Athena Emu at the Olympics

A Play in Two Acts

By

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List of Characters

The Gods

Zeus, the King of Mount Olympus, a Bull
Hera, his Queen, a Cow
Hermes, the Messenger of the Gods, a Galah
The Oracle at Delphi, a Wise Old Owl

The Villains

Zorba, the Fox, a renowned Sports Coach
Aeschylus, the Cat, his Assistant
Medusa, the Tasmanian Devil, a Sports Psychologist
Ms Severity, a Ferret, the reluctant Relief Teacher

The Australian Animals

Athena the Emu
Ares the Kangaroo
Penelope the Possum
Demeter the Dingo
Rhea the Quoll
Odysseus the Wombat
Maia the Koala
The Chorus of Cockatoos

Chloe, Charis, Carla, Cathy, Caro and Carl Cockatoo

Media Reps

Aphrodite, the Platypus, an intrepid documentary maker
Apollo, the Echidna, her cameraman.

Fans from Fremantle

Chantelle, a raucous purple Budgie
Charmaine, a raucous green Budgie

The Boy Band (Plus One)

Dionysus, an Immortal Musician
Sybil, a Satyr with Style
Socrates, a Satyr with Rhythm
Sophocles, a Satyr who can Sing

and

Retainers to the Olympians; Bull-jumpers; Acrobats

Act 1

Scene 1

Lights dim in the auditorium. SFX Thunder and lightning. Dionysus and the Panpipes are in position on the bandstand DSL. They play ‘Athena’ theme as lights come up on the apron to reveal the Chorus of Cockatoos.

The Cockatoos are in something of a state as they have an announcement to make, but as they all talk at once it’s not at all clear what they’re on about. Speaking over each other

Charis: Enters DSR (To the others as they waddle on stage) Hello Cocky -

Carla: Enters DSL (Answering) Hello Cocky -

Cathy: Enters DSR. (Practising her steps) Dance, Cocky, dance, Cocky -

Caro: (Right behind her, copying her steps) - dance, Cocky, dance!
They all join in a cockatoo chorus of “Dance, Cocky, Dance”, waddling as if they were on a branch.

Carl: Enters DSL (He is an ancient cockatoo, wearing spectacles and using a walking stick. He struggles against the odds to control the boisterous younger members of the flock and they sometimes - but not always - listen to him!) Stop! Stop! That’s enough of that.

They are silent immediately. But they look confused.

Carl: Have you all forgotten why we’re here? (He indicates the audience and gives the cockatoos a meaningful look.) We’re the CHORUS, remember!

Charis: (Realisation dawning on her) Ooh! Of course -

Carla: - and we have an announcement to make!

They all start to get worked up again, jiggling from side to side.

Cathy: That’s right. A VERY important announcement to make, to set this whole show going -

They are interrupted by Chloe, the youngest of the group, who flaps into their midst (entering DSR) causing an uproar. She adjusts her crest, takes a step DSC, takes a deep breath and speaks on a single outgoing breath as if her life depended on it.

Chloe: I know it, I know it!

Welcome, O children, to this, our little play
We hope that you will learn something
Before you go away.
So welcome, all, to Nexus,
Come with us, take a chance
We’re off to Athens, Mount Olympus -

(The others join in)

- to dance, Cocky, dance!

SFX thunder and lightning. The band plays the Zeus/Hera opening theme as the blacks fly and Mount Olympus (at night) is revealed. The God and Goddess are surrounded by their retainers and the Cockatoo Chorus joins in the opening number. Sign DSR indicates “Mount Olympus”.

3
SONG/DANCE opening number

At the conclusion of the song and dance routine all except Zeus and Hera exit. The stage is empty except for Zeus and Hera, the king and queen of the Olympians, on their thrones. They wear headgear to suggest their animal characteristics (a bull and a cow - Hera’s ‘animal’ feature is the peacock) and splendid togas. Zeus is bored. Hera is trying to cheer him up. He’s restlessly flinging thunderbolts around.

Hera: Oh stop that, my love. You’ve caused enough unnecessary damage for one day! Earthquakes in Turkey, volcanic eruptions in the Pacific. You are in a bad mood. What is it?

Zeus: I’m bored, Hera. Bored to tears by it all.

Hera: But why on earth are you bored? You should be delighted, Zeus. This is your year again! The Games are on - and once more you will be honoured by the world’s greatest athletes, performing just for you.

Zeus: Well, I’m not pleased, Hera. (Starts to fling a thunderbolt, but Hera stops him in time.)

Hera: (Holding his hand, coaxing him.) Come on, love, what is it that’s made you so irritable?

Zeus: I’ll tell you what it is! These games - in my HONOUR - they’re just not FUN anymore. Everyone’s forgotten what they were originally meant for!

Hera: What do you mean?

Zeus: When we started them, people from all walks of life were meant to test their skills against each other. You must remember, Hera, what they were once like. (Reminiscing) The Games in the old days were played for the enjoyment of everyone concerned. They’ve forgotten that! With their sports institutes, their sponsors, their coaches, not to mention their “performance enhancing” activities. There’s not a single athlete in the world who remembers the real reason we started the Olympic Games!

Hera: Nonsense my love, don’t be so gloomy. I’ll wager there are plenty of young people out there who know what the Games are about.

Zeus: (He is intensely interested now) Did you mention a wager, my dear? A bet? Now that’s something that would add a bit of spice to the boredom of Eternity. (Rubs his hands gleefully) A bet! I’d like that.
Hera:  *(Doubtfully)* I’d like to see you happy, love, but let’s be very careful. We gods of Mount Olympus have a rather spotty track record where our intervention is concerned, remember. What precisely do you have in mind?

Zeus:  Let me put it to you like this, my queen. I wager that there’s not a sportsperson in the whole world who remembers the true meaning of the Games!

Hera:  I’m sure that’s not true, my love. There must be someone, somewhere, who knows their true meaning.

Zeus:  And as for our intervention in the affairs of the creatures of the earth: we shall limit our powers to a single instance.

Hera:  *(Sparkling at the thought)* My powers against yours, husband? I can’t resist the challenge!

Zeus:  Then it’s decided. You will bring to the Olympic Games at least one creature who knows why they were played in the first place; and we agree that we shall use our powers once and once only in this contest.

Hera:  Agreed.

Zeus:  Because, unless this person can be found - and I wish you well, my dear - I will use all my Olympian powers to stop the Games this year *(SFX thunder and lightening)* I will not have them ruined for me again. *(He flounces offstage)*

Hera:  *(Anxiously)* Oh dear, when he’s in a mood like this, anything can happen. But I do love a challenge. Now I must win this bet. Let me think ... I know! I’ll send Hermes, our messenger, to the far corners of the earth - somewhere, somehow I will find someone who remembers why the Games are played... Surely there MUST be someone out there ... My woman’s intuition tells me there is - and I must not fail or all will be lost! *(She takes out her mobile and starts dialing).*

Scene 2

*(Fade to black. As they come up, Hermes (the Galah) is visible on the balcony SR, ready to abseil into the action. He should be identifiable as a galah, but also carry a postbag to signal his role as messenger of the gods. Hermes’ theme plays as he descends)*

Hermes:  Abseiling clumsily onto the apron in front of the blacks. Aah! Oooh! *(Panicking, to himself)* Don’t look down, now, let the rope out slowly, close your eyes, easy does it ... AAAH! *(Lands with a thud).* What a trip.
(To the audience) I’m going to have to reconsider this job - they simply don’t pay me enough. Risking beak and wing! (Looks up!) I’m not going back up there either, I can tell you. There has to be another way.

Starts to walk towards the sign, stops, doubles back to centre stage.

Oh, I’m sorry, I should have introduced myself. You’re probably wondering what’s going on. How silly of me! That last trip really took it out of me, I can tell you. I hate it when I’m sent to the Underworld. Hades is such a misery - moans about this, moans about that - moan, moan, moan, I don’t know how the lovely Persephone puts up with him! Luckily she’s only there half the year. But enough of all that, allow me to introduce to you, my charming self (bows low), Hermes, the messenger of the gods of Mount Olympus, and patron of thieves, musicians and sportspeople, returning from a mission to the God of the Underworld for my master, Zeus. (Looks nervously over his shoulder) He can be very demanding, so I’d better not hang around here with you for too long. I can’t wait to relax and unwind. (Starts to exit, but the lights change and he hears the sound of hooves, clip clopping. Pan pipes play on the breeze.) Listen! Do you hear something?

Dionysus and the Panpipes, a group of musical satyrs who yearn to win fame and fortune as a boy-band stand up and move onto the stage to the rhythm of the clip-clopping of the hooves. The band has a problem, though, as one of their members is a GIRL which is something they’ll have to work out. They want to play at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games and have been rehearsing for weeks in preparation.

**SONG**

(Which details this ‘problem’ and which should allow the satyrs to perform the conflict simultaneously.)

Dionysus: (Clapping him on the shoulder) Hermes, my old friend, good to see you!

Hermes: I see that you’ve been rehearsing for the Olympic gig ... not bad, not bad. (Whispers confidentially) But what are you going to do about Sybil?

Socrates: Yeah. It’s just not cool, man ...

Sophocles: ‘nSync, Blink 182, Blue, I mean none of them have a girl playing -

Dionysus: Except as vocals back-up (The boy satyrs all do a quick parody of a vocal back-up group.)
Sybil: You’re all so immature. This band is nothing without me and you know it! *(Plays the pan-pipes and Hermes sways to their sound.)*

Hermes: Those have to be one of my greatest inventions! So melodic, so beautiful. *(SFX. His mobile rings - something he will have to deal with throughout the play. He is forced back to reality)* Just a moment – I’d better read this. It’s an SMS from Hera -

Satyrs: *(Impressed. Speaking together)* OOO! The Queen of Mount Olympus.

Hermes: I don’t believe it!

Dionysus: What is it? What does she say?

Hermes: Top Secret Mission, I’m afraid. My beak is sealed. No time to waste, guys. Sorry, but I must fly! *(To the audience)* So much for my rest and recreation. This job sucks! *(He heads off through the auditorium.)* But there’s no arguing with a goddess - I just do as she says!

Sybil: But where are you going?

