A joyful comic retelling for all the family!

Exeter Northcott Theatre present a Le Navet Bete and Barbican Theatre production

A Christmas Carol

Visual Story

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
Le Navet Bete
Exeter City Council
University of Exeter
exeterphoenix
Barbican Theatre

Introduction

This visual story is here to let you know exactly what you can expect to see when you come to watch *A Christmas Carol.*

It will give you:

- An introduction to the company
- An introduction to the characters
- An introduction to the set
- A detailed outline of the story
- A list of moments that may be a little bit louder or more unexpected than others. There aren't many but we want you to know when they are.

If you would benefit from visiting the venue, seeing the set and meeting the company before you come to see the show please do let us know and we will try to make this happen if we can.

If there is anything else that you would like to know about the show that we don't cover in this visual story, please get in touch at info@lenavetbete.com and we will try to help as best we can.

The Company

There are four actors in the company Le Navet Bete. They are called Nick, John, Matt and Al and have been acting together for over 10 years.They have created over 20 shows together in that time.

The actors are supported by the Exeter Northcott Theatre's technical team. They make sure the show runs on time, but you won't see them on stage. Technicians sit in the technical box, usually at the back of the theatre and operate the lights and the sound.

The company are also joined by their Stage Manager Fi Russell. Fi makes sure that the props and costumes are in the right place backstage. She also helps the actors with their costume changes and scene changes during the show so you will her on stage now and again.

Matt Freeman
Actor

Nick Bunt
Actor

Al Dunn
Actor

John Nicholson
Actor

Fi Russell
Stage Manager

The Characters

In this show the actors play 35 different characters so you will see them in lots of different costumes and hear them with lots of different accents.

Below we will show you the main characters that each of the actors play.

We will also show what minor characters they play. You may only see these minor characters once or twice on stage for a short amount of time.

Nick plays one main character:

Ebenezer Scrooge

Ebenezer Scrooge is the main character in *A Christmas Carol*. He is old and mean and hates Christmas.

Al plays the following main characters:

Bob Cratchit

Bob works in Scrooge's counting house and is the father of Tiny Tim.

The Ghost of Christmas Past

A friendly ghost who visits Scrooge to show him memories from his past.

You'll also see Al play:

- Mrs Cratchit
- A storyteller
- A miner
- A lighthouse keeper
- Mrs Stokes
- Fred's wife Mary
- A banker

John plays the following main characters:

Jacob Marley

Scrooge's old business partner who has turned into a ghost. He warns Scrooge that he will be visited 3 other ghosts.

The Ghost of Christmas Present

A jolly ghost who appears as a giant Christmas tree. He helps show Scrooge how his current actions are affecting his friends and family.

You'll also see John play:

- A storyteller
- Mr Stokes
- A Charity Collector

Matt plays the following main characters:

Fred

The nephew of Scrooge. He absolutely loves Christmas and thinks his uncle is really grumpy.

Fezziwig

A jolly man Scrooge used to work for when he was younger.

Tiny Tim

The son of Bob Cratchit.

Belle

A woman who Scrooge once loved and wanted to marry.

The Ghost of Christmas Future

A ghost who shows Scrooge what his future could look like if he doesn't change his ways.

You'll also see Matt play:

- A storyteller
- A charity collector

The Set

The set has been designed by Fi Russell. The backdrop features hundreds of pages from ‘A Christmas Carol’ the book scattered around the floor. This helps gives the idea of the story bursting out of the book and onto the stage. Most of the set is on wheels and can be taken on and off to help create the idea of different spaces.

There are 2 staircases on wheels which you will see being moved around during the show. These staircases transform into lots of different things like Scrooge's office, 'The Counting House', and Bob Cratchit's house. The actors climb up and down these staircases during the show and jump onto them whilst they are moving.

The other main piece of set is Scrooge's bed. This is also on wheels and you'll see it transform into lots of different things during the show including a shop. Hidden in the roof of the bed in a trapdoor which you will see Scrooge use later on in the show. There is also a ladder on the back so the actors can climb into the roof of the bed.

