

JUST BEE

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A Ragtime, Boogie-Woogie  
play for young audiences  
with aromatic special effects

by Emily Ball Cicchini

Published by  
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Austin TX

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Edited by Andrew Perry

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Just Bee was first commissioned and produced by Pollyanna Theatre Company in Austin TX at the Long Center for the Performing Arts' Rollins Studio Theatre in August 2010. The original cast and crew were as follows:

<u>BLUE BEE:</u>	Michelle Keffer
<u>HONEY BEE/NEW QUEEN HONEY:</u>	Rachel McGinnis
<u>BUMBLE BEE/NEW QUEEN BUMBLE:</u>	Joni McClain
<u>TULIP FLOWER/WORKER BEE/ SUNFLOWERS:</u>	Bethany Harbaugh
<u>BEEKEEPER/CUCKOO BEE/ BUMBLE DRONE:</u>	David Meissner
<u>DIRECTOR:</u>	Judy Matetzschk-Campbell, Ph.D.
<u>STAGE MANAGER:</u>	Andrew Perry
<u>SCENIC DESIGNER:</u>	Ia Ensterä
<u>COSTUME DESIGNER:</u>	Ia Ensterä
<u>LIGHTING DESIGNER:</u>	Don Day
<u>SOUND DESIGNER:</u>	Peter Blackwell

2010 B. Iden Payne Nominations:

Outstanding Production of Youth Theater  
Outstanding Performer in Youth Theater: Rachel McGinnis  
Outstanding Costume Design: Ia Ensterä

2010 B. Iden Payne Awards:

Outstanding Director of Youth Theater:  
Judy Matetzschk-Campbell, Ph.D.

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## Cast of Characters

### BLUE BEE:

A Blue Orchard Bee, a solitary native bee of North America found originally in Mexico and the Southwest. She is young, hard working, shy, serious. She might be wearing a costume inspired by Mexican or Native American dress, but of course, a royal blue.

### HONEY BEE:

A queen bee of the European variety, naturalized in America for some time. She should be like a grand old Victorian American dame, like out of the 1905 Sears Catalogue, all powder and lace and frills, or a New Orleans matron, or a lady of a great Southern Plantation. Her hive is represented by a very fancy old wheelchair. She has a little fluffy bee dog that she takes with her everywhere, just a puff of black and yellow.

### BUMBLE BEE:

A queen bee of the bumble variety. At first, older than BLUE BEE, but younger than the HONEY BEE. All business: almost military in her looks and demeanor, she wears a yellow uniform with black stripes around the arms, and carries a riding crop to represent a stinger. She should be covered with short, almost furry, hair. Her nest is represented by an office desk on wheels and/or chair.

### BEEKEEPER:

A friendly fellow in a traditional white beekeeper suit who manipulates the garden.

### CUCKOO BEE:

An alien imposter of the BUMBLE BEE.

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Cast of Characters (Cont.)

<u>BUMBLE DRONE:</u>	A smaller male Bumble Drone.
<u>TULIP FLOWER:</u>	A floral friend.
<u>WORKER BEE (BONNIE):</u>	A wannabe who may be somebody.
<u>SUNFLOWERS:</u>	Some floral friends.
<u>NEW QUEEN HONEY:</u>	The next generation. A model 1950's office worker in a professional suit and 2" heels.
<u>NEW QUEEN BUMBLE:</u>	The next generation. A hippie peace loving tie-dyed tree hugger.

Synopsis

What happens to neighboring beehives when the rains don't come and the flowers don't bloom and the bees can't make enough honey for their hives? In playwright Emily Cicchini's fanciful and fun new play, two proud queen bees, each with very different personalities and management styles, must finally come together with the help of a solitary blue orchard mason bee and try new ways to solve old problems so that everyone in the garden can thrive.

Scene

A beautiful garden and orchard in the rolling hills of the South Central United States of America. The orchard might be made of coat trees: the garden of brass beds. In the background, a rolling landscape with a clearly defined "glass" horizon.

Time

It should be able to progress through Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, and back to Spring: but this can be done metaphorically, not literally: lots of colored lights and cut out shadows of leaves and branches.

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## Music Notes

Songs from the early 1900's are included throughout, adapted to fit this story. Music files are readily available on the internet.

List of adapted songs:

- 01) Mighty Lak' a Rose
- 02) Stinging Bee Rag
- 03) Goodbye Broadway Hello France
- 04) Bumblebee Boogie
- 05) I Send My Heart Up to Thee
- 06) Festive Boogie
- 07) Be My Baby Bumble Bee
- 08) General Boogie

The original lyrics and tunes to these songs are in the public domain but some arrangements may not be. It is suggested that you re-arrange the music appropriately for your performance.