Hermes: *(Dramatically, striking the classic Hermes pose)* To the ends of the earth - and beyond. *(Exits)*

*The Satyrs look at each other and then take up their positions on the band-stand.*

Dionysus: Come on - we’ve got a lot of work to do, guys. We need all the practice we can get.

Together: Right. Let’s make music!

*Musical crescendo. LFX  Fade to black.*

*Theme for the Australian Outback.*

*Curtain flies to reveal the setting in Australia. Lights up on the outback with xantheria in pots symbolizing the bush. A sign indicates that this is “Illyarri Primary School”.*
Scene 3

It’s just before break at Illyarri Primary, somewhere in the Outback of Western Australia, where Ms Severity is in charge of the Year 5s. The Chorus of Cockatoos is lined up on a branch[freeze] preparing to practise a routine they are working on in the hope of making it into the Synchronized Dancing section of the Olympics.

Rhea, the Quoll (or Tiger Cat as she is known in Tasmania) enters USR. She has just arrived at Illyarri Primary for an interview as a prospective teacher. She has traveled from Tasmania and she’s hot and tired and a little anxious about her future. She puts down her suitcase and mops her forehead with a large lace handkerchief.

Rhea: This must be the place - I wonder where everyone is? (To the Cockatoos) Excuse me, can you tell me where I can find (she reads the letter in her hand) the Head Teacher, Ms Severity? I have an appointment with her.

Chloe: Wait here with us and you won’t miss her. Recess any minute now - (She looks at the others and they all count down together)

Cockatoos: (Loudly) Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two ONE!

Rhea moves DS and watches, holding her letter.

The school bell rings and everyone dashes out, laughing and shouting, into the playground. The animals skip, throw balls, play hop-scotch, leap-frog and generally engage in the physical activities of childhood: marbles, football, cricket etc.

SONG and DANCE led by Ms Severity, possibly including a chorus that calls out “Dance, Cocky, Dance!” aimed at the Chorus of Cockatoos, who respond as requested by the others with an ungainly parrot-style movement.

Ms Severity: (Walking determinedly over to Rhea as the animals watch curiously). And who, may I ask are you?

Rhea: I’m Miss Rhea the Quoll, here for an interview, Ma’am. From Tasmania. (Earnestly) I want to be a Primary School Teacher, Ma’am. I’ve dreamt of this all my life. (Uncertainly) Here ... here’s the letter you sent me -
The Australian animals will be keenly interested and gather round Rhea, who responds pleasantly to them.

Ms Severity: (Snatching it from her grasp.) Mmm. Let me see...! Another Murdoch graduate - I’m not sure about that. Look at you! Stars in your eyes. (She casts a dismissive glance at the assembled children) A few weeks with this lot will dampen your ardour for the job. (Aside) How convenient! She’s arrived in the nick of time. A classroom assistant just when I need one. This will free me up to work on my plan. (She rubs her paws together gleefully). (Turning to her, sternly) Right Miss Quoll. I shall need to assess your qualifications before I employ you. Come with me.

Rhea shyly hands her a paper and the exit USL. The Australian animals watch them go in their groups.

FREEZE

Up on the balcony, SR, Zorba the Fox, WA’s greatest sports Coach and his henchmen, Aeschylus, the Cat (his assistant Coach) and Medusa the Tasmanian Devil (a Sports Psychologist with anger management issues of her own) are watching through telescopes/binoculars.

Zorba: (With an evil laugh) Aha! We’ve found the place at last! Illyarri Primary School, home, if my old friend Ms Severity is to be believed, of Australia’s Greatest Athletes.

Medusa: You’ve got to be joking! (Dismissively) That lot!

Aeschylus: (Oblivious of everything except the native animals below) Ooh, yum! Don’t they look delectable. My tummy’s rumbling. I’m starving. (Makes a lunge over the balcony but is yanked back unceremoniously by Medusa who snarls at him)

Medusa: Arrrgh. Stop it! Stop that!

Zorba: (Swatting him with his telescope) They’re not food, you fool! Control yourself or you’ll give the game away.

Medusa: Arrgh. We should have left you in Perth. You’ll ruin this project!

Aeschylus: (Whining) She’s being mean to me, again, Sir. She’s always winding me up! (Hisses)

Zorba: I haven’t time for this nonsense, Aeschylus. You know how important this is. If what she says is true and we can sign them up with Sports Corp ... heh heh heh ... Olympic Gold will be ours!
Medusa: Arrgh. There’s not a moment to lose -

Zorba: Follow me!

_Aeschy_lus has one last longing look at the animals below, hisses and runs after the departing Fox and Devil.

Aeschylus: Wait for me - I’m coming!

Animals unfreeze and move back to their playground positions. The Cockatoos get back on their branch.

_Ms Severity_, the Ferret, followed closely by Miss Rhea, the Quoll, who has put down her suitcase, taken off a coat and hat and is ready for teaching duties enter USL. _Ms Severity is a very unhappy relief teacher in the Outback who secretly dislikes children, but who, as we have heard, has in mind some devious plan: to make a fortune by exploiting her young charges

_Ms Severity: (In a bossy school-teacher’s tone.)_ This is Miss Quoll from Tasmania. She’s on trial at Illyarri Primary for the next few weeks. You have 10 minutes of recess left and then you’re all to gather on the Oval. (Aside) My accomplices - whoops, I mean colleagues - should be here any minute, to watch my training session. Little do these young creatures know, but I have measured and timed them and their natural athletic skills outstrip those of Australia’s best and fairest! My team must make the Olympic Games this year - and with the help of WA’s most successful coach - Zorba the Fox - I shall succeed!

Rhea: (Nervously) I wonder, could I possibly have a cup of tea, Miss Severity? I’ve been traveling for hours and it’s very hot here, after the cool forests of Tasmania…

_The children all gasp at this. They know what Ms Severity is like. Odysseus the Wombat and Maia the Koala enjoy the moment enormously. Discomfort in others is something they delight in!_

_Ms Severity: (Aghast at the effrontery) Did you ask for a cup of … TEA?_

Rhea: Well, yes … it’s recess and I thought … as I’ve traveled so far …

_Odysseus: (Sniggering, and elbowing Maia the Koala) Now she’s in for it!_

_Maia: (Tittering) She’s SOOO going to get it now!_
Ms Severity: (Quietly, dangerously) You thought, as you’d traveled so far, you could ask for a cup of tea?

Rhea: (Uncomfortably) Well, yes. I’m really thirsty -

Ms Severity: (Sternly) We do not run a deli at Illyarri Primary. You have very odd ideas about teaching, I must say! You have duties to perform, my girl, and they do not include sitting down and drinking cups of tea while the children (she looks at them contemptuously) get up to no good. (Muttering under her breath) Cups of tea, cups of tea. Next it’ll be muffins and a latte. I know your type!

Rhea: Oh no, I really didn’t mean it ... It’s quite all right. I’m not really thirsty - I just thought ...

Ms Severity: Well, don’t think! That’s for me to do. On the Oval in 10 minutes all of you! (To Maia and Odysseus meaningfully as she exits) I expect you two will see to it that Miss Quoll is properly introduced to Illyarri Primary.

Odysseus: Oh yes, Miss, we most certainly will!

Maia: (Sniggering) We’d love to make her feel at home, Miss.

Together: Trust us! (The snort and pick up a football to throw to each other.)

Athena Emu: (Comforting the new teacher. She’s the natural leader of the young animals) Don’t worry about her, Miss Quoll. Here, you can have some of my fruit juice.

Penelope: (She’s gentle and kind, always aware of the needs of others.) We can share our lunches with you, if you like. You must be very tired after traveling so far. WOW! All the way from Tasmania!

Demeter: (A bit naïve, she is rather like a puppy - full of unconstrained energy) Ms Severity can be really harsh at times. But are you going to be our teacher, now? Tell us, are you?

Ares: (He’s very shy, but responds to kindness in others with abject devotion) Oh, I do hope so! You’re so much nicer than (whispers) Ms Severity.

Miss Quoll: Well, I really hope I can stay, but it all depends on Ms Severity.
Ares: (Clutching Rhea’s hand) She scares me.

Athena: Nonsense, Ares. She can’t hurt us. In fact, she’s been oddly nice to us recently. She seems to be very impressed with our running -

Demeter: (Excitedly) - and jumping -

Penelope: - and my wrestling holds!

Ares: (Confidentially) And she says I have a natural ability as a boxer. (Nods vigorously).

Rhea: Really? I think you’d better give me a demonstration, then. (Laughs and takes Ares and Demeter by the hand.)

Athena: Come on, then, everyone, let’s show our new teacher what we can do! (To Rhea) Ms Severity is going to time me running the 100meters!

Demeter Dingo: And she’s going to see if I can set a new record in the High Jump.

Penelope Possum: I want to work on my falls in wrestling.

Ares Kangaroo: (Shyly – he’s extremely nervous) She wants me to work on my right hook … or is it my left hook …. Which is left, Athena? I can never tell. She says I have a natural talent and that I must make the most of it.

The playground bullies, Maia the Koala and Odysseus the Wombat, who have been burning ants with a magnifying glass/pulling the wings off flies etc. and playing football, lurch over towards them. They start teasing Ares, the Kangaroo.

Maia: (Mimicking him) Which is my left, Athena? Which is my right? “She says I have a natural talent”

Odysseus: (Grabbing him by the collar) You want to work on your right hook? I can show you a right hook. (He makes a swirling gesture as Ares cowers)

Maia: (Laughing nastily) And I can show you a left hook. (She, too, makes a swirling gesture.)

Athena: Leave him alone, you great bullies! Why don’t you pick on someone your own size?
They drop Ares, who crumples to the floor and then jumps up to be comforted by Penelope and Demetrius.

Rhea: (Ineffectually) Children, children. Stop this!

Odysseus: (Turning on Athena, ignoring Rhea completely)
Okay, Miss Goodie Goodie. We can easily pick on you instead. (He lunges for one of her feathers but she’s too quick for them both as they try to catch her)

Maia: Yeah! You think you’re sooo smart. Just wait till we catch you! (He lunges and misses)

A bit of business here as Athena runs rings around them, causing them to bump into each other and fall over. The others cheer her on. Rhea tries to establish control - to no avail.

Demeter: That’ll teach you! Come on, let’s go and work on our games. Let’s leave these losers!