There are two door frames on wheels. These doors help create entrances and exits for the actors and can moved around the stage.

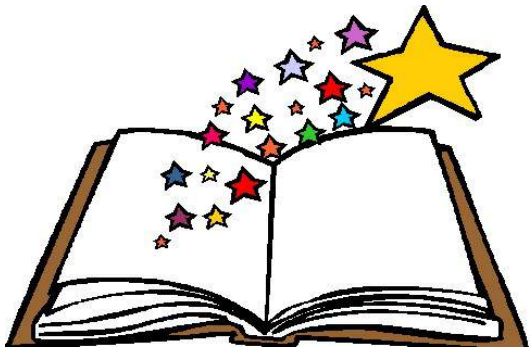
For some scenes you will also see window frames attached to wires drop from the roof of the stage.

About the show

How long does the show last?

The show is performed in two parts with a break or interval in the middle. The first half is approximately 50 minutes. The interval lasts 20 minutes. The second half is approximately 50 minutes. The total length of the show, including the interval, is 120 minutes or 2 hours.

How do Le Navet Bete tell the story



At the beginning of the show you are introduced to three storytellers. You will see them pop up throughout the performance. They talk directly to the audience and help explain what is happening on stage. There are times when the storytellers will ask the audience to be part of the show by making sounds or responding to questions.

The main characters in the show, like Scrooge and the Ghosts, do not really talk to the audience directly. They help tell the story through acting out the different scenes talked about by the storytellers.

Scene by scene

Contains spoilers! If you would like the show to be a surprise do not read any further.

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A giant Christmas pudding explodes to reveal 3 Victorian storytellers who introduce us to the story of ‘A Christmas Carol’.

Scene 2

We meet Ebenezer Scrooge and his office clerk Bob Cratchit on Christmas eve. They are visited by Mr Stokes, a man who owes money to Scrooge. Mr Stokes asks for more time to be able to repay the loan as it’s Christmas but Scrooge refuses. Then two charity workers come looking for Christmas donations. Scrooge refuses to give them any money and they leave. Scrooge’s nephew Fred then pays them a visit to invite his uncle to Christmas lunch. His uncle refuses. Bob Cratchit then asks for Christmas Day off and Scrooge reluctantly says yes.

Scene 3

Bob Cratchit makes his way home from working spreading Christmas cheer in the streets. His merriment is interrupted when Scrooge also starts to make his way home shouting ‘Bah Humbug’ at all he meets. Scrooge eventually makes it to his own front door where he is briefly spooked by his door knocker which seems to turn into his old business partner Jacob Marley who died some many years earlier.

Scene 4

Still a little spooked from seeing the face of Jacob Marley, Scrooge firmly shuts his bedroom door and is about to get into bed when he begins to hear the ringing of lots of bells all at once. Jacob Marley then suddenly appears, wrapped in some chains. He tells Scrooge that he will be visited by three ghosts throughout the night who will show him the error of his mean-spirited ways. Scrooge doesn’t believe it and gets into bed.

Scene 5

As Scrooge sleeps, the clock strikes 1 o'clock and above Scrooge's bed the Ghost of Christmas Past. He dances on Scrooge's bed and introduces himself, telling Scrooge he is going to take him to see memories from his past. They fly off together.

Scene 6

They arrive at Scrooge's primary school from when he was a young boy. Scrooge sees his young sister Fan. The ghost reminds him how he promised he would never be mean like his father. We also learn that Fan is Fred's mother (Scrooge's nephew). The ghost and scrooge fly off into the night

Scene 7

They arrive as Scrooge's old workplace during their annual Christmas party. Scrooge recognizes Fezziwig, his old boss. The Ghost shows Scrooge how fun Fezziwig could make their Christmas parties with just a little bit of kindness. Scrooge starts to think he should have done the same for Bob Cratchit. They once again fly off into the night.

