

# ***The Night before Christmas***

## **Relaxed Performance Pack**

A Polka Theatre and Royal & Derngate, Northampton production

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***The Night before Christmas*** is inspired by Clement Clarke Moore's classic poem. The play focuses on the idea of Christmas spirit and the journey to find it again amongst the difficult realities of life. The story is set during a house move, where 'Amber' has recently moved in with her 'Grandad' during the festive holiday season. It is not clear how they ended up in this living situation, but it is clear that this is a time that the family needs to come together and support one another.

Amber is a witty young girl aged "six and three quarters", as well as being a huge Christmas reindeer enthusiast, but this year she seems to have misplaced her Christmas spirit. Grandad is very happy to have Amber around during the festive season, however 'Auntie Mina' points out that he has also lost his Christmas spirit. They are both hugely lacking enthusiasm during what should be the most magical season of all.

On Christmas Eve Amber encounters a very unexpected guest, 'Blitzen', one of Santa's infamous reindeers. Amber is delighted to meet a *real* reindeer and already feels as if her Christmas wishes have all come true. Much like Grandad and Amber, Blitzen is experiencing his own life dramas and he is feeling rather negative about his placement in the reindeer line up. Amber sees an opportunity and takes it upon herself to find Grandad's and her own lost Christmas spirit, whilst also helping Blitzen find his. She believes this is the only way to save Christmas.

Puppetry is a key feature in the play and will support the story telling by taking the audience to various exciting environments. Amber and Blitzen will *teleport* to different places on their search to find the missing Christmas spirit. Here is where the puppetry will take place as they transform items of set and use props to re-create the new environments that they wish to find themselves in. The puppets will be operated by the actors.

***The Night before Christmas*** will take the audience on a unique journey to rediscover the Christmas spirit which appears to have gone missing this year. But can Amber and Blitzen find the missing Christmas spirit in time to save Christmas?

### Creative Team

Written by Hattie Naylor

Directed by Roman Stefanski

Designed by Kate Bunce

Music by Julian Butler

Lighting Design by Aaron Dootson

We hope you enjoy the show!

## The Location

When you get to Polka Theatre, this is what it looks like:



When you enter through the main entrance, to your left will be the Box Office and the Shop. Please feel free to browse the shop whilst you wait.

Box Office:





Shop:



When you enter through the main entrance, to your right will be the cafe. We serve hot and cold food, pastries, sweet treats, and hot and cold beverages.

Cafe:



Adventure Theatre: This is where the performance will take place. The seating is sold at 50% of its full capacity for the relaxed performance, therefore, the auditorium will not be full. House lights will remain on during the performance so the space will never be in complete darkness, and the volume of the show will be reduced.

The seats are not allocated which means you can choose which seat you would like to sit in – either on the blue benches or on the black carpeted floor in front of the benches.



Chill Out Space/ YC Chan Playden: This is first main space you will see in the main corridor. You can leave the theatre at any time to take a break in the YC Chan Playden and come back into the theatre when you are ready.



If you would like to learn more about Polka, please visit our website:

<https://polkatheatre.com/>

## COVID SAFETY

We take the safety of our audiences, staff and volunteers seriously and we want you to have confidence when coming to a Polka show.

- We ask that face masks be worn by everyone over the age of 12 inside our venues to help protect staff, performers and other audience members (unless exempt).
- We will continue to offer flexible ticketing under the updated 'See it Safely' kitemark (read more [here](#)) – the 'See it Safely' kitemark means a venue is Covid-secure and following the latest Government guidance for live arts events.
- There will continue to be an enhanced cleaning regime and hand sanitiser stations available.
- Our team will continue with regular lateral flow testing and will be wearing face masks or remain behind screens.
- We'll have the NHS Track & Trace available for you to check in, although this is no longer compulsory.
- We will ensure our spaces are well ventilated at all times.

### Covid Safety

Below are measures we have put in place to ensure the safety of everyone visiting Polka.



We have an enhanced cleaning regime and hand sanitiser stations.



All staff continue with regular lateral flow testing and will be wearing face masks while in venue.

