THE CHRONIC IDENTITY CRISIS OF PAMPLEMOUSSE
An opera for children by Greg Caffrey

SCHOOL RESOURCE PACK
Dear children, parents, teachers, carers

Sometimes, life can be hard. Sometimes, we feel that we don’t fit in, and nobody in the whole wide world understands us. Being lonely is unpleasant, and – would you believe it – everybody knows what it’s like!

We can feel lonely when our siblings are annoying us, or our parents are not listening, or when other children in school are mean. This is what happens to Pamplemousse, the star of our musical story by composer Greg Caffrey. Pamplemousse wants to make friends with a group of mice, but they prove to be a particularly nasty bunch. You see, Pamplemousse has a difficult name, and looks quite different from a typical mouse, so the mice get scared and think it might be easier to just ignore him. They even tease him, for no good reason at all! As you may know, people can be just as stupid as these mice.

Naturally, the way we look, and sound, says nothing about our wonderful personalities at all, and there are no skin colours and body shapes that are “right” or “wrong”. Maybe we are in fact all very similar inside, despite looking so different on the outside?

We hope you enjoy the resource pack, which comprises a synopsis, information on the orchestra, singers, composer, costume drawings, games and a Pamplemousse song! We are looking forward to seeing you for a performance of Pamplemousse in your local theatre!

Your NI Opera Team
Who is Pamplemousse, and what is this story about?

Pamplemousse the grapefruit is upset. And lonely. His mouse neighbours in the kitchen where he lives aren’t very friendly unless he’s crying sweet juicy tears that they drink greedily.

What makes it worse is that he can’t squeeze through their mouse hole to try to get to know them. All Pamplemousse wants is to find someone who likes him just the way he is, but the mice are suspicious of him because he doesn’t look or behave like one of them. Pamplemousse is puzzled, and sad. Why does it matter that he looks different? He is convinced he would make an excellent mouse companion.

Luckily, one lovely day, Apricot turns up in the fruit bowl that is Pamplemousse’s house. At first, Pamplemousse is a little bit shy, but Apricot certainly seems very nice! It so happens that Apricot is also looking for a like-minded friend and Pamplemousse realises that the mice aren’t the only creatures in the world. There is a friend for everyone!
What makes you unique?

Everyone in the world is unique, and everyone in the world is valuable. What makes you you?

My name is

I like ...

I don’t like ...

I often feel ...

I sometimes feel ...

This is me! (Draw a picture of yourself)
Pamplemousse costumes

Our designer Katie Davenport has drawn colourful costume designs. This is what Pamplemousse will look like!
The Pamplemousse orchestra

The Pamplemousse orchestra has seven musicians, each playing either one, or several instruments. The person “in charge” of the orchestra is called the conductor. The conductor shows the musicians when to play, and sometimes she uses hand gestures to make them play louder, quieter, faster, or slower.

VIOLIN. The violin is a wooden instrument with four metal strings, played with a so-called bow, which is made of a wooden stick and long white hair from a horse’s tail. The violin makes a sweet sound – almost as if it sings! Other times, it can sound coarse and raspy.

FLUTE. The flute is a long thin instrument made from metal, even though sometimes you can find wooden flutes also. The player holds the flute sideways and blows air through a mouth piece, pushing down valves (a bit like buttons) to change the pitch of the notes. The flute can sound like bird song.

BASS CLARINET. Like the flute, the clarinet is a wind instrument and the player blows air through it to make the sound come alive. There are different types of clarinets and the one played in Pamplemousse is called bass clarinet, because it sounds low and is much bigger than the clarinets you might have seen before.
**CELLO.** The cello belongs to the family of string instruments. As in most families, its members come in different sizes. The cello is the second biggest instrument in the string family, only outsized by the double bass. Like the violin it has four metal strings, but the player does not hold it below his chin (it would be very difficult to do so), but between his or her legs.

**PIANO.** The piano is a big imposing instrument with 88 black and white keys that work a bit like buttons, with each playing a different note by hitting a long metal string hidden inside the piano. Even though it doesn’t look like it, that makes the piano a relative of the violin and cello!