Athena: Ms Severity will be there any minute! We’d better hurry - come on guys!

Penelope: (Looks them over contemptuously) You should be ashamed of yourselves! (She drops their football on their laps and runs after the others.)

Rhea: Oh, dear. What am I to do? This is all a mistake. I’ll never be a primary school teacher. (She exits in tears.)

Maia: That’s a good start!

Odysseus: Got her crying in less than 10 minutes. (They jump up and give each other high fives) Yo! Ms Severity will be - like - rapt.

Together: Whoo hoo!

They run off stage.

Scene 4.

The villains’ theme is played as they enter.

Enter Zorba, absorbed in a mobile phone conversation; Aeschylus and Medusa. Their sports bags and their clothes should be emblazoned with sponsorship labels (a telephone company or food manufacturer or both). Aeschylus will
interact with the audience in this scene. Medusa is reading a book on Zen and explodes from time to time at what’s in it.

Aeschylus: (Using his binoculars, surveying the audience.) What! I don’t believe it! This lot don’t look like they have ‘Superior Skills’, Coach. Grubby little school children, that’s what they are! (Turns, sneering) Pshaw.

Zorba: (Closing his conversation on the mobile and hastening to intervene between Aeschylus and the audience, DSC. Between clenched teeth) What do you think you’re doing?

Aeschylus: Checking out the material we’ve got to work with. And between you and me, Boss. It’s hopeless… a completely lost cause!

Zorba: (To the audience, uncomfortably) Please take no notice of him. He’s not quite himself today. (Furiously to Aeschylus) You idiot! Do you want to ruin everything? Our sponsors need them on side. To buy their products, support their team. Without the paying public and little monsters… (he struggles, but manages to get the flattering phrase out) uh... I mean sweet little creatures like these, there’d be no money for us. (Beats him surreptitiously into submission) Do excuse my foolish friend – he’s only an ‘assistant’ coach.

Medusa: (Still reading and becoming agitated) Arrgh!

Zorba: Now, Aeschylus. Show them you’re sorry! I want you to be nice to the audience.

Aeschylus: (From a position on the floor) What? Nice to them! No chance.

Zorba: (Knowing his weakness, he holds out a marshmallow mouse or freddo frog to entice him) Not even if I promise you this little tidbit if you are?

Aeschylus: Aww! That’s not fair!

Zorba: Come along, now. If you want this DEE-licious freddo frog, you know what you have to do!

Medusa: (Still engrossed in the book, but thumping the pages with his fist) Arrgh! I don’t believe this!

Aeschylus: (Conceding, but whining as he makes his way into the audience). Don’t make me do it, Boss. They’re so... (sniffing one) smelly! And look at their dirty little paws (holds one at arm’s length. He catches sight of
the freddo frog being waved tantalizingly in front of him). Oh all right. You win. (To the child) This is just because I’m starving, you realize. (He purrs and strokes the child’s hand and then springs back to the stage. Zorba drops the chocolate into his outstretched paw.)

Medusa: Arrgh!

Aeschylus: (Tearing at the frog). Couldn’t have put it better myself.

Zorba: (Smiling smarmily at the children.) Well, that’s better. Now I wonder where we’ll find Miss Severity? A woman of unusual charm, if I may say so.

Enter Miss Severity in ‘designer’ joggers, sweatband, runners etc, whistle in her mouth, at the head of a disciplined line of the Australian animals, whose costumes now will be gesturing to the fact that they’re doing sport - headbands, wristbands etc. She takes them through a militaristic routine, whistle blowing and then has them stand first to attention and then ‘at ease’. Ms Quoll enters last, still drying her eyes, and takes up a position quietly at the back, unobserved to begin with. Aeschylus inspects the children closely (like a general on parade) as they stand in their rows - the Cockatoos will be perching on their branch with their backs to the audience.

Ms Severity: Ah, there you are Miss Quoll. Look and learn! You’re in the presence of a maestro. (Rhea makes herself as insignificant as possible and remains unseen by the Villains)

Medusa: (Stalking off to the Cockatoo’s branch and disturbing them as he sits down.) Arrgh. Silence. I am trying to discover my inner devil!

Ms Severity: (Catching sight of her visitors she undergoes the most amazing transformation. Her military style vanishes as she flirts outrageously with Zorba. He is by no means impervious to her charms.) At ease, class. You may warm down - you know what to do! (Hisses at them) Get on with it. (Turns to Zorba) Welcome to Illyarri Primary, dear Sir. This is a rare privilege.

The young animals go through different routines to ‘warm down’. Athena, Persephone, Demetrius and Ares are watchful: their suspicions are aroused. Medusa and Odysseus are keen to impress the newcomers. Some stage business with Aeschylus and the two of them as they size each other up. Aeschylus is usually intent on killing and eating the native fauna, but the size of these two will be a deterrent, and he’ll initially lose the power play between them.

Zorba: (Taking her hand and gallantly kissing it) The privilege is mine, dear Ms Severity, especially if what you say about these - (he looks at them rather doubtfully) - athletes, is true.
Miss Severity: Oh, but it is - just you wait and see! Their natural ability together with my training regime has brought about the most astonishing results. Even I am amazed. *(The next exchange is taken in the manner of recitative and may be a cue for a SONG - Zorba/Miss Severity duet)* They have broken every Olympic record. That little Emu over there runs like the wind -

Zorba: *(IAmstounded)* Does she now?

Ms Severity: The Possum is a wrestler of rare skill -

Zorba: *(Amazed)* Indeed?

Ms Severity: The Kangaroo would K.O Danny Green

Zorba: *(Taken aback)* No, would he?

Ms Severity: And the Dingo -

Zorba: The Dingo?

Ms Severity: Why, yes, the Dingo -

Zorba: *(Fascinated)* What of the Dingo?

Ms Severity: Why, Demetrius the Dingo can leap higher than an athlete ever has!

Zorba: Well, dear lady, all I can say is that I’m astounded, amazed, taken aback and fascinated by all that you have told me.

Aeschylus: *(Circling back to join Zorba and Ms Severity DSC)* The sponsors are not going to like this boss - they just won’t cut it. No way.

Ms Severity: *(Annoyed)* Excuse me. Are you questioning my judgement?

Zorba: *(Smoothly, while discretely giving his henchman a kick on the shins)* Your judgement is without question, my dear. This foolish creature doesn’t know what he’s talking about. *(Glares furiously at him)*.

Aeschylus: Oh yes I do. What we have here are a bunch of grubby little ten year olds and you want us to believe that they can compete with the elite athletes of the world? Fat chance.
Miss Severity: You doubt my word, do you? Well, perhaps you’ll eat YOUR words when you’ve seen them in action. *(She blows her whistle shrilly)* To the Oval, children, follow me!

*She exits followed by all the animals except Athena who moves DS. Medusa closes her book and joins Zorba CS to watch as Ms Severity exits energetically, followed by the children.*

Zorba: *(Admiringly)* Such a commanding woman. *(He turns on Aeschylus who is directly behind him.)* How dare you question One so Sublime! *(Swats him. Aeschylus ducks just in time.)* Come along! Let’s cast our professional coaching eye over these children. If they’re all she says they are - wealth beyond your wildest dreams, Aeschylus, will be ours.

Medusa: Don’t you worry! Arrgh. If they have and talent at all, it can be developed. I have several *(laughs nastily)* strategies in mind. I didn’t get a degree in Sports Psychology at Murdoch for nothing I can tell you!

*Medusa and Zorba look at each other for a meaningful moment then burst into gales of unpleasant laughter at the thought of what together they can do.*

Zorba: Follow me! *(He marches off USR followed by Medusa and - a little delayed - by Aeschylus)* Not another word from you, d’you hear?

Aeschylus: Not another word! No, I won’t say a thing. Silent, that’s me... *(Mutters as he follows them)*

Athena: I don’t like this - there’s something not quite right about those Ms Severity’s visitors. They may be from Perth but I don’t trust them Or Ms Severity. She seems to be plotting some mischief. I wonder what it can be. Oh, well, I can’t solve anything by standing around here. *(She brightens)* It’s P.E. and the others will be waiting - the races are about to begin and, ooooh *(wriggling excitedly)* I absolutely LOVE running.

*Demetrios, Ares, and Persephone are heard calling her. They peep round the back cloth.*

Together: Come Athena - the games are about to start!

*The Cockatoo Chorus joins in:*

Cockatoos: On your marks, get set, GO!

*Athena follows the instructions, then races off to accompanying music.*
Rhea:  *(Emerging from her sequestered spot)* I think Athena’s absolutely right. There’s definitely something odd going on here. I wonder what such a high-powered Coach is doing way out here, anyway. I’ll just keep watch and see ... *(She exits hurriedly)*.

The Cockatoos have become aware of a ‘Divine Presence’ and they begin to chatter loudly to each other. A form of ‘parrot-style’, Chinese whispers concluding with them pointing towards Hermes, who appears on the balcony, wearing sunglasses unseen by anyone else.

Hermes:  *(To the audience)* Did she say “godforsaken place”? Not anymore! That’s my cue, I believe. And just look at this! *(He looks anxiously down at the stage)* Another DANGEROUS descent from the heavens required. I tell you, this job just isn’t worth it. *(His mobile rings. To the audience)* Excuse me a moment - it’s the Queen of Olympus! I’d better take this call.

The cockatoos are really excited at his presence and during the ensuing SONG they place a ladder at his disposal which allows him to descend from the balcony a bit like either Mercutio in Baz Lernham’s R+J or Tim Curry in The Rocky Horror Show. This number becomes a bit of a show-stopper with Hermes and the Cockatoos supported by Dionysus and the Panpipes.

Hermes:  Take me to them. It looks as if I’ve found what I’m looking for - a team of athletes who know what the Games are really about! And here at the edge of the world, in Western Australia. Take me to the Oval! Yeah! *(He takes out his mobile and calls Hera)* Mount Olympus! This is Australia calling ...

The Cockatoos lift him up and carry him off as the blacks are flown in.

