat chorus, with offstage backing vocals,

4.

The faceless men who cut the strings that kept me in
the air
Are worried now that ecstasy is turning to despair
They thought they'd seen the end of me when they threw
me out the door
They thought my wounded ego would be easy to ignore

Chorus (ALL)

(Repeat chorus, with backing vocals and KEVIN
encouraging audience participation. Heads of CHORUS
appear randomly from side panels. As last line of
chorus repeats, exit KEVIN via rear. Blackout.)

6. What's Yours is Mine (GINA, CLIVE) Key: Am

Set: Corridor in yellow backlight, with lines of small lights along top edges to resemble mine lighting.
Enter CLIVE and GINA in evening dress.

1. (CLIVE)

Em Bm
This mining tax is a crock of shit!
D Em
A high court challenge'll deal with it
Em Bm
And as for carbon, well what a joke
D Em
They get that up and we'll all go broke!

2. (GINA)

Coal seam gas is the way to go
Money's good and the costs are low
No need to worry about the opposition
Divide and rule is the best position

Chorus: (BOTH, facing each other "theatrically" and tentatively approaching centre stage.)

C
What's yours is mine
G
It'll work out fine
C G
We're all in this together
C
For the good of all
G
Till the market stalls
C G
But nothing lasts forever.

3.

(CLIVE)
Our public image is a bit of a mess
(GINA)
That's okay; we'll buy the press
(CLIVE)
They say media standards can't be ignored
(GINA)
Well that's okay; we'll buy the board!

4.

(CLIVE)
The payout in wages is costing the earth
Seems like the workers want more than they're worth

(GINA)

So bring in some labour, offshore it's cheap
Promise green pastures, they'll follow like sheep

5.

(CLIVE)

I'm tired of dealing with a bunch of hoons
For some useless country: they want the moon!

(GINA)

So give them some programs, give them some room
Right up to the finish of the mining boom...!

Chorus (BOTH. At beginning of chorus, HARLEQUIN hands Andrew a red rose. On last line of chorus ANDREW lays rose at GINA's feet.)

[ANDREW exits. GINA, spoken] ...except a dynasty, of course!

[GINA exits. Enter Harlequin, who picks up rose and exits]

7. You Won't Hear That on the Six-o'clock News (MEDIA ANCHORS) Key: C

Set: Bright light focused upon a large white desk facing the audience. Two MEDIA ANNOUNCERS are seated behind desks, large map of world upside down on wall behind.

Intro: 4 bars. [As music starts, enter HARLEQUIN as studio assistant, who checks MAs' hairpieces, etc before kneeling at side of stage and signalling in vocal.

1. (MA1)

C F
The banks are in a quandary; interest rates are down
G7 C

There's panic on the markets at the heavy end of town
(MA2)

C F
Mining is declining, as they always said it must
G7 C
It's the same old story of boom and bust

2. (MA1)

They're printing lots of money to keep the ship afloat
But it doesn't seem to plug the holes within the
leaking boat
The dice have all been loaded; we know that we all lose
But you won't hear that on the six-o'clock news.

Chorus (BOTH) :

F C
There's nothing left to gamble with, there's nothing

left to lose

G7 C
You can put your poker chips on any spot you choose
F C

We've lost the game by betting on the red white and
blues

G7 C
But you won't hear that on the six-o'clock news

[Both move to World map.]

3. (MA2) The battle for Afghanistan, well it's been
shot to hell
There's big trouble brewing in the Middle East as well
(MA1)
There's strife in northern Africa; the Chinese are on
fire
And every day the cost of all this freedom just gets
higher

4. (BOTH)

We're doing what we can to keep our country on its feet
But there's too many enemies who want our defeat
We've stepped on a landmine; we've set off the fuse
But you won't hear that on the six-o'clock news.

Chorus (BOTH)

8 bars instrumental. [MA's perform hoedown dance,
return hurriedly to seats.]

5. (MA1)

The standards are in disarray that held our world in
place!

(MA2)

Graffiti shouts from every wall; the crims laugh in our
face!

(MA1)

The stench of deep corruption invades the hallowed
halls

(MA2)

Where ministers and CEO's make salutary calls

6. (BOTH)

The churches are in disarray, there's talk of wide
abuse

There's rumbling from the activists, contradictory
views

The place is full of woodworm; they're boring out the
pews

But you won't hear that on the six-o'clock news.

Chorus, ends with last line repeated twice. HARLEQUIN
signals abrupt blackout.

INTERMISSION

8. I Want So Much (JULIA, CHORUS)

Set: Marbled panels. Enter Julia.

Intro: 4 bars instrumental.

1. (JULIA)

Am F
I want so much to see my dream come true
Am F
So much to hope for, so much to do
Dm C
There is a future, a pathway, a door:
Dm C
Help for the helpless, some hope for the poor
F Am
A chance for our young folk, the injured, the slow
F Em
Our elders, our migrants, a real fair go.

