

**Educational  
Musicals**

*presents an  
Anthony James  
Musical*

# **Perfect Pirates**

**The Story of Anne Bonny & Mary Read**

**Script**



With  
**CD**

**Written by Anthony James  
Music by Katherine Brookes**

# Perfect Pirates

## The Story of Anne Bonny & Mary Read

### Fact Sheets.

#### The Pirates.

Pirates come in many shapes and forms and have a long history. Even the ancient Greeks and Romans were harassed by sea raiders and the Vikings were some of the most successful pirates of all time. Today however, it is the pirates of the 16th, 17th and 18th century's whose exciting and daring exploits remain in the imagination, perpetuated by romantic stories, gripping books and very inaccurate Hollywood films.

The actual word pirate means **"one who plunders on the sea"** and it must be remembered that many were brutal sea thieves who showed no mercy to their innocent victims. Pirates themselves can be classified into several categories.

#### Privateers.

These sea raiders carried a government licence to pillage enemy ships during wars with other countries. Letters of Marque, as they were called, allowed privateers to attack the ships of other countries as long as the king or queen also received a share of the loot. The English Queen Elizabeth I gave Francis Drake a knighthood for his successful privateering against the Spanish. The English King Henry III issued one of the first Letters of Marque in 1243.

***"Know Ye that we have granted and given license...to Adam Robernolt and William Le Sauvage...to annoy our enemies at sea or by land...so that they shall share with us half of all their gain".***

#### Buccaneers.

Buccaneers were 17th century pirates who attacked Spanish ships and their colonies in the Caribbean. Originally the buccaneers were hunters from the island of Hispaniola. They had begun to colonise the mainland and lived by breeding pigs and other livestock and by supplying meat to passing ships. The name buccaneer derives from their 'boucans' which were smokehouses in which meat is 'cured'. The Spanish however felt the mainland was theirs and tried to drive them out. The buccaneers now banded together in groups attacking Spanish ships and colonies. They were notorious for their casual brutality and cruelty.

#### Corsairs.

Privateers and pirates who roamed the Mediterranean. One of these was an English pirate called Bartholomew Roberts who wrote that corsairs were:-

***"All lured by the promise of plenty...pleasure...liberty and power".***

## **A Way of Life.**

Life at sea was hard and dangerous. Many sailors were victims of press gangs. Young men would literally be kidnapped and forced into serving on man-of-war battleships for their king/queen and country. Conditions could be horrific and many never returned home. Piracy offered a way out of this harshly disciplined life; a pirate's life offered freedom.

Pirates were heavy drinkers, full of bravado and swagger, weapons were displayed and stories spread to increase individual stature and position. Captured ships were renamed, given fearsome titles to match their new owners. Names such as 'The Mad Dog' or the 'Revenge'.

## **The Spanish Main.**

Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492 and during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Spain exported vast amounts of gold and silver from the recently conquered Aztec and Inca nations back home. Spanish treasure ships laden with their valuable cargo's were easy pickings for privateers and pirates. The term 'Spanish Main' originally referred to the Spanish Mainland of South America. Later it came to include the many islands and sheltered waters of the Caribbean.

## **Calico Jack.**

John Rackham was nicknamed 'Calico Jack' because of the sailcloth calico breeches and coat he regularly wore. He first appears in pirate history as the quartermaster of Captain Charles Vane's pirate ship the *Treasure* in 1717. When Captain Vane failed to attack a large Spanish treasure ship Jack led a mutiny and took over the treasure. A handsome man with a thirst for life, money and adventure. His four-year career as a famous pirate was ended in November when first his crew were hanged, then on November 28<sup>th</sup> 1720 Calico Jack himself was hanged at Gallows Point in Port Royal.

## **Women Pirates.**

Piracy was a man's world, as were the areas of politics, business and art through the years associated with the pirate era. If a woman wanted to be a pirate she had to pretend to be a man. Many of these women are lost to history and the few who were found out became legends. One of the first, even before the time of the Vikings, was Alvilda, a Swede, who went to sea with a crew entirely made up of women, to avoid an arranged marriage.