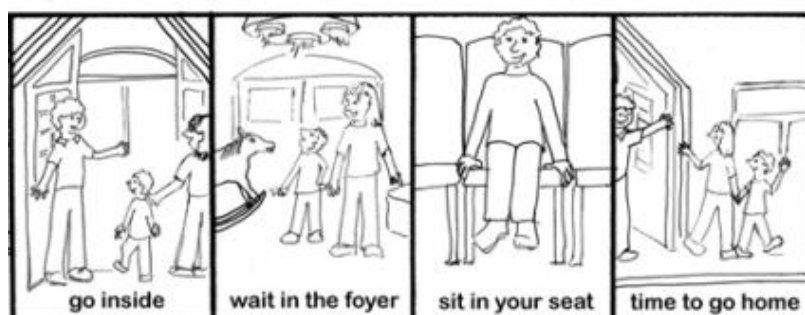


We will ensure our venue remains well ventilated at all times.



We ask that all visitors age 12+ wear face masks unless exempt.

Picture information strip- this is what you will do when you go inside:



To prepare you for your visit to **Polka Theatre** we have put together a synopsis - this is to help you to understand the story that you are about to see and prepare you for what to expect during the performance. The performance will last approximately 50 minutes.



## ***The Night before Christmas***

This heart-warming play consists of 2 actors and one of the actors will play more than one role. The actor playing more than one role will be changing costumes to represent their character change.

The actors will use props & puppets to recreate key moments in their story.

*The props are made for storytelling purposes and are not real.*

This is what the characters look like:

**Grandad**



**Amber July**



**Blitzen**



You will also hear the voice of one other character, 'Auntie Mina'. This voiceover will be pre-recorded and will be played through the speakers.



During the show, the actors might interact with you. This play has interactive moments, and you are welcome to respond to characters and laugh or smile.



During the show you might see something that makes you feel sad or scared. You are allowed to feel sad or scared, that is ok.

This is the performance space:

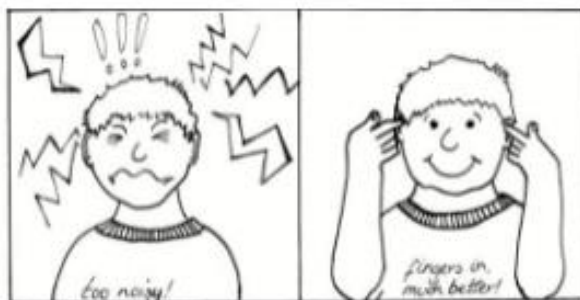


Set as you first see it:

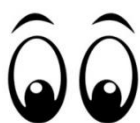
The scene is set in the living room of a flat. Amber has recently moved in with her Grandad so there are boxes of her stuff everywhere.

There is a sofa and a side table on the left-hand side of the stage, and a large window at the back of the set which is located slightly off centre to the left. On the right-hand side of the stage, there are lots of boxes stacked on furniture and to the far right of the set there is a Christmas tree with presents underneath it. The room looks very cluttered.





If you see this symbol, it means there will be a loud or unexpected noise and you can put your fingers in your ears.



If you see this symbol, it means there will be visual projections, or something visual happening on stage, this will aid with the story telling.



If you see this symbol, it means you will hear music or there will be a song.



If you see this symbol, it means there will be a change in lighting and you can cover your eyes.



If you see this symbol, it means you will hear a sound effect coming from the speakers.

### **Pre-show Intro**



*You will hear a pre-recorded voice over coming from the speakers. This is Santa Claus welcoming you to the theatre and informing you of some safety guidelines to adhere to.*

### **Scene 1. Part 1. The Night Before.**



It's Christmas Eve and Amber is feeling particularly grumpy. Auntie Mina calls and invites Amber and Grandad to spend Christmas with the family. It soon becomes clear that Amber and Grandad are not feeling the Christmas spirit this year as Amber does not want to go.



*(You will hear Auntie Mina's voice coming through the speakers. This is pre-recorded).*

### **Scene 1. Part 2. The Magical Thinking Place.**



Grandad attempts to understand why Amber is feeling so negative and takes Amber to *'the magical thinking place'* to find out.