Chorus: (JULIA)

C G7
But how do I get there, how will my theme
F C
Turn the reality into a dream
F Em
How do I manage it, what is the key
F G7
To matching my deeds to the vision I see
F C
It may be a fantasy, pie in the sky
Dm G7
But I'll only know if I give it a try.

2.

I want so much to see my vision shared
By those now against me, those who don't care
A better Australia, a tolerant world,
A pride in our nation, our own flag unfurled
An end to this hatred, deception and lies
A common commitment that shines in our eyes

Chorus

3.

I want so much to see us all at peace
A sense of fulfilment, a sense of release
Respect for our people, no axes to grind
A sense of compassion for all humankind
Respite for our country, respect for the land
A moment in time when we all took a stand!

Chorus, exit Julia as music ends. Fade out.

9. I Can't Say No (TONY A, CHORUS) Key: C

Set: building scaffold background. Enter TONY, in orange safety vest and helmet.

Intro 8 bars.

1. (TONY A)

C F C F
When I was a kid at school, with other girls and boys
C Am G
I only wanted things that every other child enjoys.
C F C
I didn't want their lunch-boxes; I didn't want their
F
toys
C Am G
I didn't want their boom boxes; I didn't like the
G7
noise!

2.

I didn't mean to rip them off or call them nasty names!
I didn't mean to interfere in all their childish games!
I didn't need to buy their votes; I didn't need to win!
(Slowing) But no one told me politics was such a mortal
sin!

Instrumental: 1 bar

Chorus:

C G C
But I can't say no (Offstage voices: No, no, no)
C G C
No, I can't say no (Offstage voices: No, no, no)
Am G
I wish it wasn't so
F G C
But I can't say no

Instrumental F/G/C

3.

I really didn't want to be the leader, the leader of
the pack
But once I started down that road, there was no turning
back
The best way to defend myself was go on the attack
When all I ever wanted was the very thing I lack

Instrumental (Verse pattern) [TONY shakes hands,
distributes leaflets.]

Chorus

4.

And now at last I find myself out here on centre stage
Called upon to write my name in history's endless page
I'd like say I'd compromise, to put aside my rage
Show mercy to my enemies, let someone else engage.

Chorus (Repeated, with offstage voices behind. Repeat
last line of chorus twice. Blackout.)

10. As Green as Brown (CHRISTINE) Key: Am

Set: A long table placed laterally centre stage, 2 chairs at ends, 5 along rear. The centre rear seat remains vacant. Lighting to dim, sombre. Enter CHRISTINE, who lights a candle on table then moves stage right. As vocal begins, six MONKS enter and move to positions behind chairs.

1. (CHRISTINE; dirge behind)

Am

He's gone

Just when we thought we had it made

G

He's gone

Am G

How are we supposed to go on

Am

Without him

2.

He's gone (MONKS take places at the table)

Just when we had the table laid

He's gone

How are we supposed to go on

Without him

Chorus 1: (ALL)

C

He brought us out of the wilderness

G

Salvation coming, the moment blessed

F

But now he's gone, now he's not around

Em

How will we ever be as green as Brown?

3. (CHRISTINE)

He's gone

Somehow he seemed to have a gift

He's gone

How are we supposed to go on

Without him

4. (ALL)

He's gone

The burden is too difficult to lift

How are we supposed to go on

Without him

Chorus 2: (ALL, turning to lighted portrait of Bob Brown on rear wall)

How are we ever going to get things done

Now that we lost our favourite son

Where he walked was hallowed ground

But how can we ever be as green as Brown?

[ALL repeat Verse 1, MONKS exiting slowly in time.
CHRISTINE blows out candle, exits. Fade to Blackout.]

11. The Policy Rap (TONY A, JULIA) Key: E7

Set: White panels with two chairs to either side, podium in front. Bright lighting in red, white and blue. JULIA and TONY A appear stage left and right respectively and sit on chairs. HARLEQUIN enters, dancing to rap music.

CHORUS (HARLEQUIN)

E7

Well it looks like it's time for another election
E7

Time for a little bit of sober reflection

E7

People're looking for a sense of direction

E7

So let's put some policies up for inspection

**8 bars instrumental between each verse and between
verses and choruses**

1. (TONY A, stepping forward to podium)

Ah, women ought to stay in their natural place
A babe in their arms and a smile on their face
Cooking the dinner and washing the nappies
Doing their bit to keep everyone happy
When hubby comes home, you can fetch him his slippers
If he's bored in bedroom, you can call in the strippers
Let's stop these feminists from rocking the boat
Next thing we know they'll be wanting the vote

2. (JULIA, stepping forward to podium)

Women ought to be at the front of the queue
Properly paid for the work that they do
Whether it's childcare or holding a shovel
Why should they have to go begging or grovel?
If we want to build a nation that's fair and square
We've got to give women their rightful share
Let's move forward on the road to healing
By punching a hole in that old glass ceiling

Chorus (HARLEQUIN)

3. (TONY A, stepping forward)

Ah, let's do away with these workplace laws
If the workers don't like it, just show 'em the door
We could learn a thing about industrial relations
By watching how they do it in third world nations
If the unions start threatening to go on strike
We'll tell the frigging lot of them to take a hike
They start getting stroppy down at Union Hall
We'll take 'em out the back and shoot them all!