Another was Charlotte De Berry who had always dreamed of a life at sea. She dressed as a man and joined her husband in the navy. Later she led a mutiny aboard an African bound ship. Under her command the whole crew turned to piracy and cruised the African coast capturing gold ships.

## **Anne Bonny.**

In 1697 Mary Brennan gave birth to a daughter, Anne Brennan, later to become Anne Bonny, in Kinsale, County Cork, Ireland. Anne was the result of a scandalous affair between her mother, Mary Brennan, and her mother's married employer, William Cormac. They were briefly jailed, but on release she and William sailed to America to begin a new life.

In Charleston, South Carolina, William became a respected plantation owner and began to amass a fortune. Although Anne wanted for nothing she was fascinated by the pirates that frequented the popular port of Charleston. She married a small time pirate, by the name of James Bonny, in her late teens and the couple left Charleston for New Providence in the Bahamas, now called Nassau.

Unfortunately, James was an inept pirate and poor businessman. He would regularly accuse fellow sailors who he disliked as being pirates and turn them over to the authorities for a reward, but soon even this ill gotten money ran out. Anne now wandered into the arms of the notorious pirate John 'Calico Jack' Rackham who persuaded her to join him in a life as a pirate. Women at that time were thought to be bad luck on a ship, so Calico Jack smuggled her aboard his ship disguised as a man.

## **Mary Read.**

Mary Read was born in London in 1695. Her father was a seaman originally from Devon, England. The family had little money so Mary's mother would dress her up as a boy and hire her out as a footboy to rich French women.

Mary soon tired of this life, she had a thirst for adventure and a fascination with the sea and seafaring men. She soon ran away to sea, still dressed as a boy. She signed aboard a mighty man-o-war battleship.

However, even this wasn't enough and several months later she jumped ship and joined the infantry. She quickly ended up in the horse regiment and fought in Flanders, earning the reputation as a good soldier.

While in the horse regiment she met and fell in love with a fellow soldier, revealing the fact that she was a woman. They married and left their regiment to set up an Inn called 'The Three Horse Shoes'. Unfortunately the venture failed and Mary's husband died. Mary's life was about to change yet again. Back in men's clothing she signed onto a Dutch ship bound for the West Indies. This ship was attacked by pirates and as Mary seemed to be the only 'English boy' aboard she avoided being marooned with the rest of the Dutch crew. She was taken aboard the pirate vessel and after months at sea she was landed at New Providence.

Mary Read's life had already been quite an adventure, but it wasn't over yet. Quickly becoming bored, she signed onto the ship of a powerful pirate called Captain Vane. Vane himself captured a rich ship from London called The Kingston. Vane then decided to hand over the captaincy of this ship to another pirate. Calico Jack Rackham. This was a mistake. Rackham instigated a mutiny and cast Vane and his followers adrift at sea. Mary fought bravely and became Calico Jack's Lieutenant.

## Anne & Mary together.

Attracted by the offer of a royal pardon, Calico Jack headed back to New Providence where he met Anne. By now Anne was bored of her marriage to James Bonny and she quickly began a relationship with Jack. Having returned from a recent stint at sea James heard of the relationship. Furious, he contacted the Governor and insisted he put an end to the affair. Jack even offered to purchase Anne, which was legal at the time, but James refused. With the threat of a public flogging hanging over Anne, Jack gathered members of his original crew (including Mary Read) and rowed out with a disguised Anne into the harbour to steal a ship, which they christened 'The Revenge'.

