



PEACE CHILD

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PEACE CHILD BACKGROUNDER: "Turning a Dream Into Reality"

The Washington, DC-based Peace Child Foundation takes a novel approach to peacemaking and international diplomacy: start with a dream, turn it into a musical play, then gradually turn the play into a self-fulfilling prophecy. To a startling degree, the approach is working.

The dream comes directly out of a popular European publication called The Peace Book by Bernard Benson. It is set in the year 2025, when lasting world peace has already been achieved. Every year, children celebrate Peace Day by reenacting the story of children from the 1980's who took decisive steps to save their world from nuclear destruction.

In 1981, then-BBC filmmaker David Woolcombe teamed with songwriter David Gordon to turn Benson's book into a musical theatre production, aptly titled Peace Child. Following its London premier in the Royal Albert Hall, Woolcombe took Peace Child to America for a gala presentation at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1982. Shortly thereafter, the Peace Child Foundation was established to promote productions of Peace Child nationwide. Woolcombe himself staged numerous shows along the East Coast while preparing a Peace Child Study Guide for Schools. Once this study guide became available in early 1983, schools, churches, and youth and service organizations could easily mount productions of their own, and Peace Child began appearing in scores of cities. The work of the Foundation shifted to disseminating the study guide and providing support services for the many groups trying to do the play. To date, nearly 300 productions are known to have taken place, including shows in eight other nations.

Like Benson's book, Peace Child starts in a peaceful future where children annually celebrate the story of a Russian girl and an American boy who, in the 1980's, discover they can be friends and then try to persuade their leaders to become friends as well. The play flashes back to our present time, focussing on the valiant efforts of these two peace children. Along the way, many issues are grappled with, and considerable respect is shown

- more -

David Woolcombe, President Lucia Effros, Administrator

The Peace Child Foundation is a non-profit corporation registered under Section 501 (C) (3) of US Tax Law

Background, cont'd

for the terrible dilemma world leaders face in trying to balance their own common sense and humanitarian instincts against the hard political realities of their office. At bottom, Peace Child echoes the sentiments of the Geneva Summit: since we must at all costs avoid nuclear war, we must discover new ways to cooperate, to appreciate each other and, finally, to be friends. Responses from both cast and audience members confirms that Peace Child instills hope and encourages people to engage in the peace process wherever they can.

The Peace Child Foundation pushed the dream a major step forward in mid-1985 by arranging the first-ever joint Soviet-American production of Peace Child in Moscow's prestigious Children's Musical Theatre. Seventeen American and 24 Soviet children comprised the cast. Soviet audience response was so positive, and the children's experience of friendship was so moving, that a second event was devised to reunite them by satellite television in early December: the Minneapolis-to-Moscow Peace Child Spacebridge. This television special included a children's "mini-summit," during which child audience members in each city asked and candidly responded to questions ranging in topic from dating to Star Wars. Spacebridge was seen nationwide on American PBS stations during the holiday season, and twice televised in Soviet prime time in early January, 1986.

Now, a new breakthrough is approaching. In late May, David Woolfcombe finalized agreements with Soviet officials in Moscow to permit the first-ever joint Soviet-American Peace Child tour on American soil. In August, American cast members will join their Soviet counterparts to rehearse and perform in several Soviet cities, including Leningrad and Moscow. Then the entire troupe will journey to New York City to begin a 10-city US tour spanning nearly five weeks. Highlights will include a presentation at the United Nations on September 16, celebrating the opening of the General Assembly; and several performances at the Vancouver EXPO. Also joining the tour will be the Stas Namin Group, Russia's most popular rock ensemble, who participated in both the previous Moscow Peace Child and the "Spacebridge," and who will now be making their American debut.

Overall, the 1986 tour represents a major step in Soviet-American youth exchange, paving the way for even more extensive tours and, possibly, summer exchange youth camps under Peace Child auspices in 1987 and beyond. Mutual understanding, appreciation and friendship between Soviet and American children is the key to this dream, which is starting to become reality.

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WHAT ARE WE ABOUT ?

Our purpose is to present the Children's Plea for Peace to the delegates to the Second Special Session on Disarmament in June 1982 by giving a Gala Performance of "PEACE CHILD" - a Children's Celebration for Peace.

