

# **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.)



(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 ...