Over the next couple of weeks Anne, dressed in men's clothing, became an active and fearsome member of Jack's crew. Soon both Anne and Mary realised that they were both women in disguise. Anne convinced Mary to reveal her secret to Calico Jack which she did. However by now Anne herself was pregnant and Jack took her to Cuba where she delivered a baby. Anne left the child in Cuba and returned to the Revenge. What happened to this child is uncertain. Calico Jack now terrorised the Caribbean. Alongside him fought two brave pirates who we know to be Anne and Mary. During this time, Mary too fell in love with a captured prisoner. She even took his place in a duel and killed his challenger.

But time was running out for the terrible trio. Back in New Providence Governor Woodes Rogers, an ex privateer himself, had employed another ex pirate, Captain Barnet, to search out and cripple the forces of piracy. In 1720 Captain Barnet's ship caught up with The Revenge. After a heavy bombardment from Barnet's navy sloop, Calico Jack and his men disappeared below decks to get drunk. An outnumbered Anne and Mary bravely faced Captain Barnet's boarding party alone, expertly wielding heavy boarding axes. Anne is reported to have shouted to Jack and his men:-

***"If there be a man among ye, ye'll come out and fight like the men ye are meant to be".***

Calico Jack, Anne, Mary and the crew of The Revenge were put in irons and taken to Jamaica to face trial for piracy. On November 16<sup>th</sup> 1720 Jack and his men were sentenced to be hanged. As a last request, Jack asked to see Anne. The meeting was arranged but Anne's anger at his cowardice was overwhelming. She screamed:-

***"If ye had fought like a man you would not be hanging now like a dog".***

Calico Jack Rackham was hanged for his crimes along with his crew at Gallows Point in Port Royal, Jamaica. Amazingly Anne and Mary escaped with their lives, as both women had become pregnant and the law at the time prevented a pregnant women from being hanged. Mary, however, didn't escape the wrath of the law as she was sentenced to hang after the birth of her baby. Mary still managed to avoid the gallows, however she and her newborn baby died of a fever while still in prison.

Amazingly Anne was granted a pardon. Many believe her rich father intervened. After release she disappeared from history and to this day nobody knows what happened to her and her baby.

The story of Anne Bonny and Mary Read is an incredible odyssey, even more remarkable when you consider that it was a hanging offence at the time to bring a woman or child aboard a pirate ship. They were fearless and were expert in the use of the boarding axe, cutlass and pistol. Together they truly were two perfect pirates.

## **Pirate Facts.**

### **The Jolly Rodger.**

Pirate ships flew black flags showing images associated with death. They were used to fill their victims with fear and were a warning to surrender. An even more terrifying sight was a plain red flag. This signalled death to all that saw it. Every pirate had their own Jolly Rodger design, and not all were the standard skull-and-crossbones of pirate legend.

### **Pirate Treasure.**

There are many myths and legends about pirate treasure. Surprisingly many are true. Pirates could become fabulously rich overnight. Fortunes in gold and silver were regularly spirited away by successful raiders. Whether any treasures lasted long enough to be buried and marked with an X on a map is debatable. Most pirates would quickly spend their fortunes rather than bury it for later.

### **Pirate Processions.**

Many pirates had their own names for objects familiar to us. A valuable tool to a pirate was a 'Bring 'em near' or what we call, a telescope. 'Sea Artists' created maps and charts and books of charts were called 'Waggoners'.

### **Pirate Grub.**

Pirate food was always an unreliable commodity. Fresh meat was available in the form of turtle or fish taken straight from the sea. If fish and turtle couldn't be caught most pirates survived on biscuits and dried meat washed down with stolen wine or beer. Occasionally ships could anchor off remote islands to hunt for fresh meat, eggs etc but these stops were rare. Starvation was always just around the corner. If a ship became becalmed or worse, wrecked, pirates could be reduced to eating leather shoes, satchels or even each other.

***Perfect Pirates*** is a fictional account of the amazing, true story of Anne Bonny and Mary Read. Two successful female pirates. The show follows both Anne and Mary as they join the notorious 'Calico Jack' for a life of piracy on the high seas.