During the six weeks of the Special Session, there will be detailed submissions from delegates from many nations, but they are all likely to be adults. Children looking out down the long avenue of Life that stretches before them will probably not understand much of what is said; but they see the thunder-clouds gathering at the end of that avenue - they feel a real fear that Nuclear Catastrophe will cut short their young lives, a fear expressed by one child in a short poem:

"If there is a war, Dad,
Will I go to Heaven?
Will they let me in, Dad?
Though I'm just eleven?"

Children in Britain and around the world have suddenly woken up to the fact that they have more to lose, in terms of years, than adults from a Nuclear Holocaust. Their message to the delegates is extremely simple - they don't want to die in a war the point of which they cannot see. They want to Live!

Apart from allowing children the opportunity of addressing their message to the delegates to the special session in a powerful and colourful way, this Gala Event has a second important purpose: to draw the attention of the public to the Special Session, to encourage them to watch its deliberations closely, and scrutinise the outcome. The Final document of the First Special Session has been justly hailed as a triumphant achievement but it was ignored by almost all the media, as it has since been ignored, betrayed even, by most of the governments that endorsed it. The only weapon against this is Public Opinion. With its power and innocent simplicity, the "Peace Child" show is the perfect instrument to win public support: its music speaks to peoples' hearts and opens their minds to the strong rational arguments for Peace and Disarmament.

The success of the workshop presentation of the show in The Royal Albert Hall ably confirms our confidence in it. That confidence is supported by the evidence of the television recording, which demonstrates also that the show will work brilliantly as a Television

THE PEACE CHILD FOUNDATION

Introduction

A Missionary travelling recently in New Guinea discovered that when certain warring tribes of head hunters made Peace, they exchanged a child to seal the peace between them. If at any time in the future, conflict threatened, the child would come forward and say "No! - these are my people. You would not make war on me!"

That child was called the "Peace Child".

Coincidentally, it was the name chosen by David Woollcombe, David Gordon and Bernard Benson for a musical show which tells the story of an American boy and a Russian girl who bring Peace to the world by persuading their respective Presidents to "change places", - they, as children, providing the example by changing places themselves, "going to each other's schools, staying with each other's families, so that none of the lies and suspicions about each other's countries need ever grow up again!" Peace Children.

The aim of the Peace Child Foundation is to awaken the Peace Child in all of us - in every child and ex-child on this planet. Our programme covers three areas:

1. Education
2. Arts and Entertainment
3. The Machinery of Global Communication

Our programme does not contain any form of angry protest against nuclear weapons or the military: our purpose is only to encourage in people a positive perception of the Beauty of Peace, trust and friendship - to instil in all people an attitude of Unselfishness and concern for the survival and Improvement of this small planet.

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EDUCATION:-

The "Peace Child" show is the inspiration of this Foundation, and our initial business in the field of Education is the creation and distribution of versions of the show that may be performed by children of all ages, in many different countries. To this end, "Peace Kits" are being created for experimental purposes in schools in Great Britain. There will be two versions of this at first - a simplified version for children under ten, to be performed, as it were, on the same level as a Nativity Play. The show in this form is seen as much as an introduction to Geography as to Peace Studies.

The second level is for the "Peace Child" show to be part of a project on Peace Studies for children between the ages of 10 - 16. The show includes conversations between children and politicians, children and businessmen, diplomats, research scientists etc. - and also discussions amongst themselves. These are open-ended in this version, and children are invited to discuss them amongst their own class, add their own arguments, and reach their own conclusions on the basis of data supplied in the "scripts" and added in their own discussions. Notes, sound and video-cassettes will be supplied to teachers and group leaders for this version. The Peace Child Foundation will also have on hand volunteers to visit schools/classes and assist teachers in the initiation of this programme.

EDUCATION (contd.)

Following experimentation in Great Britain, great care will be taken in the translation and preparation of foreign versions of these Peace Kits which will then be passed to affiliated organisations overseas to distribute throughout schools.

It is planned to develop two further projects in the educational area:

1. Twinned Schools - schools across national frontiers to exchange information, video/sound cassettes of school plays, concerts; pamphlets, magazines, essays on peace-related projects etc.
2. Student Exchange - students of all ages changing places for varying lengths of time.