**HARP.** Another relative of all the string instruments mentioned so far is the harp. The big concert harp has 47 strings which the player plucks either one after another or simultaneously to play melodies and chords. The harp is one of the oldest instruments in the world and is part of many folk music traditions (including in Northern Ireland).

**PERCUSSION.** There are dozens of different percussion instruments, and they all make a very distinctive sound. The vibraphone is like a big xylophone, with metal plates that the percussionist hits with sticks that have soft bobbles on their tips (called mallets). There are also various drums of different sizes, a triangle, and a large gong.
And this is what Apricot will look like!
Meet the composer Greg Caffrey

This is Greg. He wrote both the music and the words for this opera.

Greg, what is an opera?
An opera is simply a play or a drama where the dialogue is sung. However, for me personally, an opera is something more. It is something super-real, a fantasy where everything is possible, where giant fruit, for example, can think and talk and express themselves in the most amazing way, through music. Imagine if we could do this in real life – if we could go into a shop and sing “Can I have a bar of chocolate please?”, to which the shopkeeper would reply, “Milk chocolate or dark chocolate? Fruit or nuts?”, and all with a fabulous melody and an instrumental accompaniment.

Why is everyone singing?
Everyone sings in an opera because an opera is pure fantasy. The composer can spend months or years shaping the words to music so that they can have maximum emotional effect. We can make sad language sound even sadder and beautiful language sound even more beautiful, all with the help of music.

What does a piece of fruit sound like?
A piece of fruit sounds just like you or me, only juicier and more colourful!

How do the musicians know which notes to play?
I create a thing called a score, which is a set of instructions, but in a special code that only musicians can understand. A score is a book with lots of lines and notes (little dots) and all kinds of squiggles. The higher the dots go on the lines, the higher the notes sound. We write in various symbols to tell musicians to play softly, louder, faster, slower. Musicians understand all this and they spend their whole lives perfecting this language. It’s just like speaking another language, like French or German.
Pamplemousse is looking for Apricot!
Can you help him?
Meet “Pamplemousse”!

In *Pamplemousse*, you will see and hear eight opera singers. The main role is of course Pamplemousse the grapefruit, which is played by Francesco Giusti (pronounced “Franchesco Justy”), who is an Italian counter-tenor.

Francesco, what is a countertenor?
A counter-tenor is a man who sings high, in what we call "falsetto". This type of voice is mostly used for older music but also for new pieces like *Pamplemousse*.

Why did you want to be a singer?
I have always loved singing, but I didn't want to make music my job until I begun to sing as a counter-tenor, when I was about 16 or 17. I just love it and the music the comes with it.

How does singing make you feel?
When it works as it should, singing makes me feel very well, and if it doesn’t I should probably practise more, haha! Jokes aside, I do really enjoy it. I believe it's the best way to express myself that is available to me. Also, it's so much fun! I feel very thankful for being able to work as a singer.

Pamplemousse is upset because he doesn't seem to fit in with his neighbours. Do you understand how he feels?
I really do! When I was a kid I was a bit nerdy and didn't have many friends and trying to fit in didn't really work... but then I found people who were similar to me and with whom I shared many things and interests. With some of them I am friends to this very day! Being true to one’s self is always the best way, it may be very hard sometimes, but it is definitely worth it and it brings about lasting friendship.
Information for teachers, parents, carers

The Chronic Identity Crisis of Pamplemousse is a Northern Ireland Opera production

Creative Team
Composer and librettist: Greg Caffrey
Music director: Sinead Hayes
Director: Caítriona McLaughlin
Associate Director: Justine Doswell
Costume designer: Katie Davenport
Set Designer: Deirdre Armstrong
Lighting Designer: Sebastian Pizarro
Creative Producer: Kate Guelke
Dramaturg: Judith Wiemers
/Outreach facilitator: Keith McAlister

Cast
Pamplemousse: Francesco Giusti
Narrator: John Porter
Apricot: Nathan Morrison
Mouse: Rebecca Murphy
Mouse: Jessica Hackett
Mouse: Ben Escorcio
Mouse: David Corr
Mouse: Berus Komarschela

Orchestra
Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble

Partners, Funders
Sing a Pamplemousse song!

Attached you will find a song from the opera that you can sing in class.