**Scene 5**

Enter SR on the apron, Aphrodite the Platypus a documentary-maker - dressed in a burberry style raincoat - from Murdoch University’s Media Studies programme and her camera-man, Apollo, the Echidna dressed in jeans, T-shirt, and sneakers. They are hot on the trail of a huge ‘story’ that they want to sell to Channel 1,2,3 or to the AABC (the Australian Animal Broadcasting Corporation) and the trail has led them to: Illyarra Primary School. Aphrodite is an Artist, with a pragmatic bent, and knows reality when she sees it whereas Apollo has a postmodern orientation in his!

Aphrodite:  *(She indicates the sign pointing to Illyarra Primary. Apollo focuses on it and rolls camera)*

Apollo:  Wow! Cool!
Aphrodite: What a remote community this is! Hardly where you’d expect to find a team of elite athletes. I wonder if this story can possibly be true. *(She indicates newspaper headlines)* “Zorba the Fox, WA’s most successful coach, on a talent search in the Outback” That’s enough of that, Apollo. My goodness have you no creative ideas of your own? The AABC (Australian Animals Broadcasting Corporation) won’t want a 20 minute programme on the sign!

Apollo: *(In a bemused tone)* They won’t?

Aphrodite: Of course not. This is not an Ingmar Bergman movie we’re making. It’s animal interest they’re after and we’re here to give it to them. Just think! This could be our big break! *(He’s been filming his feet for the last few minutes)* What on earth are you doing?

Apollo: *(He’s completely unfazed by her, and just does as he wishes)* It’s cool, Dude.

Aphrodite: *(Exasperated)* We can’t use any of this! Come on, let’s see if we can find them. I have a feeling we’re about to scoop the biggest story WA’s ever seen - my reporter’s instincts tell me we’re onto something.

Apollo: *(Films the audience as he exits.)* Now this is REALLY cool!

Aphrodite: You’re joking! They belong on the Discovery Channel - not the AABC! Come on! Let’s go and find Zorba.

*She yanks him by the shoulder and leads him offstage.*

Fade to Black

Scene 6

*Musical theme for the Trials. This scene will involve rapid-fire changes as the threads of Act 1 are wrapped up and music will be crucial in establishing the shifts. The curtain flies to reveal the Cockatoo Chorus with the Divine Visitor, Hermes, perched on their branch. He stands out because of his plumage and the fact that he’s wearing sunnies as a disguise and is carrying his messenger bag. Also because of his ‘traditional’ pose.*

Chloe: Ooh! This is exciting!

Charis: I’m all a-flutter!

Carla: *(Worshipfully)* A visit from the gods.
Cathy: And what a god!

Caro: *(Sighing)* My hero.

Hermes: *(In a super cool tone)* That’s, Hermes, actually, not Hera.

Carl: Quiet. There’s someone coming. Sshsh.

**Ms Severity and Zorba enter DSR**

Zorba: It’s quite amazing. Such speed, such prowess! Your young charges are GOLD, I tell you, Ms Severity, they’re GOLD!

Ms Severity: *(Tittering, coyly)* Oh please, Zorba, let’s not be so formal. Just call me Clytemnestra.

Zorba: *(Struggling a little with it.)* What an unusual name, my dear. Cly -tem - nes -tra.

Ms Severity: Precisely. Now to these times. I am right in assuming that my little charges are world class?

Zorba: There can be no doubt, my dear. Our sponsors will be delighted and you and I - heh heh heh - stand to make our fortune. Let’s prepare the documents. We must sign them up immediately!

Ms Severity: Ooh. How forceful you are, Sir. *(Taps him playfully)* Quick, to my office. *(They exit DSL.)*

**Hermes** *(Moving CS and talking on his mobile. Lights dim to illuminate him as he speaks. Lights up on balcony SR where Hera is seen talking on her mobile)* It’s not looking good, I’m afraid, Hera. The Australian Animals just may be persuaded to sign up. There’re six figure sums involved *(to the audience)* that’s a LOT of money! I don’t think they’ll be able to resist.

Hera: I won’t give up! Surely one of them will remain constant to the true values of the Games

**Lights up on balcony SL where Zeus is seen. He laughs and throws a thunderbolt. SFX Thunder and lightning.**

Zeus: Give up, my dear. Your bet’s almost lost!

Hera: But not yet. Hermes, keep watch and report EVERYTHING you see to me!
Hermes: As you wish, O mighty Queen! *(He gets back up on the log and into position.)*

*Aeschylus enters, furtively, followed by Maia and Odysseus.*

Aeschylus: O.K. guys. There’s no-one around. You’ve got something to tell me?

Maia: *(Thrusting a paper at him.)* Thought you might like to see this!

Odysseus: Yeah. That’s *(he’s lying so he looks even more furtive, not catching Aeschylus’ eye)* my time for the 100 meters.

Aeschylus: *(Whistles in amazement)* You run the 100 meters in under 9 seconds! That makes you faster than Ben Jonson on steroids!

Maia: *(Eagerly)* Yeah. He’s fast – very fast!

Aeschylus: *(Looking a little doubtfully at the non-athletic physique of Odysseus who immediately tries to look more ‘sporty’.* I s he now?!

Odysseus: Yeah, I can run like the – *(looks questioningly at Maia)*

Maia: - wind. You run like the wind.

Aeschylus: *(Aside)* If this is true, I have my hands on Olympic Gold. *(To Odysseus and Maia)* You know what this means, don’t you?

Odysseus & Maia: Yeah! Yeah! *(Nodding vigorously.)*

Odysseus: *(After a slight pause.)* What does it mean?

Maia: Yeah. Tell us. What’s it mean? Huh?

Aeschylus: We’re gonna be RICH! Rich beyond your wildest dreams, mate. Just sign here. *(He produces a contract and Odysseus signs a large ‘X’ on the page.)* *(To Maia who does the same. SFX thunder and lightning accompany the signing. We hear Zeus laughing)* And here. You’re the witness *(Aside)* A word of warning children. Always read the fine print! These two don’t realize that I’m in now control of their sponsorship and whatever they make from this deal is mine, all mine! *(With his arms around their shoulders)* Our little secret, hey? We don’t want anyone else getting their paws on your money, do we?

Odysseus: No way! I want every last cent!
Maia: Half’s for me, though. It was my idea, remember!

Aeschylus: (Hears someone coming) You’d better get back to the Oval. But don’t tell anyone about this or the sponsors won’t give you a cent. It’s our secret, remember!

Odysseus: Right! Our secret.

Maia: (Sniggering) Our lips are sealed. (The exit, arguing and jostling each other: “my idea” ... “yeah well they’re my times!” ... “no they’re not!” ... “sshhh. You’ll spoil everything”.)

Ms Quoll enters DSR anxious and in a great hurry. Aeschylus turns, sees her, and stands smitten. But she doesn’t see him.

Rhea: This is all too dreadful! I can’t believe what that awful Zorba the Fox and Ms Severity are up to. It’s nothing but - exploitation! How can they be so - so - cruel. But, where money is involved, people will do anything I suppose.

Zeus becomes visible on the balcony. SFX Low rumbling of thunder

Zeus: What did I tell you, my dear?

Hera becomes visible too.

Hera: I’m not defeated yet, Zeus. I have my powers still.

Rhea: And now it looks like there’s a storm brewing. Oh, I must do something to help those innocent children. But what ?

She runs off stage( USL) in distress as Aeschylus watches. He is now putty in her hands, as it were, his heart captured by a Quoll!

Aeschylus: (Thumping his chest to the rhythm of his heart beat) What a cool cat! She’s so cool! She’s ice-cold! (Dramatically intoning the lines from Faustus)“Was this the face that launched a thousand ships -?” I will follow her - to the ends of the earth, if I must!” He exits, dramatically (USL)

The Australian Animals run on - entering from each side of the stage (UR and UL) led by Athena Emu.

Athena: (Looking over her shoulder) I don’t trust that Coach -

Penelope: Me neither. There’s something not quite right about him.
Demeter: And Ms Severity is being odd too.

Athena: Yes, she’s actually being nice to us. Trying to get us to sign all those documents.

Ares: (Nervously) I don’t think I can hold out much longer, Athena, she’s just so - so MEAN, when she’s angry!

Others: But you MUST, Ares. You must!

Athena: We must stick together, Ares. Don’t give way now!

**Rhea enters and speaks urgently.**

Rhea: I don’t care if this costs me my job at Illyarri Primary but you children must not sign anything! Listen -

*The Cockatoo Chorus starts to jump up and down as Medusa, Ms Severity and Zorba enter from USL. They lift their binoculars and call out a warning. Aphrodite and Apollo appear DS and, hiding behind a Xantheria, secretly film the scene for their documentary.*

Together: Danger at 12.05. Look out!

*Rhea tries to shield them from Zorba and Ms Severity but they bravely take the Enemy on.*

Zorba: Ah! There you are, children (Smiling fiendishly) Come come, now! All we want is your signature on this contract, and you’ll be rich beyond your wildest dreams.

Ms Severity: Come along, now I know what’s best for you! (She smiles ingratiatingly.)

Zorba: (Rounding on Medusa in a fury) What is the matter with them? You said that the prospect of money would be enough to get them to sign!

Medusa: They’re clearly in denial, Coach. Arrgh! Give me a moment with them. I think the kangaroo is about to crack. (She rounds on him, fiercely)

Ares: (Hiding behind the others). Oh please don’t hurt me - please

*SFX low rumbling of thunder. Zorba, Ms Severity and Medusa brandish the contract at Ares.*
Athena: (Stepping forward, courageously). We won’t sign anything, Miss Severity!

Miss Severity: WHAT did you say?

Penelope: (Coming up behind her) We’ve decided we won’t!

Zorba: (Aghast) What??

Demeter: (Also bolstering the resistance) We won’t. And you can’t make us!

Ares: (With his arm across his forehead, not wanting to look. Trembling) No you can’t!

Medusa: (Arms folded, observing them clinically) Denial, I’m afraid. That’s what this is!

Ms Severity and Zorba look at each other

Ms Severity: That’s it then - we’ll make you!

She lunges at Athena and Penelope

Zorba: Let me at them!

He lunges at Demeter and Ares. They have a knockabout moment, knocking each other out accompanied by musical FX The children gather round and look at them in shock.

Medusa: (Clinically interested, on her knees beside them checking their pulses) I think we have a case of concussion.

Musical crescendo as Hera appears, lit, on the balcony.