*The musical is filled with factual information on pirates, their ships and the politics and attitudes of the time. It also provides an insight into the hardships of a life at sea and the lives of real historical characters.*

# Perfect Pirates

## The Story of Anne Bonny & Mary Read

### Characters.

**Total Characters.** Main parts - 8 Calico Jack's crew, 9 Governor's employees, 4 Captain Barnett's crew, tavern staff, general pirates.

Numbers are flexible.

<b>Anne Bonny -</b>	A young female pirate.
<b>Mary Read -</b>	A young female pirate.
<b>John 'Calico Jack' Rackham -</b>	A notorious rogue and pirate.
<b>Governor Woodes Rogers -</b>	The Governor of New Providence.
<b>Captain Barnett -</b>	An ex pirate employed by Governor Rogers.
<b>James Bonny -</b>	Anne Bonny's unpleasant husband.
<b>Angus -</b>	Scottish member of Calico Jack's crew.
<b>Mr Rack -</b>	Member of Calico Jack's pirate crew.

Other characters.

<b>Calico Jack's Crew -</b>	A burly bunch of pirates.
<b>Captain Barnett's Crew -</b>	Mercenaries and ex privateers.
<b>Governor Rogers Employees -</b>	Governors personal staff and jailers.
<b>Tavern Staff -</b>	Friendly New Providence residents.

# Perfect Pirates

## The Story of Anne Bonny & Mary Read

Anne Bonny is bored and unhappily married to James Bonny. One day a notorious pirate 'Calico Jack' enters her life with his mysterious Lieutenant. Very quickly Anne falls for Jack and joins him, dressed as a man, for a life of piracy on the high seas. While aboard Jack's ship *The Revenge*, Anne learns the amazing truth about Jack's Lieutenant, the disguised Mary Read, and together they vow to be the best pirates ever. Meanwhile in New Providence the new Governor has been charged by the king to end piracy. Captain Barnet is dispatched to capture *The Revenge* and bring all aboard her to justice.

***Perfect Pirates*** is a fictional story accurately based on the historical facts known about the pirates Anne Bonny and Mary Read. Created specifically for children this lively and fun look at the amazing story of history's most famous female pirates is accompanied by a musical score of memorable and catchy songs that you will find hard to forget.

Enjoy ***Perfect Pirates***.

***Anthony James***

# Perfect Pirates

## The Story of Anne Bonny & Mary Read

### Song List.

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Pirates</i> -                   | The Pirates.                  |
| 2. <i>New Providence</i> -            | James Bonny & Pirates.        |
| 3. <i>Bored</i> -                     | Anne Bonny.                   |
| 4. <i>I'm Calico Jack</i> -           | Calico Jack & Pirates.        |
| 5. <i>I'm Not What I Seem</i> -       | Mary Read & Anne Bonny.       |
| 6. <i>At Sea</i> -                    | The Pirates.                  |
| 7. <i>Scourge of the Seven Seas</i> - | Governor Rogers.              |
| 8. <i>Perfect Pirates</i> -           | Captain Barnet & Crew.        |
| 9. <i>Heave To</i> -                  | Captain Barnet & Calico Jack. |
| 10. <i>Come Out and Fight</i> -       | Anne Bonny & Mary Read.       |
| 11. <i>No Regrets</i> -               | Angus & Calico Jack's Crew.   |
| 12. <i>Pirates (Reprise)</i> -        | All.                          |

# Perfect Pirates

The Story of Anne Bonny & Mary Read

## Performance Notes

This show has been constructed so that no one character has more than five consecutive lines. Anne Bonny and Mary Read were female pirates dressed as men. Who knows how many more could be in the crew in your production! It is suggested that there should be an equal male/female mix of children in main roles.

**Factual Changes.** 1. Not long after she boarded The Revenge Anne Bonny became pregnant with Calico Jack's baby and the pair sailed to Cuba. It is unknown what happened to this child. This event is not chronicled in *Perfect Pirates*. 2. Only Anne Bonny visited Calico Jack while in prison in Port Royal. Mary is present in this production purely for artistic licence!