4. (JULIA, stepping forward)

We've got to stand up for workers' rights
To stand united when it comes to a fight
For social justice and a decent wage
No going back to some bygone age
We've got to move forward, no turning back
To when airing a grievance could get you the sack
We need some agreement, a social accord
More talk of consensus, less talk of the sword

Chorus (HARLEQUIN)

5. (TONY A)

Ah, climate's change is a load of crap;
Some radical greenies, some lines on the map
Sure there's some fires, some floods and some droughts
But let's push our luck before it runs out
Get rid of the taxes, get rid of the fines
More power to the miners, more power to the mines
Who cares about carbon, it's cheap at the price
The cake might be yellow, but we'll all get a slice

6. (JULIA)

We can't keep pretending that everything's fine
When everyone knows that we've run out of time
The weather's disastrous, the land's in a mess
And where it's all going is anyone's guess
We need some perspective, some policy shift
That'll keep us from ruining what we've got left
Let's find a solution before it's too late
Some sense of perspective to guide the debate

CHORUS (HARLEQUIN)

7. (TONY A)

Before we turned up here the place was a mess
The Aborigines failed the *terra nullius* test
Most of them died, some raised an objection
So we set up the missions and gave them protection
We built farms and factories, we shared in the spoils
A slice of the profits went back to the Royals
We raised the new flag up, saluted the queen
Gave the Kooris land rights; it's really obscene

8. (JULIA)

It's time we got rid of the Union Jack
Get the monarchist monkey off our back
It's time we moved forward; we've too long postponed it
Let's give the land back to the people who owned it
Let's welcome the tired, the hungry, the poor
The countries around us on Asia's back door
Let's build a strong nation, all cultures and creeds
Where all have a stake, where we have what they need

CHORUS (HARLEQUIN)

TONY and JULIA exit as HARLEQUIN repeats CHORUS.
HARLEQUIN exits dancing. Music fades, light fades to
blackout.

12. Faceless Men and Women (CHORUS) Key: E

Set: Flashing black and white lights.

Intro 8 bars E. Enter HARLEQUIN leading the FM&W, at marching pace. On the back of their heads they have white masks.

1. (HARLEQUIN)

E

Turn about!
Turn about!
To the left!
To the right!
Vote them in!
Vote them out!
Vote for anyone you like but have no doubt
That it's all been pre-arranged

A

B7

The only thing that changes is the names.

Chorus: (ALL)

A

E

We're the faceless men and women; we're the powers

behind the throne

A

E

The ones you hardly ever see, the ones with eyes of

stone

A

E

We're here to reassure you that the party marches on

A

E

B7

To victory, posterity, when all of us are gone.

We're the faceless men and women, who work behind the scenes

The ones who run the parties, who drive the big machines

That pre-determine who shall rise and who's about to fall

Who blithely choose the chosen to keep watch over us all!

4 bars instrumental

2. (HARLEQUIN)

To the left!

To the right!

It's as plain as black and white!

You can pick!

You can choose!

Either way you know you're going to lose
To the east!
To the west!
Just remember that we know what's best!

Chorus

HARLEQUIN repeats 'Turn About!' as FM&W exit at marching pace, with HARLEQUIN at rear. Fade sound and lights.

13. Power Play (JULIA)

Set: Soft light.

Intro 8 bars instrumental. Enter JULIA from rear after four bars.

1. (JULIA)

C Am
At the end of the day, it's a power play
G
That's all it is
C Am
At the end of the day, winners win, losers pay
G
That's all there is
C Am
At the end of the day, it's a game we all play
G
To the end
C Am
All the schemes, all the deals, all the threats, the
appeals
G
Count for little in the end
F Em
But you've got to pretend ...

Chorus: (JULIA)

C
This wasn't what I had in mind
G7
It's harder than I'd planned
C
It's taken me a long time,
G7
But I've come to understand
F
That nothing's what it ought to be
G7
Nothing's what it seems
G7
The passion and the pageantry,
Am
The principles and dreams
G
Count for little in the end
F Em
But you've got to pretend ...

2. (Julia with offstage chorus)
At the end of the day, it's a power play
That's all it is
At the end of the day, it all fades to grey
That's all there is

You've got people galore lining up at your door
All these fair weather friends
But all the schemes, all the deals, all the threats,
the appeals
Count for so little in the end
But you've got to pretend ...

16 bars instrumental. JULIA does a slow mannequin-like dance]

3. (FULL CAST, entering onstage)
At the end of the day, it's a power play
That's all it is
At the end of the day, it all fades to grey
That's all there is
At the end of the day, it's a game we all play
That's all it is
All the schemes, all the deals, all the threats, the
appeals
Count for little in the end

JULIA:

[Blackout, CAST remains on stage for curtain call.]

CURTAIN