Scene 8

They arrive at an ice-skating rink and see Belle, a woman that Scrooge once loved. He sees his young self propose to Belle. Scrooge begs the ghost to be able to speak to Belle but the ghost tells him that she cannot hear him. They fly off again into the night.

Scene 9

They arrive at Fan's house. She is very unwell and dying. Scrooge sees a younger version of himself promise to Fan that he will look after Fred. Scrooge is left feeling very sad for how mean he has been to Fred. The ghost and Scrooge fly off once again into the night.

Scene 10

The ghost takes Scrooge to see his last conversation with Belle. It's Christmas Eve and young scrooge comes back from work late. Belle says that Scrooge is now just obsessed with making money and not spending time with her. She gives him back her engagement ring and says she never wants to see him again. Scrooge says he can't take seeing any more memories from his past as they are making him too sad. The ghost takes him back to his house.

Scene 11

The narrators tell us that Scrooge is now soundly sleeping and that it is time for the interval.

ACT TWO

Scene 1

The narrators introduce the second half and tells us that it's five to 1 in the morning. Scrooge is asleep in his bed awaiting the next ghost to arrive. The clock strikes 1.

Scene 2

Scrooge meets the Ghost of Christmas Present, a giant Christmas tree. He brings onto stage a Christmas sleigh pulled by his reindeer. The ghost tells him that he has places to take Scrooge and things to show him. They climb aboard the sleigh and fly off into the night.

Scene 3

On the streets of London the ghost shows Scrooge a man and woman arguing. After sprinkling some magical Christmas cheer on them they apologise and make-up. Scrooge asks whether the ghost's magic The ghost tells him it works on anyone willing to change their ways. He tells Scrooge they're off to see another family.

Scene 4

They pass Bob Cratchit and his son Tiny Tim singing a song together on the street.

Scene 5

At Bob Cratchit's house. The ghost tells Scrooge he has come to bless Bob Cratchit's house with the spirit of Christmas. There Scrooge witnesses how happy the family are even with so little. He asks the ghost whether Tiny Tim will survive. The ghost replies that if things remain as they are he will. Scrooge is said to hear this.

Scene 6

The ghost shows two miners underground who are exchanging Christmas presents. Even though they have small Christmas presents and not much else, the ghosts wants to show Scrooge that you don't need 'things' to be happy at Christmas, you just need kindness.

Scene 7

The ghost takes Scrooge to a lighthouse in the middle of the sea. There he sees the men that work there singing a cheery Christmas song. The ghost reminds Scrooge that although these men may be far from home and their families, they too can still have Christmas cheer.

Scene 8

The ghost shows Scrooge his nephew Fred preparing for Christmas, putting up decorations. Together they start playing in game in which they have to try and guess what each other are thinking of by a series of clues. As part of the game they describe Scrooge as an ‘unwanted creature’. Scrooge feels saddened by this. Scrooge asks the ghost how he can make things better? The ghost tells Scrooge that his time with him is over and he must go.

Scene 9

Scrooge meets the Ghost of Christmas Future. A giant spider like creature which towers above him. The Ghost does not speak but gestures to Scrooge to follow him.

Scene 10/11

The ghost shows him two bankers discussing the possessions of a dead man. The bankers laugh and joke about the dead man, saying that no one ever cared about him anyway. Scrooge soon realises that they are talking about him and feels sad.

Scene 12

The ghost takes Scrooge to Mr Stokes house, the man who owed money to Scrooge at the beginning of the play. Scrooge sees Mr Stokes tell Mrs Stokes that Scrooge is dead and that they no longer owe him money. They rejoice in Scrooge's death as they are debt free.

Scene 13

At Bob Cratchit's house, the ghost shows Scrooge Bob and Mrs Cratchit mourning the death of Tiny Tim. Scrooge becomes confused and fearful as to whether these things have already happened or are the future. He asks the ghost but the ghost does not respond.