All characters are factual except for the names of Calico Jack's crew.

*Perfect Pirates* is a complete musical. Its structure has been created to enable individual interpretation by teachers and young performers. The facts used are as accurate as possible within a structure created to entertain and inform young children. The writer has striven to be politically correct and inoffensive.

# Perfect Pirates

The Story of Anne Bonny & Mary Read

## SCENE ONE – The Tavern

*During Song one's introduction, pirates and townsfolk of New Providence enter and sit at tables. Captain Barnet and three of the governor's employee's, who are wearing black, sit at one table towards the back. They do not join in the impending song. Tavern staff bring on onion bottles of wine and tankards. Anne Bonny enters and sits at the centre table which is positioned nearer to the front of the performance space than the others. She watches, delighted, as the pirates sing and get up to dance around her. They even drag her up for a dance towards the end of the song.*

### SONG 1: Pirates - The Pirates.

**Pirates.** Pirates are we, sailing the sea, a rum a dum a rum a dum a  
Pirates are we, try not to flee, a rum a dum a do.  
Pirates are we, totally free, a rum a dum a rum a dum a  
Pirates are we, mean we be, a rum a dum a dum a do.

We can sail around the world, capture treasure by the boatload,  
We can cross the deep blue sea, plunder again and again.  
Scurvy dogs all drunk on beer, creatures you should loath and fear,  
Pistols aiming left and right, shooting again and again.

Yo ho ho and blow me down, we sing upon a dead man's chest.  
Yo ho ho and blow me down, we sing our pirate song.  
Yo ho ho and blow me down, we sing upon a dead man's chest.  
Yo ho ho and blow me down, we sing our pirate song.

Pirates are we, sailing the sea, a rum a dum a rum a dum a  
Pirates are we, try not to flee, a rum a dum a do.  
Pirates are we, totally free, a rum a dum a rum a dum a  
Pirates are we, mean we be, a rum a dum a dum a do.

We can sail around the coast, battle Spanish by the boatload.  
We can beat the fastest ship, attack again and again.  
Dirty slob all hair and lice, you can't call us very nice.  
Look out world we're on our way, laughing again and again.

Yo ho ho and blow me down, we sing upon a dead man's chest.  
Yo ho ho and blow me down, we sing our pirate song.  
Yo ho ho and blow me down, we sing upon a dead man's chest.  
Yo ho ho and blow me down, we sing our pirate song.

*At the end of the song the pirates and townsfolk settle down and Anne grabs a tankard of wine from a serving girl. As she drinks from the tankard James Bonny enters with three shipmates and creeps up behind her, clasping his hands over her eyes.*

**James.** Hello my darling Anne, guess who?

**Anne.** Is it the terrifying pirate Blackbeard?

**James.** No.

**Anne.** Is it the dashing pirate Black Bart, come to whisk me away to a life on the ocean blue?

**James.** No, darlin' it's me.

*Anne removes James's hands from her eyes, disappointed.*

**Anne.** Oh it's you!

**James.** Your lovin' husband back from his pirate adventures.

**Anne.** *(Sarcastically)* .....And how much money have you made for us this time dear husband?

**James.** Well....you see...we ran into a few storms and.....

**Anne.** You haven't got anything for us have you?

**James.** ....Well.... no.

**Anne.** How are we supposed to live on nothing? I had money before I met you James Bonny. My rich father gave me everything I wanted.

**James.** Apart from excitement and adventure.

**Anne.** *(Angrily)* Waiting for a part time, useless pirate to return empty handed from a bodged voyage is not exciting.

**James.** Don't worry Anne, I've made a deal with the governor. I'm going to turn in some of my pirate friends. We can live off the reward.

**Anne.** You're despicable.

**James.** Aren't we all in New Providence?