Hera: The moment has come! You know what to do, Hermes. Let the Power of a Goddess take these children to safety - and Olympia!

Hermes: (Descending from the branch in a Divine flurry). Quick! There’s not a moment to lose. The Queen of Olympus sends you this vessel (a sail-boat is wheeled on stage to accompanying magical sounds) All aboard before these two wake up! We’re off to Athens and the Olympic Games.
Athena: Ooh! How exciting. (To Hera on the balcony) Thank you! Oh thank you so much! We’ll not disappoint you there, O mighty Queen. (Hera acknowledges her with an inclining of her head.)

The animals clamber aboard. SONG The ship sets sail as they all sing together - “We are sailing...” etc.) Zorba and Ms Severity regain consciousness to discover their Gold Medalists sailing into the sunset. Aeschylus runs onto the apron followed (slowly) by Odysseus and Maia. They watch in amazement as the boat ‘sails’ away. Aeschylus sees Rhea vanishing from sight.

Thunder and lightning. Only Zeus is visible now.

Aeschylus: Hey, Boss! What’s going on? (Shrieking) That’s my true love in that boat!

Zorba: (Getting unsteadily to his feet) There’s no time to lose! Quick! Follow that boat.

Ms Severity: This all that meddling Quoll’s fault! Just wait till I get my paws on her. I’ll wring her neck!

Medusa: You must channel this anger. Channel it into something creative, Madam. Positive energy -

Ms Severity: (Rudely) Oh be quiet!

Aeschylus: (An idea dawning slowly) I know! a mate of mine has a boat moored in Fremantle. We can charter it and follow them - we heard where they were going! Quick guys. (Aside, dreamily, heart thumping) That chick is sooo cool! I mean: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” (He looks longingly into the distance as he speaks)

Zorba: Stop your poetic ramblings! What’s the matter with you? We’ve not a moment to lose if we’re to catch them! We must get to Fremantle. Come along all of you!

They all start to exit. SFX Thunder lightning and rain. They look up at the balconies.

Ms Severity: It’s almost as if the gods are against us!

Zeus: (Laughs, echoing through the theatre.)

Odysseus: That’s a bit creepy - I don’t like it at all.

Maia: It’s only the wind -
Ms Severity: Odysseus, Maia, follow me if you don’t want to be left alone here!

They waddle slowly off after her. Lights fade. The Cockatoos spread their feathers in the rain and make loud squawks.

Chloe: Come on, everyone - we have a flight to make.

Girls: Athens here we come.

They fly off stage (in twos) with Carl a little behind the flock.

Carl: Wait for me! Hey! Wait for me! (Squawks)

Blacks fly in.

Dionysus and the Pan Pipes complete the musical accompaniment and then step forward to take the children through the Interval Routine. (Stretches etc.) They could teach them a few bars of the Boy Band Song perhaps. Some activity that gets them involved in Act 2.

Act 2

Scene 1

Sounds of the sea - seagulls, the lapping of the waves - overlaid by cars hooting, engines revving - the sounds of the port of Freo. The action has moved to the Fremantle boat harbour. Lights up to reveal the ‘cheerleaders/fans’ on stage. They’re a pair of budgies and they are wearing Odysseus the Wombat’s colours (green and purple) with scarves, beanies etc. proclaiming their support. They carry pom-poms and use them when necessary to emphasize their support.

Chantelle: I wonder if we’ll catch sight of him, Charmaine? I mean, they said they were leaving from Freo.

Charmaine: I’m sure we will, Chantelle. Just keep looking out - and watch where that camera man from the AABC goes.

Apollo is on the trail of his athletic subjects. He enters through the auditorium, and films the children in the audience again, followed by Aphrodite with her bags - she is ready for a trip.
Chantelle: Oooo! Let’s follow them. D’you think we’ll be on the 5.0’clock News?

Charmaine: If we can get behind that camera operator when she’s filming (reverently, but struggling with the name) O-dyss - O-dyss-ee - oh whatever (gives up on it) the Wombat Wonder.

Chantelle: (Excitedly - she really is dim-witted) Then we can wave at Nana. She likes seeing someone she knows on TV.

Together: Yeah!

Aphrodite: (Reaching the apron: in a business-like tone) Apollo! That’s enough of that footage. We must make sure we catch up with Coach Zorba and his retinue before they sail. I have an interview booked with this amazing athlete the Assistant Coach has found in the Outback: Odysseus the Wonder Wombat.

Chantelle/Charmaine: (Shaking their pom-poms in delight and chanting) Go Wombat! Go Wombat! Oh, no! Not you, again! Come ON Apollo, let’s lose these two.

Apollo: (Following slowly and filming as he does to the chanting of the budgies.) Cool, man! This is so cool!

As Apollo and Aphrodite exit they keep up their chant and add to it with cheerleader moves.

Chantelle: Charmaine!

Charmaine: Chantelle?

Chantelle: Do you see what I see?

Charmaine: Omigosh! It’s him. EEEE. It’s O-dyss- O-dyss-ee -

Chantelle: It’s the Wombat Wonder! EEEE!

Odysseus enters, strutting his stuff a bit, followed by Maia, eating fish and chips. They’re dressed in ‘Olympic’ tracksuits - their deception still holding. The budgies flutter up to him but he takes one look at them and does a runner!
Odysseus: Fans! Help, I’m outa here!

Maia: Come back here, you idiot! That’s no way to treat your fans. *(To Chantelle and Charmaine)* He’s very shy, but come with me girls, I’m sure I can get him to give you his autograph.

Charmaine/Chantelle: Oooh! His autograph. We’ll die happy!

*They exit together, following Aphrodite and Apollo.*

Enter Zorba, Aeschylus and Medusa with Ms Severity. *Zorba and Ms Severity each sport a bandage across their forehead after their collision.*

Zorba: This boat you’ve chartered for us, Aeschylus. I hope it’s worth it! It’s costing me *(Aside)* - I mean the sponsors - a fortune.

Aeschylus: Now, would I do you any harm Boss? *(Aside)* You know I would! My mate tells me it has what it takes to get us to Athens in style and comfort.

Medusa: I need some R&R (that’s rest and recreation) if I’m to prepare your team for the finals. After all we’ve been through I’m feeling quite ... ARRGH ... *tense*. 

Ms Severity: Well, so am I. How could we have lost them? So many of them. Just wait till I get my paws on that wretched Quoll. It’s all her fault.

*Aeschylus, aware that his beloved has been referred to responds briefly as the Band plays a haunting melody.*

Aeschylus: *(In a pleasant day dream)* The fault, dear Madam, lies not in us but in our stars!

Zorba: What are you talking about? You’ve developed some very odd habits recently. Take us to your friend and this boat we’ve chartered. I can see myself now, on the deck of the liner, sipping wine and eating canapés.

Ms Severity: What a charming picture you paint! I can scarcely contain myself. Oh, once we reach Athens and find those foolish young creatures, our dreams of Olympic gold will come true.

Medusa: Arrgh! Never doubt it.
Aeschylus: This way, Sir, Madam - I’ll have Odysseus and Maia here in no time and we’ll set sail for Athens. (Aside) I must be careful. I don’t want them to realize yet my fiendish plan to double-cross them with the Wombat Wonder. (Calling) Odysseus! Maia! We’re on our way.

LFX fade to black.

**Scene2**

*Lights down, thunder and lightning SFX, sounds of a massive storm at sea. Enter all the characters, including the budgies, Aphrodite and Apollo, in wet weather gear, rowing a small, leaky boat. They bail out water as they go. (The boat’s proportions should be those of Three Men in a Tub - overcrowded and visually hilarious.)*

Zorba: (Beating Aeschylus about the head) I should have known! I can leave no decision to anyone else. I’ll never let you arrange anything again! This is a nightmare.

Aeschylus: Ouch! I’m sorry Boss - it’s not my fault. How was I to know? Ouch!

Ms Severity: Of course it’s your fault! You idiot! I knew it! Never trust a feline (She, too, lashes out at Aeschylus, who shields himself with his paddle.)

Aeschylus: Ouch!

Medusa: (Flinging her arms out as she speaks and causing the others to duck.) Arrgh! This storm reflects my soul. What a tempest.

Zorba: Row, Odysseus! Row, Maia - and you two stowaways! Bail out the stern.

Aphrodite: Get this, Apollo. (The boat lurches on) This is real!

Apollo: Wow! Cool. This is, like, wow!

Exit, rowing frantically, bailing out, complaining and thrashing at each other, *the Ship of Fools! SFX Thunder and lightning.*

Zeus and Hera appear, dimly lit, on the balconies. Zeus laughs malevolently. Hera picks up her mobile and dials Hermes. She needs to see her plan in action.
Dionysus: (Gestures, acknowledging their presence, to the balcony.) The gods are really angry, guys. I wonder what lies ahead? And who do you think will win the bet?

Socrates: No question - it’ll be Zeus! You saw how quickly the Wombat signed the contract.

Sophocles: Yeah. He knows what makes people tick. Money - (thinks a bit) - and fame. Hera hasn’t a hope. You’ll see!

Sybil: (Laughs at them) You’re so wrong! You have no idea do you?

Hermes enters on the apron DSR talking on his mobile.

Hermes: Of course, O Queen of Heaven. Absolutely. (He looks over at Dionysus and the Pan Pipes and indicates, miming, that she’s annoyed. They’re in trouble.) They are -

The band plays the theme for the bull-jumping scene. The curtain flies to reveal all the animals in training together with their European counterparts, tumblers, acrobats, the bravest of the brave. Several gymnastic and circus routines - plate-spinning, juggling, ribbon-swinging etc. - are in motion with the animals grouped together. The flock of Cockatoos is there, too, practising their synchronized dancing.

Scene 3

- in training, in the arena, as we speak.

He gestures towards the others and joins them as a Master of Ceremonies as the scene progresses. As the dance sequence ends, he’ll bring the characters forward to perform - very briefly - their acts: eg. Scarf juggling, ribbon twirling, plate spinning, etc. [INSERT WHEN DETERMINED] concluding with either the ‘bull-jumping’ or a pyramid. Sophocles may join them for this.