## Scientific Note

There are many conflicting theories about the cause and potential cure of Colony Collapse Disorder, and researchers are continuing to investigate the problem. Producers may feel free to incorporate this debate into the dialogue as new information is brought to light, but an effort should be made to avoid a definitive opinion about the matter until it is fully resolved by science.

SETTING: A beautiful garden with distinct horizon line in the background.

AT RISE: The BEEKEEPER comes out into the garden, which is bare in winter.

BEEKEEPER

Spring is coming any time now. I can feel it in my bones. And soon, all my little bee friends will arise, and pollinate the flowers and food crops, so that we humans can have fresh fruits and vegetables and grain to eat.

(Music starts: Mighty Lak' a Rose. As the BEEKEEPER sings, the HONEY BEE comes out, doing wide swinging modern dance type movements, and the BUMBLE BEE, in tiny choppy baby steps, around and behind him.)

Honey bees make honey,  
 Ev'rybody knows;  
 Bumble bees are busy,  
 And drink nectar from the rose.  
 Did you know that some bees  
 Are not yellow but blue?  
 Solitary creatures  
 Who won't likely bother you?  
 They're collecting pollen,  
 For their babes to grow,  
 From the nut and fruit trees  
 Lined up in a row.  
 This is why we call these insects  
 Orchard Mason Bees.  
 They don't live in hives,  
 But alone up in the breeze.  
 Honey bees make honey,  
 Ev'rybody knows;  
 Bumble bees are busy,  
 And drink nectar from the rose.  
 But there are some good bees  
 We call the Orchard Blue.  
 Good at pollinating  
 Lots of yummy plants for you!

(The HONEY BEE and the  
 BUMBLE BEE both dance away,  
 in different directions.)

## BEEKEEPER (Cont.)

I'm a beekeeper. It's my job to make sure there's enough bees around to help the orchard and the garden thrive. We're all connected, you know, in this great cycle of life. And this here-

(He holds up a small bee house, sort of like a bird house, but smaller.)

This here is my best employee. She does the work of almost a hundred other bees combined. She's called an Orchard Mason Bee. Some call her a Blue Mason Bee. I just call her: Blue.

(The sun begins to rise, and the plants to bloom as he speaks.)

See, Blue is a very special type of bee, called a solitary bee. Unlike the other bees, she's alone in this world. She comes from a small tube of mud, not a big colony hive or nest with a whole lot of other bees, like the Honeys or the Bumbles. This is a special house that I made for her last Fall. This winter was hard. So hard. So I brought the bee house inside my house for a bit. But now it's time for the eggs to hatch. The sun will help them know. There's probably 5 or 6 eggs in there. But I'll be lucky if just one makes it through.

(The BEEKEEPER places the blue bee house carefully behind a shrub.)

I'll just put Blue's little bee house back here. Oop- Gotta be careful not to disturb her too much. There. Now, I'll go see about the Honey Bees. They're kinda high maintenance, if you know what I mean. Susceptible to pests and disease. Wax Moths. Foulbrood. Nosema. Mites.

(shutters at the thought)

The Bumbles should be out soon, though... don't need to do much to keep them happy: They pretty much take care of themselves.

(He puts on his beekeeper hat and walks away. Almost instantly, the bush begins to shake and we hear a bee struggling on the other side. Finally, out pops BLUE BEE. She's sort of like a fairy, a Native American princess, and a

blue jean cowgirl, all in  
one.)

BLUE BEE

Hallelujah! I'm free!

(She stretches, and her  
wings unfurl.)

Now. Where the heck am I?

(She buzzes around a bit,  
floating and gliding with  
her body, as if she's never  
flown before.)

Woah, whoah whoa, what the heck is going on here. I feel  
like, I feel like, I'm flying or something.

(buzz buzz...)

I can fly.

(Discovery!)

I can fly! I can fly!

(She buzzes around and  
starts to do some  
syncopated Boogie Woogie  
moves.)

Flap, flap, tri-ple flap, tri-ple flap... Would you look at  
that! I can boogie.

(pause)

I did not know that.

(new idea)

I gotta tell somebody about this.

(BLUE BEE slumps down and  
considers her fate.

Meanwhile, nearby, a large  
TULIP FLOWER blooms as she  
talks.)

I feel like I should be doing something. Making something  
out of myself. But what? When? Where? Why? How?

(The TULIP FLOWER blossoms  
with a loud sign, which  
BLUE BEE hears.)

What was that?!?

(The TULIP FLOWER sighs  
again.)

There it is again!

(BLUE BEE looks around,  
goes to the TULIP FLOWER.)

Did you hear something?

(The TULIP FLOWER sighs  
again, almost annoyed.)



BLUE BEE (Cont.)

Oh, oh, oh, it's you. You're alive! You're alive! How wonderful. What's your name?

(The TULIP FLOWER shrugs.)