Scene 14

The ghost shows Scrooge a gravestone. When wiping away the snow Scrooge realizes it is his gravestone. He begins to as the ghost whether it is too late to change his mean ways, as he thinks about what all three ghosts have shown him. He promises to keep Christmas is heart forever and stop being mean to people. As he does so the ghost disappears and Scrooge falls into the grave.

Scene 15

Scrooge wakes up in his bed. It's morning. He realizes that he is alive and well. He says that he will keep his promise and will change his mean ways. He calls out of the window to a young boy in the street and gives him money to go and buy the biggest and most expensive turkey he can find. He then leaves his house.

Scene 16

On the street Scrooge meets the charity men that visited him the previous day. He gives them £1,000. Fred bumps into Scrooge on the street and Scrooge asks whether he can come for Christmas lunch. Fred it delighted and they dance.

Scene 17

It is now Boxing Day and Scrooge arrives extra early at work hoping to catch Bob Cratchit. Scrooge tells Bob he is going to triple his wages. He also apologises to Bob for being so mean to him over the years. Tiny Tim enters and tells us that Scrooge became like an uncle to him after that.

Scene 18

Together as their characters the company sing 'Joy to the World'.

Moments you might want to know about

Noises

There are a couple of moments in the first and second half which are a little bit louder than others. They are listed below. It's ok to cover your ears at these points. We have told you below which lines they happen after.

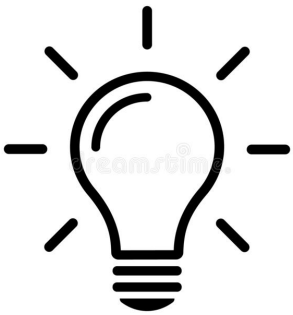
Opening of show - use of pyrotechnic

In the very first scene three narrators emerge from a giant Christmas pudding. This is accompanied by a quick loud bang and a puff of smoke from a pyrotechnic. This last for just a second and you are welcome to cover your ears.

Scene 4 - Entrance of Jacob Marley

Accompanying the entrance of Jacob Marley are the loud sound of ringing bells and some other eerie sounds effects. This is in the opening of scene 4 after Scrooge says 'Bah humbug, I won't believe it'.

Lighting changes



There are a couple of moments where the lighting changes suddenly during the show. They are only very brief and don't last more than 20 seconds.

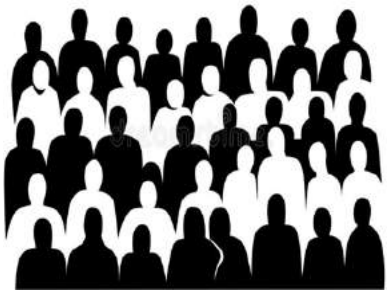
Scene 4 – the entrance of Jacob Marley

There is use of strobe lighting on the entrance of Jacob Marley. This happens when Scrooge is alone in his room. The sound of bells can be heard and the door frame into Scrooge's room begins to shake and suddenly stops. Scrooge slowly walks to the door and opens its and then there is strobe lighting and loud sound effects.

Scene 18 – the entrance of the Ghost of Christmas Future

After the Ghost of Christmas Present leaves in the wheelie bin Scrooge is left alone on stage. There is a sudden blackout of lights followed by strobe lighting before the Ghost of Christmas Future is revealed. This last about 5 seconds in total. You are welcome to cover your eyes at this moment.

Audience Interaction



There are two moments of audience interaction during the show. The actors stay on the stageand do not come out into the audience.

Scene 5 – Boy Scrooge at School

The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge back to see his old school. At the beginning of the scene the performers ask a person to join them on stage to help with the scene. The performers ask for a volunteers and will not pick you if you do not want to come up on stage.

Scene 6 – Fezziwig's Christmas Party

The Ghost of Christmas Past also takes Scrooge back to see his place of work from when his was a young man. The performers ask for volunteers to come up onto to stage to be people at Fezziwig's Christmas party. The performers will not pick you if you do not want to come up on stage.

Haze

Haze, also known as light smoke, is used at various points during the performance. It is always very subtle and will not harm you.