Both these projects will grow organically out of the programme of introducing "Peace Child" kits into schools in different parts of the world. The twinning of schools will be concentrated on crossing frontiers of potential conflict - East/West; North South, between North and South Ireland etc.

Following the experimental stages, and initial distribution, it is expected that this area of the Foundation's work be commercially self-supporting.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Peace Child Foundation is committed to the harnessing of the Arts in the Service of promoting the cause of Peace and Understanding throughout the world: violence, conflict, war films, adventure novels all too often celebrate the false glamour of War. The Foundation will seek to raise money to commission writers, musicians, dramatists, film-makers - artists of all kinds - to create works which reveal and celebrate the joy of Peace.

One way of raising such finance will be by the promotion of Peace Concerts and commercial presentations of "PEACE CHILD" in different parts of the world. In the future, new works will be added to the Peace Child Foundation repertoire. Tours, exhibitions, books and other publishing ventures will be added to our programme of activity.

In the immediate future, work will be concentrated on promoting the Peace Child show, Bernard Benson's "The Peace Book", and organising Peace concerts and other events to draw attention to the Foundation, and raise money for its activities.

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THE MACHINERY OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

The biggest machine Mankind has ever built is the International Network of Telephones. The machine can link any pair of Four Hundred Million audio terminals around the planet in the space of 15 seconds. It is also the fastest growing machine in the world - its terminals will soon include data screens, followed shortly by Television screens. It will mean, effectively, that no person on earth need ever be more than 15 seconds apart from another.

One could be forgiven for thinking that such machinery would be a virtual guarantee of Peace on our Planet: how could one go to war with anyone that one could pick up a phone and talk to with such ease?

THE MACHINERY OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS (contd.)

Yet the major use of this machinery to date has been to reinforce and further entrench systems of national defence and influence. It is a major aim of the Peace Child Foundation to set up Networks of people and organisations around the world, linked by computer, telephone and compatible sound and video systems so that information, educational and cultural materials may be exchanged at high-speed. Chiefly, we intend this network be a support to the educational programme, allowing articles etc. to be passed between pupils across the world, comments received and so on. International links via satellite and cable TV will also soon be possible, allowing new Information programmes to reach into people's homes. The encouragement of Positive News programmes regularly transmitted is seen by the Foundation to be a major force in promoting our aims.

Much research into these new areas of global communications is needed before the Foundation will commit to a definite, and probably costly, programme. This research will be carried out by students and media experts sympathetic to the aims of the Foundation, and a report prepared. On the basis of this report, and various pilot projects planned in Europe and the USA, a programme for action will be placed before the Trustees in late 1983/early 1984.

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P R O G R A M M E 1982 - 1983

(Programme for Discussion by Trustees at meeting on 22nd April 1982)

1. To draw attention to the aims of the Peace Child Foundation and raise money for its educational, artistic and research projects.
2. To mount a professional Theatre Production of "PEACE CHILD - The Musical" in Great Britain by Christmas of this year(1982).
3. To plan an International Presentation of "Peace Child - The Cathedral Version" in Berlin, Moscow, Washington and other cities for a tour in the Summer of 1983.
4. To prepare a "Peace Kit" consisting of the Schools "Study" version of Peace Child, music and/or video-cassette, Teacher's notes and a copy of "The Peace Book" for distribution and experimentation in schools in UK and America. Pilot Programme - Autumn '82 in U.K.
5. To record and release "Peace Child" sound recording as an LP, and possible single records.
6. To arrange and/or promote "Peace Concerts" to raise money for the Foundation as and when the opportunity arises.
7. To set up Central Office with executive and secretarial staff as funds become available.

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TRUSTEES: Professor Frank Barnaby; Eirwen Harbottle; Pamela Johnson, *and James George.*

Executive Directors: Bernard Benson; David Gordon; David Woollcombe.

The following have also been invited to the 22nd April meeting as observers: Rupert Woollcombe - Legal Adviser; Michael Harbottle - Political Adviser; David Kingsley - PR Adviser.