You, you don't have a name?

(The TULIP FLOWER shrugs again.)

You can't talk, can you.

(The TULIP FLOWER shakes his head.)

Well, that's okay. I'll talk for both of us. Cause, two lips are better than four. Get it? Ha ha. Two lips. That's it! I'll call you... Two Lips. How does that sound? Two Lips.

(The TULIP FLOWER smiles a little.)

What's that you've got there, Two Lips? That little yellow powder, you've got in there right on your nose... It's so golden, it looks good enough to eat. Can I... you know, have a little taste of it?

(The TULIP FLOWER shrugs. BLUE BEE sticks her finger out, wipes it on the TULIP FLOWER's petal, and then licks it.)

Mmmm. MMMMM! SWEET! YUMMY! MMMMMORE! I want more! I need more!

(She starts using all her fingers.)

MMMMM! Oh, goodness, I am so hungry. I am starving. I am famished! It's like, it's like, I've never eaten anything before ever in my whole entire life!

(pause)

In fact, I can't remember ever eating anything before. Because, because, that's it. I've got it! I've just been born.

(The TULIP FLOWER makes a sound.)

Oh, I'm sorry, I don't mean to be greedy. Are you, are you okay?

(The TULIP FLOWER nods its head.)

You're okay? Really?

(The TULIP FLOWER leans towards her, offering her more.)

You sure?

(The TULIP FLOWER nods.)

BLUE BEE (Cont.)

Well, okay. But I can't be such a pig about it. I know. I'll just take some and put it in this little sack here.

(She takes a sack off, like a purse, and proceeds to put some of the pollen in it.)

For safe keeping. I'll eat it later. Okay. Well. That's enough for now. Thank you, Mr. Tulip.

(The TULIP FLOWER bows.)

Maybe, maybe I'll see you around, okay?

(BLUE BEE flies away, and the TULIP FLOWER discretely exits.)

Wow. That was great. That felt just right. I think this is what I'm supposed to be doing. Collecting this, this, dusty, sticky, flower candy, and putting it in this little sack I have here. It's a pretty little sack. I wonder how I got it? I wonder how I got here? I wonder what it's all about?

(Just then- with a buzzing sound like a WWI airplane- the BUMBLE BEE enters, in a march. She's an officer, rigid and authoritarian. Music starts: The Stinging Bee.)

BUMBLE BEE

Hup, two three four, Hup two three four... Company, halt! You there!

BLUE BEE

Who, me?

BUMBLE BEE

Yes, you there. Why aren't you back at the colony?

BLUE BEE

The what?

BUMBLE BEE

The nest. Basecamp. Your home, daughter worker. Maybe we haven't met. I'm your queen, Queen Bumble Bee to you, and I take great pride in creating a friendly work environment.

(BUMBLE BEE holds out her hand to shake.)

BLUE BEE

(shivers but shakes her hand)

I don't know what you're talking about.

BUMBLE BEE

Oh, don't be like that. All you worker bees are technically my daughters, although I don't like to get all touchy-feely about it.

BLUE BEE

You're my mother?

BUMBLE BEE

Yes, yes. But no time for catch up. We've got a lot of work to do. We need to collect nectar for carbohydrates, and pollen for protein, in order for our young larvae to properly develop. It's all in the family, you know... except... except...

(noticing for the first time as the MUSIC abruptly stops)

You're... BLUE!

BLUE BEE

We're family?

BUMBLE BEE

A blue bee? We've never had a blue bee in the family before. Wait just a minute. Wait just an ever lovin' minute...

(examining her)

You don't have yellow and black fur. You don't have a stinger. You don't even have a uniform. Why, you're not a Bumble Bee at all.

BLUE BEE

What's a Bumble Bee?

BUMBLE BEE

Bumble bees are the hardest working creatures on the planet. We are a highly organized social unit, a perfectly balanced female-dominated civilization. Plus, unlike that preposterous Honey Bee-

(aiming her crop as if it were a sword)

-we can sting more than once! *En Guard!*

BLUE BEE

Yikes! Why would you want to sting someone?

BUMBLE BEE

Only for self-protection, of course.

(putting crop behind her back, circling BLUE)

In any case. I don't know who or what you are, but I'm warning you right now. This is my land. My territory.

BLUE BEE

I won't bother you, I promise. But please, Miss Queen, if I'm not a Bumble Bee, can you tell me what kind of bee I am? I seem to be, all alone out here. I'd love to have a job... a nest... a family of my own...

BUMBLE BEE

I'm sorry. I can't help out every little lost bee I find buzzing around outside my hive. I must get back to my mission. The sweet peas are calling...

(The BUMBLE BEE starts up her engines, but then stops. She sees something and looks around for another direction in which to exit. The HONEY BEE calls from off stage.)