DANCE/MOVEMENT Piece

As the dance ends, Rhea and the Animals of Australia gather DSC. They are in Olympia, now, and their costumes should suggest the loin-cloths/short togas of Greek Vases: black, elegant. The tumblers/acrobats continue going through their moves and the cockatoos take up their familiar positions across the platform at the back (US). Sophocles, Socrates and Sybil the satyrs mingle as ‘trainers’ much to the delight of the Animals. Hermes walks over to the Band stand and picks up a goblet of cordial (!) Dionysus lolls with his goblet of
cordial at the key-board, sharing the moment with Hermes, observing the action.

Athena: (Doing some stretches) I still have to pinch myself to make sure this isn’t a dream! A boat appears like magic in the dusty wasteland of the Outback and the next thing we know, we’re here - in Olympia - being trained by some of the most amazing athletes I’ve ever seen! It’s very mysterious.

Penelope: (Bending from side to side) You’re right, Athena, There’s something very mysterious about it all - I don’t understand it.

Demeter: (Juggling scarves) Me neither - but hey, it’s great to be here. My first trip overseas!

Ares: (Wearing boxing gloves) It’s amazing (Air-boxing with Sophocles as a sparring partner) Working out with these champions is unbelievable. I’m even getting a handle on my left (he makes a left hook) and my right (he makes a right hook) hooks! (Rapid fire) Look! My left and my right and my left and my right!

Sophocles: (Laughing and backing away from an over-eager sparring partner) We’re really happy with your progress, guys.

Socrates: Yes - it’s been even better than expected.

Rhea: But who’s behind all this? I don’t see any sign of sponsors? And yet we’ve had everything we could have wished for in this truly awesome resort.

The satyrs look at each other and over to Dionysus for confirmation. But he shakes his head.

Dionysus: (Raises his goblet to them and toasts them) Chill, kids! It’s in the lap of the gods.

The Satyrs laugh

Sybil: Yes, “In the lap of the gods”, so to speak.

Hermes: It certainly is! (His mobile rings. He looks at the message.) (To the audience) Uh-Oh. And speaking of gods - this is an SMS from Hera. In fact, it’s a warning … that (he reads quickly) they’re not out of danger yet! Just when I was beginning to unwind I’ve got to get back on duty. (He hands his goblet back to Dionysus who drinks it himself). I’d better be off to
see what it’s all about. *(He adopts the Hermes pose and - if possible - exits on a skateboard.)* See you later.

*The Animals wave and call out goodbyes to him as he exits.*

*The lights dim a little and SFX low rumbling of thunder. Zeus is visible on the balcony. Hera, opposite, is also visible.*

Rhea: I wonder what this is all about?

Penelope: I don’t like the sound of that - it’s almost as if ... as if ... I don’t know ... as if someone was trying to tell us something.

Demeter: Yeah. Actually, it’s really creepy - like the soundtrack to a Horror movie or something.

Ares: *(Shaking)* Oh, I hate horror movies and I don’t like that sound. It’s not like ordinary thunder. What is it? *(He’s comforted by Penelope and Demeter.)*

Athena: **SONG**

*(About her dreams, ambitions, fears and courage in the face of adversity; her yearnings to be the best she can be.)*

*The Song ends, there’s a pause, and the auditorium door is flung open. Zeus laughs and Hera turns from him abruptly and walks off into the darkness.*

**Scene 4**

*Villains’ theme. A version of ‘Zorba’s Dance’ (?)*

*Enter Ms Severity, Zorba the Fox, Aeschylus and Medusa. Ms Severity should look a little disheveled and Zorba, too, should display signs of the trials he’s been through. Perhaps he can wring out a T-shirt. Aeschylus may be wearing a knotted handkerchief on his head, Medusa, a sailor’s cap, to indicate their recent nautical experience.*

Ms Severity: *(She is furious)* Aha! We’ve found you at last you treacherous creatures! Just wait till I get my hands on you. Thought you’d given us the slip, did you? As for you, Quoll! Your part in this has been outrageous. Abducting and kidnapping! That’s what this is.

Rhea: *(Vehemently and anxiously denying this charge.)* No! You don’t understand. I didn’t!
Athena: She is not responsible, Ms Severity. Really she isn’t!

Penelope: It was magic.

Demeter: Yes, it was - magic!

Ares: Magic brought us here. In the most beautiful boat I’ve ever seen!

Athena: We weren’t kidnapped!

Ms Severity: (Still irate) You expect me to believe this nonsense! How dare you make up stories like this!

Zorba: Now, now, my dear, remember what we discussed? We are not going to be angry (through clenched teeth - she’s upsetting his plans to get them all to sign the contract.) Think, dear Madam, what did we decide?

Medusa: (In a clinical, thoughtful way, to no-one in particular) She clearly has deep-seated issues that recent events have surfaced. My advice is -

Ms Severity: (Losing it. Angrily) I’ve had enough of your advice! A boatload of it in fact! Be silent!

Medusa: (Completely losing her self-control) Arrgh. How dare you speak to me like that! (They go head to head like the fox and the crow in the animation)

Zorba: Now, now, ladies. Let’s not quarrel. Not in front of these (he grimaces, trying to smile at the young animals gathered anxiously together CS as the cavalcade descends towards them.) charming young creatures. Think of our sponsors!

Ms Severity: (Ignoring him entirely - she’s utterly frazzled) As for having issues! Issues - I’ll tell you who has issues!

Zorba: Ladies, ladies, please! (He tries to pull them apart.)

Aeschylus: (He’s been looking the audience over, perhaps finding the child he ‘bonded’ with in Act 1 and now addresses his villainous colleagues). Oi! Have a look at this! They’re here too! Now that’s something else! I thought we left them back in Oz! (Looks at them, puzzled) and walks on stage.
Ms Severity:  

Notes the audience and pulls herself together.  

Apologetically) Oh, I’m so sorry. I do apologize. Don’t know what came over me.

Zorba:  

(He is greatly relieved. Benignly) That’s much better! Now Medusa, that’s enough of that.

Medusa is still attempting to scratch Ms Severity’s eyes out - she’s not a Tasmanian Devil for nothing - but subsides as Zorba firmly intervenes.

Medusa:  

(Reluctantly) Arrgh. But she had no right to speak to me like that.

Zorna:  

(Soothingly) There, there!

Ms Severity:  

(Gathering her few diplomatic skills) Right, children, I think we should begin again, don’t you? My friend, Zorba the Fox, here is an excellent coach and has come to make you an offer you simply can’t refuse ... (She blows her whistle peremptorily)

The animals, disciplined as they are, gather reluctantly round her as she and Zorba mime their ‘offer’, brandishing the contract to be signed from time to time.

Lights dim on animals USC discussing the contracts. Spotlight on Rhea DSR who catches sight of the smitten Aeschylus looking at her. This brief scene will be over the top in high romantic mode, establishing the illicit ‘love’ between a Feral Cat and a Tasmanian Tiger Cat. Love will transform Aeschylus, who will think better of his wicked ways.

Aeschylus:  

(To the audience) It’s her! That cool cat from Illyarri Primary! (His heart thumps) And she’s looking at me. (Lyrical) Here, at the ends of the earth!

Their eyes meet but they look away quickly

Rhea:  

(To the audience) He’s so cute! But why is he looking at me like that?

Once again their eyes meet but they look away quickly.

Aeschylus:  

(To the audience) Should I say something -?

Rhea:  

(To the audience) I HOPE he says something!

Embarrassed, walking a little way off. Speaking together.
Aeschylus: Nah! She’s too cool - she’d never talk to me.

Rhea: Oh, he’s too cute - he’d never talk to me.

They laugh as they realize how silly they’re being. Clearly ‘love’ is in the air! The music FX change from schmaltzy romantic as Aeschylus starts to sing his rap/rock SONG.

Aeschylus: Listen up, Lady, I’ve got something to say

There should be a suggestion of the duet from ‘Grease’ in this, with Rhea starting off shy and retiring, but eventually joining in the dance moves. The satyrs all join in as the song progresses and provide harmonies and vocals for the two of them.

When the SONG ends the two of them rush off stage together, holding hands.

The Australian Animals look anxious and upset. They have had a very demanding session with Zorba, Ms Severity and Medusa.

Zorba and Ms Severity with Medusa come DSC and huddle conspiratorially. Low rumble of thunder and lightning flashes. Zeus leans over the balcony and cries out.

Zeus: It’s just as I thought! Watch everyone. There’s no-one on earth who remembers the real reason the Games are played.

Zorba: I think we’ve done it! By George we’ve done it.

Ms Severity: Olympic Gold within our reach.

Medusa: Arrgh. Aren’t you forgetting something? It was my inspirational team-talk that moved them.

Zorba: (Flourishing a gold pen and the contract.) Right! We’ve no time to waste. Sign here young Athena, and the rest of you. You will not regret this!

Ms Severity: (Intensely, beginning to get annoyed as they hesitate.) Come along now, hurry up.

Medusa: There’s money - lots of it - to be made. Come along!

Drum roll as the animals reluctantly line up to sign.
Cockatoos see Hermes off stage and call out, delightedly.

Cockatoos: Hello Cocky! Reinforcements at - ?(they look at each other in order to confirm his position) Reinforcements at - (loudly) - at 12.35!! (They dance up and down delightedly to quiet strains of “Dance, Cocky, dance”!!)

Hermes enters with the Reporter and the Camera-person. He must be dressed (over his feathers) like an old-style Hollywood film mogul: Panama hat, perhaps, double breasted jacket, Blues Brothers sunnies. He is in disguise (!) Hermes’ theme modulates into something more contemporary.

Hermes: (Winking at the animals) My scouts tell me there’s something really neat happening here and I’m paying this young lady Miss -?

Aphrodite: Aphrodite, documentary maker, Murdoch University.

Hermes: Too much information! (Holds up his hand to silence her.) I’m paying Miss Aphrodite, here, and her - prickly - camera operator -

Apollo: Apollo! That’s me, man!

Hermes: (Continuing) As her sponsor - I’m paying them a large amount (he pulls out a roll of money and starts to count off the notes) to finish the film they’ve been making for global distribution.

Aphrodite: It’s so exciting, Coach Zorba! This is my Big Break!

Apollo: It’s REALLY cool, man.

Zorba and Ms Severity look cunningly at each other.