"PEACE CHILD"

Plot Synopsis

"PEACE CHILD" is set on Peace Day in the year 2025. Peace Day is a summer festival which commemorates the day, back in the 1980s, when peace 'broke out' between the USA and the USSR. The children of a small market town gather to watch a troupe of travelling players re-enact the story of the Peace Child which tells how Peace Day came about.

They begin by telling the history of weapons development - from stone-age cudgel, to spear, to bow and arrow, musket, cannon, machine gun, tank and finally, nuclear missile. The song "FIREBALL" reminds of the horror of a nuclear explosion; the children, listening to the story, can hardly comprehend why anyone would want to make such a weapon. "But you're a child!" reminds the story-teller(who fills in between the scenes with pieces of narration), "It took the mind of a child to bring the world to its senses...."

The scene changes - we're in Washington D.C. in the mid-nineteen eighties; an embassy garden on a summer evening; there is the hum of diplomatic chatter from the terraces; two children drift away, bored. They notice each other, strike up a conversation, enjoy each other's company until.... they find out that one is American, one is Soviet. Horror!! They shouldn't be talking to each other, particularly as their parents do work related to the military. "Why?" says the Soviet girl, "Do you think there's going to be a war between us?!" - they start to discuss the possibility of a nuclear war. A touching song reveals their shared hopes and anxiety: it's called "I Want to Live". Following the song, the American boy encourages the girl to 'do something' about the problem: "If we can be friends, why can't our presidents be friends? - if they were friends, they wouldn't need any nuclear weapons at all..." (The children are about 11/12 years old.)

They decide to get on a TV Show and reveal to the world that the USA and the USSR can be friends. By chance they get on a Johnny Carson style of show. Conquering nerves, they make a powerful appeal to the TV audience on their fears about nuclear weapons, and their desire for their two presidents to get to know each other. The next morning, their pictures are in all the newspapers. They are media sensations! The boy becomes more intelligent and articulate on the subject. Finally, the press engineer a scoop: the president will interview the boy and put his head straight on the problems of national security. (Before this, the girl has gone back to Moscow.)

The boy's interview with the president is perhaps the heart of the show. It begins with the president making wise, if portentous, remarks about the security provided by deterrence. The boy makes this difficult for him by asking naive but searching questions: "Do you mean if we have the bomb, we won't use it; but if we don't have it, - we will?" The press fall about laughing, and finally the president dismisses them. Alone with the child, he opens his heart to him about his very real fears of the Soviet Union, his central belief in the value of American Freedoms. The child is touched - but he cannot square his own belief in freedom with catastrophic weapons which threaten everyone's freedom just to be alive. Reflective suddenly, he asks the president what he will do when the nuclear war comes; "If - if a nuclear war comes...." the president cries. "Would you call up your grand-children to say good-bye?" asks the boy. "Look at the other side: imagine how popular you would be if you persuaded all the leaders of the world to unite for peace! - you would be the greatest man the world has ever seen! - the man who brought the world peace!" The president tries to explain that one man cannot do it on his own - he sings the song: "I'm sorry...." Touched by the child's innocence, he explains that he is on the child's side, "I want to live too! - " At the end of the scene, they have an idea: the boy will take a message of peace from the children of the USA to the children of the Soviet Union. At the

Act One (contd.)

very least, it will be a bone to throw to the press hounds who wait outside. The President makes the announcement, the photographs are taken, and the entire chorus parade out into the audience singing the celebratory anthem, "SING!"

A C T T W O

Act Two begins with the children of the future rummaging through the props trunk finding memorabilia of the 1980s - presidential bumper stickers, redskin NFL championship T-shirts, and - a Michael Jackson cassette: they have some fun reminding themselves of the crazy dances they used to do in those days - looking on them rather as we might look on Glenn Miller numbers today. This is stopped by the severe entrance of the Soviet President. Quickly they get back to the story....

In what has become the show's most popular number, the children gather round to ask the president questions in the song, "Mr President" - "Is it true what they say, you can kill all the world in less than a day?" At the end of the song, the children are ushered in for a private session with the Soviet President. This man is much harder than the US President - he doesn't open his heart to the children at all until the very end. Instead, he tries to explain how essential it is in a shrinking world to have strong national security systems - how the world is actually safer because we have nuclear weapons. "Safer!" cry the children, "How can it be safer when with them, we can destroy the whole world! - without them, we couldn't, and wouldn't that be 'safer'?" "Oh if only people would love each other," says the girl, "we wouldn't need any weapons at all...." The old president is touched: he thanks the children for coming to see him and reminds them that everything he does in government is intended to protect their future.