HONEY BEE

(offstage)

Beebee! Beebee! Where are you, my little precious poo-poo...

BUMBLE BEE

Drat! It's that ridiculous Honey Bee, right between me and those delectable sweet pea blossoms...

BLUE BEE

What's a Honey Bee?

BUMBLE BEE

Don't you know anything? It's her fault we're having a shortage, you know. She had to go proliferating and replicating and procreating, year after year, summer after summer, until the whole place is just dripping in honey...

BLUE BEE

What's honey?

BUMBLE BEE

What's wrong with you? Were you born yesterday?

BLUE BEE

As a matter of fact, just this morning.

HONEY BEE

(offstage)

Beebee! Come back here this very instant!

(There is a dog barking noise, combined with a flying sound... and suddenly, a small fuzzy creature flies at BUMBLE BEE, who unwittingly catches it.)

BUMBLE BEE

(juggling the small fuzzy thing)

What? Ugh, for Pete's sake!

BLUE BEE

What is it?

BUMBLE BEE

It's Beebee. Her pet beegle.

(rim shot from a drum)

Ugh, disgusting creature. Here, take it.

(She throws it at BLUE BEE.)

BLUE BEE

Oh, how sweet!

(wimpering sound)

It's okay, little fellow.

(BLUE BEE takes the dog and cuddles with him. The dog makes happy sounds. The queen HONEY BEE enters, all frills, corset, big powdered hair, as if from another time altogether.)

HONEY BEE

Oh, Beebee! They've found you!

BUMBLE BEE

For the hundredth time, if you can't keep your dog on a leash, I'm liable to call the wasps on you.

HONEY BEE

Oh, please, just for once, can't you be civil? Just give me my pooch, and I'll be out of your way.

BLUE BEE

Can I keep it? She really likes me-

HONEY BEE

I'm sorry, honey, but this little pup belongs to me.

BLUE BEE

Okay, here you go, if you say so...

(BLUE BEE gives HONEY BEE the dog, and HONEY BEE puts the dog on a leash.)

HONEY BEE

Why, thank you, sweetheart.

(She acknowledges BLUE BEE's sadness, trying to cheer her up, charm her.)

You know, thank you for saving my dog. You're a hero. You see, I was just taking a little a tea break, and Beebee just slipped out the hive-

BUMBLE BEE

(cutting her off)

That's what you said last time. If you don't keep your mutt to yourself, I'm liable to tell the Cuckoo bee where you live. How would you like a nasty Cuckoo Bee to get you?

HONEY BEE

Why, you wouldn't dare.

BLUE BEE

What's a Cuckoo Bee?

BUMBLE BEE

It's the most horrible creature in all the garden. It's a parasite with massive mandibles that infiltrates the colonies of other bees. It will come into your home when you're asleep and steal the whole hive away from you!

HONEY BEE

Honestly, Bumble. Why must you have such a negative attitude? Why can't you just be happy? We are truly blessed. Look all around us. It's spring!

(The plants have all begun  
to bloom.)

The flowers and trees are in bloom. There is plenty of nectar and pollen for all of us. You just need to believe in the good, and the promise of everlasting abundance...

BUMBLE BEE

La, la, la dee dah. That's easy for you to say, up there in your fancy luxurious hive with thousands and thousands of workers. I only have fifty. Only fifty pathetic worker bees! And if you haven't noticed, the entire eco-economy is in a tailspin. According to my calculations, there's a 50% decrease in pollen collection over this time last year.

BLUE BEE

What's an eco-economy?

HONEY BEE

It's the movement of everything that keeps us all alive.

BUMBLE BEE

Rain. We need more rain. And the winter. So hard. I barely made it through alive. We're in a flower shortage, no two ways around it. And now, there is this, this, Blue Bee to contend with.

HONEY BEE

Yes, indeed.

(They both stare down the  
BLUE BEE. She backs away.)

Don't be afraid, darling. We're not going to hurt you.  
Where did you come from?

BLUE BEE

Why, I was just born here...

HONEY BEE

I remember your mother. She was an excellent pollinator.

BLUE BEE

You know my mother? Where is she? Can you tell me where to  
find her?

(The HONEY BEE and the  
BUMBLE BEE shoot each other  
a knowing look.)

HONEY BEE

Well, we'd like to tell you that...

BUMBLE BEE

But we can't.

HONEY BEE

No, you see-

BUMBLE BEE

Well, it's classified information.

HONEY BEE

Yes. That's right. Classified. Dear Miss Blue Bee. How rude  
of us! When you're clearly so new here. What we *should* say,  
is, welcome, my dear, to the garden.

BLUE BEE

Why, thank you, Madame Queen.

HONEY BEE

You're so fresh, so natural, and beautiful, in your very  
own original way.

BLUE BEE

Do you, really, think so, um, your highness?