Hermes: (With his arm around Zorba’s shoulders) Now I know that time is money to a man like you, so here’s the deal! You take these (he fans out some large green notes) and I take these young athletes with me. They’ll be back first thing in the morning.

Cockatoos: (Together) In the morning! In the morning!

Hermes: (Holding a hand up to silence them and continuing, confidentially) You see, we need to shoot a scene with the Oracle at Delphi if it’s OK with you? Some local colour -

Cockatoos: (Together, interrupting again.) Local colour! Local colour!
Hermes: \textit{(Holding his hand up again)} Some local colour to capture the flavour of the place. They’ll be back by sunrise - the Oracle only operates at night anyway. But we really must hurry - the bus is waiting and it’s quite a ride.

Cockatoos: \textit{(Together)} Quite a ride! Quite a ride!

Carl: Settle down, girls - let’s not get carried away.

\textit{They all subside and preen their feathers.}

Zorba: \textit{(Aside)} Film rights, global distribution, did he say? This is even better than I thought it would be! This can only add to my riches! \textit{(Heh heh heh)} Ms Severity, Cly-tem-nes-tra, I’m sure we can spare our young charges for this excursion.

Ms Severity: \textit{(Fluttering her eyelashes at Zorba)} Of course. Whatever you wish. \textit{(In great excitement, together, as Zorba’s theme plays and they begin to dance [Zorba’s Dance] to it with Medusa clapping time and the Cockatoos keeping the rhythm.)}

Hermes: Let’s not miss the bus then. Follow me!

The animals exit USL in pairs, following Hermes and Aphrodite. Apollo exits last, after filming as much as he can.

Zorba/ Ms Severity: The movie rights! This is it - we’ll be rich.

The blacks fly in as the music finishes. The stage is prepared for Scene 6, the Grotto at Delphi. FX dry ice, lights in screen, tumbled Greek Column etc.

\textbf{Scene 5}

Music FX Odysseus’ theme. Enter DSR Odysseus, dressed as a prize-fighter before a match, with a Budgie on each arm. Maia (with some of the paraphernalia of the tourist draped around her neck) walks grumpily behind them as Odysseus has forgotten his original allegiances and fallen victim to the flattery that ‘fame’ has brought him.

Odysseus: Where’s Aeschylus, my coach? He said he’d meet me here. I’ve got to practise my start, he says, if I want to win the 100 meters.

The fans squeal as they help him off with his robe and then have a brief tug of war with it.
Charmaine: Let me do that, Odysseus.

Chantelle: No, I want to! Let me.

_Odysseus flexes his muscles and crouches down very slowly as if to start running._

Odysseus: Girls, girls! That’s enough of that. Quiet. I need to concentrate.

_Music FX - Odysseus’ theme. Perhaps ‘Chariots of Fire’?_

_Chantelle holds the robe firmly. With infinite generosity and patience_ Odysseus takes off an arm band and flings it carelessly across to Charmaine. _He very slowly goes through the motions of a start while the Budgies hold their breath._

Maia: (To the audience) He’s completely lost it! He believes his own fibs now. There’s no way that he’ll win the 100 meters - those were Athena Emu’s times. She’s fast enough to beat anyone in the world! Hey, Odysseus, there’s no point! You’ll never beat Athena.

Odysseus: (Annoyed) What do you mean? All I need is to get my start right and that’s what that stupid Cat’s supposed to be working on with me. Where is he?

_Lights dim a little. A hooded figure enters SL. He lifts his cape and the animals see something shining underneath. SFX Faint rumbling of thunder._

Zeus: (Furtively, glancing over his shoulder) Psst. Wanna buy some golden apples? (It’s - unbeknown to them - Zeus in disguise. This is his intervention and he hopes to thwart Hera by complicating her plan to see the best and fairest, in the spirit of old, win at the Olympics.) They’re irresistible, I promise you. Just drop them as you run and the fastest athlete will slow down to pick them up. No-one can resist the glisten of gold! Over a 100 meters - 3 apples, 3 seconds - even a Wombat could win!

Odysseus: Wow! How much are they?

Maia: Hey, Odysseus. Let’s not do this. I think we’ve gone too far. (Tugs at his arm)

Odysseus: Don’t be a loser! (Pulling away) How much for the apples?
Zeus: (Laughs) For a nice guy like you - they’re free. But use them wisely. They’re magic apples. (To Maia) See that he uses them well.

He exits as he came, music SFX accompanying him.

Odysseus: This is amazing. Look at these apples. I’m, like, rapt! That old guy’s right. This is my chance to beat that stuck-up Emu and win Olympic gold!

Maia: Look, guys. I don’t like this. I don’t know who that was but I really didn’t trust him. He gave me the creeps.

Charmaine: Don’t be so boring, Maia.

Chantelle: You’re so, like, down on everything we do!

Maia: Well, I think this is wrong. We’ve gone too far.

Odysseus: Oh, stop beating up on me, Maia! Come on girls. Let’s go and find something to eat. I need to carbo-boost for the race tomorrow! Hey, be careful. He said these were magic apples.

Chanting, Charmaine and Chantelle, exit with him:

Together: Go, Wombat! Go, Wombat!

Lights down on the front of the stage.

Scene 6

Curtain flies to reveal the stage set for the Oracle at Delphi. Dry ice should swirl across some fallen columns and the lighting should establish an air of mystery: the Oracle is a powerful force, able to see into the future. She is always approached with care. Here she manifests as an Owl and it would be great if she could fly at the end of the scene. Dressed in white togas so that they look like statues and dimly lit at the back of the stage, Zeus and Hera can just be made out. They must remain still until their cue.

Oracle’s SONG

She should sing about her powers, her ability to foretell the future, how she knows the pain of others but also their joy. She is enslaved, forever, to the Gods of Mount Olympus - always on call at their every whim - but she relishes her position because it’s one of immense possibility.
As the Song ends, the lights come up a little. She should be slightly distracted, a little scatter-brained, not quite focused on reality.

Oracle: (Listens) Who is that? Who’s there?

Hermes: (Enters as himself) It’s just me, Hermes. Sent here by Hera to consult with you.

Oracle: Ah, Hermes, my old friend. It’s a while since you were here. What have you been up to?

They sit side by side on the fallen column.

Hermes: Don’t ask! I’ve been to the ends of the earth and back since I saw you last!

Oracle: Ah, yes, I know! WHOO- OOO! I know.

Hermes: Well you always do, don’t you?

Oracle: (Laughing) It’s that bet, isn’t it? Between Hera and Zeus that’s kept you so busy. What a pair they are - they LOVE a good contest!

Hermes: She wants to know -

Oracle: Hera?

Hermes: She wants to know whether she’ll win this bet. She’s SMS-ed me pretty much all day, really. And she said to ask you. Any idea?

Oracle: (Standing up to her full height). Of course I’ve an idea - that’s my job as an Oracle! WHOOO -OOO! I know exactly what the outcome will be. (A bit stressed as she says this, a little frantic) But it’s such a responsibility! Knowing the future. Just how much should I tell? That’s what I ask myself?

Hermes: So you speak in riddles?

Oracle: Right. It’s more exciting like that. And I don’t need to feel so responsible. Listen - there’s someone coming. Oh no! It’s that pair of lovers. I can’t tell you! Nothing more boring to deal with. The same question every time and I certainly am not going to tell them what I see! (Mimicking) “Will he love me forever?” “Will she love me for ever?” “Please tell us, O Oracle” (Pushing Hermes toward the back of the stage - Center -between Zeus and Hera) Just stand over there - between those statues of Zeus and Hera.
Whoever it is mustn’t see you. (Confidentially) Top Secret stuff here. Everything in the strictest confidence. She hides behind the fallen pillar.

Hermes stands like a statue in the shadows as Aeschylus and Rhea enter from USR. He notices that Zeus and Hera are present.

Aeschylus: OK, OK, but just because you want to. My sixth sense is really doing overtime, I tell you! I don’t like this place - it feels spooky.

Rhea: Of course it does. It’s Delphi - home of the Oracle (rapturously) who can foretell the future. And I want to ask her (she turns and puts her arms round him) what the future holds for us!

Hermes will attempt to move off stage, maintaining his statue status.

Aeschylus: (Looking over her shoulder) Wait a moment! That statue just moved. I swear it did.

Rhea: Oh, don’t swear, my love. Let’s see if we can find her. I’m sure this is the spot.

Aeschylus looks over his shoulder as they exit USL.

Gesturing furtively, Hermes takes a few steps, and exits DSR.

Hermes: (Aside) I’ll just fetch the Australian Animals. The Oracle must speak to them. These are Hera’s orders.

Aeschylus: (Running back in) It’s GONE! There was a statue there, I swear it. It was right between these two. Of a funny looking bloke with little wings on his heels. Really!

Rhea: (Running in and grabbing his hand) Come on, Aeschylus! It doesn’t matter - we must find the Oracle before sunrise if we’re to have our future told! She must be here somewhere.

She pulls him out again after her, and he follows.

Aeschylus: I dunno. This is all weird. But, hark, my lady calls - (romantically) Oh Rhea, goddess, nymph .... I’m coming.

Music FX The Australian Animals enter anxiously, led by Athena. Aphrodite and Apollo will film the scene for the AABC.

Ares: This is NOT a good idea. Why have we come to such a spooky place?
Penelope: Shshsh. You know why we’re here, Ares. Hermes has organized an appointment for us all - we’re very lucky to be here. The Oracle is going to advise us. We really need to know what we should do.

Demeter: We do! It’s been so weird - there we were at Illyarri Primary and the next thing we know a boat appears out of nowhere, and we’re in Olympia on our way to Athens!

Athena: No, not Athens. This is Delphi, a magical place, and there’s something very powerful drawing us in. Listen! Is that the Oracle?

Ares: Oooh! I’m scared. (Shivers and Penelope comforts him).

*The animals tremble a little and group together as the Oracle hops up from behind the pillars onto a slab CS and with loud musical FX (drum roll) and draws herself up, spreading her wings. They drop onto their knees before her.*

Oracle: Speak, little creatures of the Outback. Why are you here, so far from home?

Penelope: (Gently pushing Athena forward.) Go, on, Athena. Tell her why we’re here.

Athena: Tell us, Wise Oracle, what should we do? Should we do what Ms Severity and Zorba want us to do?