Alone in a park, waiting for the taxi to come and take the boy to the airport, the children reflect morosely. They begin to consider what a wonderful world they could create if they could spend all the money at present spent on weapons just cleaning it up - they dream of how they would end all pollution, feed all the starving people, - of the holidays they would take, - even the magnificent schools they would build! Then, they part, singing a parting song - "Reach out for your dream!"

Back in Washington, the boy is totally deflated. He takes to walking the streets where he meets a couple of old people who had seen him on TV: they congratulate him warmly, and wonder how he has got on? The boy doesn't want to talk about it: his crusade is at an end. "But it's just beginning," they cry! "Take your message to the people, not to presidents. The world is thirsting for your message!" This leads to the song, "Look at Life" and the point in the show where the children come out amongst the audience, singing an up-tempo version of "I want to Live" followed by the chant: "WE WANT PEACE" - the entire theater rocks with the cry, until the Presidents come out from both sides. The children call for a summit meeting. The presidents concur - they've wanted one for a long time too.

The children want to get into the meeting, but are kept out. "If they will be friends, why should it be secret?" asks the girl. The officials laugh. Top academics, military personnel, economists, representatives of industry, and business go into the meeting. They explain to the children in song about the "Military Industrial Complex". At the end, the presidents emerge, tired and depressed. There's no chance, they say, of disarmament. "Who's talking about disarmament?" cries the boy! "How can you have disarmament while you are still enemies? - you've got to be friends first..." The girl explains the idea they had for the meeting: "Let us - the children, - change places now, while we are young, go to each other's schools, learn about each other's different way of life. Then, when we are your age, we will need no weapons at all - for by that time, we shall all be friends...." The presidents demur. What about the Military Industrial Complex? says one official. "Keep it" says the boy, "We're going to build a Peace Industrial Complex...."

ATTENTION: YOUTH & EDUCATION EDITORS

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ROSANNE SKIRBLE

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APRIL 27, 1984

"PEACE CHILD": A ROCK MUSICAL WITH A MESSAGE

(INSERTS/VOICED VERSION IN TAPE LIBRARY)

INTRO: ON STAGE AT A WASHINGTON, D.C. HIGH SCHOOL IS A CHORUS OF SEVENTY-FIVE CHILDREN FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND SEVERAL FOREIGN COUNTRIES. THEY HAVE JOINED TOGETHER IN A UNIQUE INITIATIVE FOR PEACE. THEY ARE PART OF "PEACE CHILD," A ROCK MUSICAL CELEBRATION THAT HAS INVOLVED YOUNG PEOPLE IN EUROPE, CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES. VOA'S ROSANNE SKIRBLE HAS THE DETAILS.

NARR: IN A RECENT NATIONWIDE STUDY FOR THE AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION, RESEARCHERS REPORTED THAT SEVENTY PERCENT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE QUESTIONED MENTIONED NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION AS A CERTAINTY OF THEIR FUTURE WORLD. THE MUSICAL PLAY, "PEACE CHILD" ADDRESSES THIS CONCERN. IN IT WE FIND A RUSSIAN GIRL AND AN AMERICAN BOY, WHO MEET, BECOME FRIENDS AND TOGETHER APPEAL FOR A CHANCE TO GROW UP ON A PEACEFUL PLANET.

BRITISH PRODUCER DAVID WOOLLCOMBE ADAPTED THE STORY FROM THE POPULAR EUROPEAN CHILDREN'S BOOK, THE PEACE BOOK BY BERNARD

BENSON. WOOLLCOMBE THEN ADDED THE LYRICS AND MUSIC FROM SONG WRITER DAVID GORDEN'S "PEACE ORATORIO." HE SAYS HIS PURPOSE IS TO EDUCATE YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY FOR PEACE AND TO ALLAY THEIR ANXIETIES ABOUT THE NUCLEAR ARMS BUILDUP.

TAPE CUT 1: DAVID WOOLLCOMBE

"It was designed as a celebration of peace --designed as a sort of contrast of the negativity of the sort of anti-nuclear, anti-war, anti-government demonstrations that were sweeping Europe at that time (1981). And, 'Peace Child' comes romping in with joyous songs and a message that it really is possible for people who thoroughly disagree politically, who have a history of disagreement and hostility to build bridges of friendship. And it has to start when you're young. It has to start with unselfishness and integrity and a belief that peace is possible."

TAPE CUT 2: MUSIC -- ESTABLISH AS BRIDGE AND HOLD UNDER NARRATOR THAT FOLLOWS THEN FADE OUT UNDER TAPE CUT 3

NARR: SINCE IT FIRST APPEARED IN LONDON IN NINETEEN-EIGHTY-ONE, "PEACE CHILD" HAS TRAVELED TO AUSTRALIA, CANADA, AND THE UNITED STATES. IN EACH CITY, THE PLAY'S ORGANIZERS SEARCH FOR A CAST OF VOLUNTEERS AND A CHORUS OF CHILDREN. DAVID WOOLCOOMBE SAYS THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE MUSICAL IS MEASURED MORE BY COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT THAN BY ANY MONETARY STANDARD.

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD MARCO CLARK WAS THE STAR OF "PEACE CHILD"

IN WASHINGTON. HE'LL TRAVEL WITH OTHERS IN THE WASHINGTON CAST AS THEY TOUR THE UNITED STATES THIS SUMMER. HE SAYS THAT HE NEVER REALLY THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT GLOBAL ISSUES BEFORE HE AUDITIONED FOR THE PART IN "PEACE CHILD."

TAPE CUT 3: MARCO CLARK

"After I read the script, the character seemed so much like me. It changed my life around. I used to study all the time, and not think about things much. Now, I am thinking more about my life and how I want to live, and how I want my children to live and their children to live. I want the world to keep growing because this is a prospering planet. This is what I must do. And, even if I were not to do the play 'Peace Child,' I would become a leader to inspire others to believe in peace."

TAPE CUT 4: MUSIC -- "I WANT TO LIVE" -- ESTABLISH AND HOLD
UNDER TAPE CUT 5 -- DAVID WOOLLCOMBE

TAPE CUT 5: DAVID WOOLLCOMBE

"I think that the plea 'I want to live' really reaches to the heart of children's consciousness. Because they have their whole life time spreading out before them. They see these very serious threats and that makes them anxious. Yet, the upbeat tempo of (the song) 'I want to live' really gets to them."

TAPE CUT 4: MUSIC -- "I WANT TO LIVE -- BRING UP AND PLAY TO TAG

NARR: THE PERFORMANCE HAD SPECIAL MEANING FOR A NICARAGUAN WOMAN WHOSE COUNTRY IS NOT AT PEACE. HER ELEVEN YEAR OLD SON WAS PART OF THE "PEACE CHILD" CHORUS. SHE WAS PARTICULARLY PROUD THAT HE WAS LEARNING SUCH A VALUABLE LESSON SO YOUNG IN LIFE.

TAPE CUT 5: NICARAGUAN WOMAN (IN SPANISH)

"The first thing is to plant in them (the children) the idea that peace is necessary. And, perhaps like the play says, they should take a more active role in things like this or in some other (organized) activity, so they can see the real danger that confronts us. They should take some responsibility to fight for peace."

NARR: PRODUCER DAVID WOOLLCOMBE, WHO ALSO HEADS THE WASHINGTON BASED "PEACE CHILD" FOUNDATION, WILL TRAVEL TO THE SOVIET UNION IN MAY. DURING THE TWO WEEK STAY, HE WILL SPEAK TO SOVIET LEADERS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF STAGING A RUSSIAN VERSION OF "PEACE CHILD." HE WANTS SOVIET CHILDREN TO TELL THE "PEACE CHILD" STORY FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW. HE FEELS WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY WILL BE NO DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS.