Penelope: Oh please advise us, we really aren’t sure.

Demeter: And we want to do the right thing.

Oracle: Of course you do! (To Ares) And you - Whoo-whoo, do you?

Ares: Yes, I do, I really do.

Athena: Please, can you help us?

Oracle: This isn’t easy for me, I can tell you - I hate it when I have to answer questions like these But, oh, well, here goes. (Confidentially) You know I speak in riddles -

Athena: (Nodding) Yes, O Wise One. Please speak - we need your help
Oracle: Well, I’ll do what I can. But you and your friends, young Athena Emu, will have to work this out for yourselves. Listen …! *(She begins to chant as if in a trance. Music FX the pan-pipes or flute and very quiet percussion as the magic begins)*

Beware, little creatures, of glistening gold
Those that adore it have hearts icy cold
Be true to your selves - let your hearts burn with fires
And you will achieve your deepest desires

Remember the true meaning of the Games, my little ones! Follow your hearts.

*Sounds in the undergrowth USL. The Oracle drops her dramatic, incantatory style and looks over her shoulder.*

Oh, no! That sounds like the Lovers returning. I couldn’t bear it! I must leave - dawn’s approaching. I must be gone! But remember my words. Whoo-ooo.

*She raises her wings and flies as the curtain descends and the animals bow before her. Rhea and Aeschylus run on and watch as she disappears.*

Aphrodite: Now that was incredible. I hope you got it, Apollo.

Apollo: Like, wow. Yeah, I got it.

*Music FX crescendo followed by SFX thunder and lightning as Hera and Zeus turn from their state of ‘marble’ into life, look challengingly at each other.*

*Thunder and lightning. SFX Wind as the blacks fly in. The Animals huddle together, afraid of the powers they’ve unleashed.*

Scene 7

*Hermes’ theme. Hermes enters DSR, if possible on his skateboard, in full messenger mode.*

Hermes: *(To the audience)* That was pretty amazing! But the Riddle of the Oracle is a bit much, to my mind. I’m not sure I get what she means. Dionysus – what do you make of it? Will Hera win this bet, or is Zeus right - there’s no-one in the world who remembers what the Games are for?

Dionysus: I don’t think they want me to tell them - it’ll spoil the ending. Let’s just see what happens.

*Pan Pipes play.*
Hermes: Shshshsh! There’s someone coming! Oh, it’s the Koala, Maia and she looks really sad.

Enter Maia, the Koala, SL and a huddled figure in a ragged cape (Hera disguised as a beggar woman) SR.

Maia: Sitting on the edge of the apron. Sighs.

Hera: What is it, child? Why are you so sad?

Maia: Oh, it’s nothing! Just - I think I’ve lost my best friend that’s all.

Hera: (Sitting down next to her) I know how awful that is. I’m also alone in the world, pretty much.

Maia: Yeah. You look really sad, too. Who are you? You look as if you’re starving. Want something to eat? (Gives her a piece of chocolate)

Hera: (Taking it eagerly) Thank you I haven’t eaten for days. Come on, tell me what’s up. What is it you want?

Maia: (Unburdening herself) I’m totally confused. What I want is for Odysseus, my friend, to be normal again, to forget all this stuff about being a champion - that’s what I want. In my heart. I want him back as my friend. But he doesn’t even notice me anymore now those Budgies are around.

Hera: Sounds to me like he’s forgotten what true friendship is for. Remind him, Maia. Show him what true friendship is.

She vanishes by retreating into darkness as lights go down, except for the spot on Maia. Musical FX - panpipes.

Maia: How do I do that? He takes no notice of me anymore. That’s funny, she’s gone! I wonder where she went. Poor thing.

Hermes: Come on, everyone, let’s head back to Athens and the trials which I believe are about to begin (SFX thunder and lightning.) To the Bull Jumping arena where the competition is hotting up!

Music FX takes us through the curtain flying and into the next scene.
Scene 8

The blacks fly to reveal the Bull Jumping arena with all the athletes assembled. Aeschylus joins the tumblers, acrobats and athletes showing off his prowess as a gymnast. Zeus watches from his throne USR - Hera’s USL is empty - as the athletes gather for their final trials before selection for the Olympic Games. Next to him is the Oracle. Zorba, Ms Severity and Medusa have Odysseus in their ‘corner’; Rhea has responsibility for the others. The Cockatoos take up positions on either side of the thrones as the trials begin. Aphrodite and Apollo will be teamed together shooting the scene - Apollo will need to be encouraged at the appropriate times to film the winners.

Hermes: And the winner, in this, the Australian boxing team trials - roo weight division - for Athens 2004, is: (Rises Ares’ gloved paw) Ares, the Boxing Kangaroo.

Ares: (Running up to the podium.) Thank you so much - it’s great to have got to this level - I never thought I would!

Budgies: Go Ares! Go Ares!

Cheers from the crowd.

Hermes: And the winner of the High Jump - another success from Illyarri Primary, Demeter the Dingo!

Budgies: Go Dingo! Go Dingo!

Cheers from the crowd.

Demeter: Thank you thank you - I’d like to thank my friends for making this possible. I couldn’t have done it without you! (She stands on the podium next to Ares.)

Hermes: And the winner of the wrestling contest - Penelope Possum, whose half Nelson defies physics.

Budgies: Go Penny! Go Penny!

Cheers from the crowd.

Penelope: (Wiping a tear from her eye) I’m just so happy. I’d like to thank my mother and father who are watching this back home. Thanks Mom, Dad. (Sniffs). Joins the others on the podium. I can’t believe I’m in the Olympic team!
The Budgies will now be seen to have changed allegiances to the other animals, smitten by Ares’ powerful display, and be less interested in Odysseus.

Hermes: And now, for the final place in the Australian athletics team, the 100 meter final will be a contest between Athena Emu and Odysseus the Wombat

Budgies: (Without much enthusiasm) Oh yeah, Go Wombat! Go Wombat!

Chariots of fire theme sounds as Athena and Odysseus get ready. Zorba, Severity and Medusa gather round Odysseus, pumping him up for the race of a lifetime.

Ms Severity: Remember, Boy. It’s your start. Remember your start. Get your start right and the race is yours. (Aside to Zorba) Thank goodness we have one of them signed up.

Zorba: (Laughing nastily) And there’s no way he can lose. Not with these to help him. (He takes out the golden apples and hands them to Odysseus.)

Medusa: (Intensely to Wombat) Channel your aggression, boy, into a burst of speed. Channel it. Arrgh. (She growls at Athena)

Odysseus: (Crestfallen) Hey, Chantelle, Charmaine! What’re you doing? I thought you were my fans.

Chantelle: Not any more! (Hanging off Ares’ arm) Look how strong he is!

Charmaine: He’s, like, so cute! (Hanging off Ares’ other arm.)

Hermes: Into your starting blocks. Ready Chorus?

Cockatoos: Ready!

Athena and Odysseus take up their positions. Drum roll, other music FX accompany the start of the race

Cockatoos: On your marks, get set -

Maia: (Stepping forward) No, stop! You can’t do this. Not like this Odysseus. I won’t let you!
Odysseus: Maia?

Maia: This was all my fault and I’m really, really sorry. It’s a lie from the start, you know that Odysseus.

Hera, dressed as a beggar enters DS

Hermes: (Aside) This should be interesting.

Zorba: (Desperately) Don’t listen to this creature. She’s merely jealous of her friend’s success.

Ms Severity: Be quiet you dreadful girl. Odysseus! (Looks meaningfully at the golden apples) You will run this race as we planned. You know what to do.

Maia: Odysseus, don’t …

Odysseus looks from one to the other then goes over to Maia and hands her the apples. They hug each other. Then look slightly sheepish.

Odysseus: You’re right, Maia. I can’t do it like that. But what shall we do with these. (Looks at the apples in her hands)

Maia: (Points to the Beggar Woman) I can see someone who needs them.

Zorba: Just a moment!

Ms Severity: Come back here, boy. What do you think you’re doing?

Odysseus: Walks over to her and hands her the apples. Here, these are for you. Music SFX establishes the poignancy of the moment: violin/flute. She removes her cloak to reveal who she is.

Everyone reacts to the presence of the goddess. Zeus descends from his throne, smiling.

Zeus: You have won the bet, my Queen and I am delighted to lose!

Hera: I knew there had to be someone somewhere who remembered what the Games were about. Thank you, Hermes.

Hermes: My pleasure, mighty Queen. Athena and her friends have been fantastic!
Zeus: Little Emu *(places a gold medal round her neck)* you will run for Australia at the Games of the 27th Olympiad in Athens this August.

Athena: *(A little overwhelmed)* Oh, thank you, Sir. This is amazing. I’m so proud.

Budgies: Go Emu! Go Emu!

Hera: And I have awards for two more competitors: Maia the Koala for being a true friend *(She places a medal round her neck as Maia kneels before her)* and Odysseus, who gave a poor beggar his gold.

Ms Severity: *(Bitterly)* What a waste!

Zorba: *(Almost in tears)* We’ve lost everything! Our wonderful plans, everything destroyed. Oh, what will happen to us?

*Oracle steps forward*

Oracle: I take that as my cue! An Oracle can tell you exactly what will happen!

*Lights dim and music FX creates the Grotto of Delphi’s atmosphere*

Oracle: *(Speaking in sonorous tones as she foretells the future)* Zorba, the Fox, your coaching days are over -

Zorba: I knew it!

Oracle: And Severity, the Ferret, your teaching career is at an end!

Ms Severity: I’m not one bit sorry about that, I can tell you!

Zorba: Let’s go, my dear. It’s clear we’re not wanted here!

*They stalk out indignantly. Oracle whispers to Rhea as they exit.*

Rhea: And the Oracle says the Department of Education has appointed me Head Teacher at Illyarri Primary - Aeschylus, my true love, who has learned the error of his past ways, is to be the sports coach.

Aeschylus: That’s a promotion! I’m not an ‘assistant’ coach any more! Oh my true, true love. *(They hug each other)*

Children:  
(Together) I don’t think so!

Zeus: This calls for a celebration. Come on everyone - mortals and immortals together, let the Games begin!

The Cockatoos: A dance, cocky, dance!

The Finale with a large SONG and DANCE routine - the Villains should return at some point to join in too.

FINIS