DAVID WOOLLCOMBE IS SUPPORTED IN HIS EFFORTS BY U.S. CONGRESSMAN MORRIS UDALL WHO HAS PROPOSED A UNITED STATES-SOVIET EXCHANGE FOR PEACE. UNDER THIS PROGRAM TWO THOUSAND AMERICAN AND SOVIET SCHOOL CHILDREN WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO STUDY IN EACH

OTHER'S NATION FOR A YEAR. WOOLLCOMBE AGREES THAT THIS IS THE TRUE MISSION OF HIS MUSICAL PLAY "PEACE CHILD" -- TO BUILD BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING IN PLACE OF THE FEARS THAT SEPARATE US TODAY. HE ADDS, "WE MUST GIVE CHILDREN THE HOPE THAT TOMORROW'S WORLD IS ONE WORTH LIVING FOR."

TAPE CUT 6: MUSIC "I WANT TO LIVE" (INSTRUMENTAL) SNEAK ABOVE
AND USE AS DESIRED FOR OUTRO

RS/VOHS

PEACE CHILD : NEWS RELEASE

What will our world be like fifty years from now ? What is the solution to the arms race ? Is it solvable ? Can nations with fundamentally opposed political philosophies ever be genuinely at peace ? What can ordinary people do that would make a difference ?

" PEACE CHILD " presents an opportunity for people to confront such questions through the enjoyment of a challenging musical play.

A STORY OF THE FUTURE CREATED BY CHILDREN

The setting of the play is in the future in a small town on Peace Day, a holiday celebrating the time when all the nations of the world gave up their arms and achieved lasting peace. As part of the festivities of the holiday, the children of the town enact a play. The play recalls the story of how an American boy and a Russian girl became friends and shared a dream of peace, and how they then brought together the other children of the world and persuaded their leaders to overcome their fear and distrust of each other and break the vicious circle of the arms race.

THE HISTORY OF "PEACE CHILD"

"PEACE CHILD" was the creation of the World Disarmament Campaign, as their testimony of hope for Disarmament Week 1981. The story was based on the "Peace Book" by Bernard Benson, a delightful children's fantasy that has been a best seller in much of Europe. The songs are by David Gordon, composed independently but expressing the same searching for peace. The marriage between the book and songs was made by David Woolfcombe, a British playwright and film-maker.

The first "PEACE CHILD" was performed in the Royal Albert Hall on 30 October 1981 with a full symphony orchestra, a 100-voice choir and a cast of more than one hundred children drawn from schools and foreign embassies, led by Susannah York. The American premiere was in the Kennedy Center, Washington DC, on 1 December 1982, with students of dance, drama and music from the Duke Ellington School and an international chorus of children, led again by Susannah York. Since then it has been produced in Riverside Church, New York, in April 1983 and returns once more to London for the production at Southwark Cathedral from 28th to 31st December 1983.

"PEACE CHILD" is promoted by two charitable trust, the Peace Child Charitable Trust in Britain and the Peace Child Foundation registered in Washington DC. The long term aim is to have "PEACE CHILD" and similarly inspirational shows thought about and performed on stage and in schools all over the world. A study guide for schools has been prepared, including 10 Lesson Plans and a bibliography for use by teachers.

More than 10,000 people have now been a part of "PEACE CHILD". In the United States, the City of Minnesota has its Peace Child Project; they have a dream of bringing a troupe of Soviet children to perform their version of "PEACE CHILD" at the Minnesota Festival. It is equally our dream to take a cast of British and American children and actors to Moscow.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT "PEACE CHILD"

" You can't be part of "PEACE CHILD" without being made happy, without being made hopeful.. "PEACE CHILD" engenders generosity of spirit - it engenders above all the will to do something more positive for the cause of peace and love."

Susannah York.

"PEACE CHILD" may seem a fantasy but the day that the Superpowers choose to replace long distance rhetoric and threats by a more constructive and personal bridge building process, the fantasy that is "PEACE CHILD" could become an achievable reality."

Brigadier Michael Harbottle.

" It is my fervent wish that every one in the world would open their hearts to let in the Little Boy of the Peace Book."

Pope John Paul II

A cast of 12 have given up their time and their jobs to take part in the presentation of "PEACE CHILD" at Southwark Cathedral. It is hoped that this cast will go on to perform "PEACE CHILD" on a nation-wide tour.

For further information contact PEACE CHILD, Southbank House, Black Prince Road, Lambeth, LONDON, SE1 7SJ -(01-587 1957 or 01-251 5716).