It is soon time for bed and Grandad reads a section of Amber's favourite poem, 'TwasThe Night before Christmas' to help her fall asleep.



*There will be a lighting change when Grandad reads out the poem and the snowglobe will light up and sparkle.*

### **Scene 2. Part 1. Enter Blitzen.**



*You will hear music coming from behind the audience seating area. Blitzen the reindeer will enter from the back of the room playing loud grime music through his boombox. He sniffs around Amber's living room before making himself comfortable and falling asleep by the Christmas tree.*





## Scene 2. Part 2. You're a Reindeer!

Amber wakes up for Christmas and she is excited to see what Santa has left for her. Here she finds Blitzen asleep next to the false chimney. She wakes him up with excitement and tries to understand what he is doing there.

Blitzen is hesitant to explain but it soon becomes clear that he has also lost his Christmas spirit due to an incident that occurred last Christmas.



Glitter drops from the ceiling representing a text from Santa. *There will be x4 of these glitter messages in this scene and each one will be a different colour.*



## Scene 2. Part 3. Blitzen is in the magical thinking place.



In efforts to get Blitzen back with Santa and the other reindeers, Amber takes Blitzen to 'the magical thinking place' to think up a plan to find his Christmas spirit.

They try exchanging Christmas presents but this does not work. Amber realises the best way to find the missing Christmas spirit is to physically go out and find it.



Whilst Amber gets ready for the adventure, Blitzen accidentally breaks her precious snow globe that belonged to her mother. He claims he can fix this using his reindeer magic, but this does not work.

The pair then get ready to *teleport* to another location to find the missing spirit.

*Here Blitzen will speak out to the audience and ask 'if anyone believes in Christmas'. He will ask you to do reindeer hooves with your hands to help with the magic and send your Christmas spirit their way.*

### **Scene 3. Playground.**

*There will be a lighting change and a scene change to a playground. This will be a miniature playground created using props and the actors will use props to act out the scene.*

Amber and Blitzen try to find Amber's Christmas spirit at the playground and try out different activities to see if they can find it. The playground is completely empty with no other children playing, so they conclude that the Christmas spirit must not be there.



*Blitzen receives another glitter message from Santa.*



*Scene change back to the flat.*

*Blitzen will ask the audience to help with the magic and join in with reindeer hooves again before another scene change.*

### **Scene 4. The Chimney.**

*There will be a lighting change and scene change to the chimney where Blitzen got stuck. This will be a miniature version of the scenario and the actors will use puppet props to act out the scene.*

Blitzen recreates the moment he fell into the chimney to try and find his lost spirit. He re-enacts the scene moment by moment, but he still can't find his Christmas spirit.

Amber begins to feel sad about her snow globe which prompts Blitzen to try something else.



*Scene change back to the flat.*

*Blitzen will ask the audience to help with the magic and join in with reindeer hooves again before another scene change.*

### **Scene 5. Part 1. Elves workshop.**

*There will be a lighting change on the set and in the audience along with a scene change to the Elves workshop. This will be a miniature version of the workshop with a video projection of snow on the mini window and an effect of smoke coming from the tiny chimney. The actors will interact with the workshop set and use props throughout the scene.*

Amber thinks they are at the workshop to find Blitzen's missing spirit, however, Blitzen brought them here to fix the snow globe, which he fails to do.







*Blitzen sings the Elves mending song to see if that works instead. This is followed by another glitter message from Santa.*



### **Scene 5. Part 2. We've Found it!**



*In one final attempt to find the lost Christmas spirit, Amber and Blitzen revisit 'the magical thinking place'.*

Here they realise that all of the places they visited were empty and begin to understand that Christmas spirit is found when we are all together.



At this time, they celebrate their discovery and rock out (*the lighting will flash in these 'rock out' moments*).



*Blitzen receives another glitter text from Santa.*

*Before returning to Santa to save Christmas, Blitzen asks the audience for magical assistance one final time.*



## Scene 6. Back at the flat.



*Lighting and scene change back to the flat. There will be a video projection on the window of a sleigh crossing the night sky with Amber July on the back waving.*

Grandad enters the room on Christmas morning and catches a glimpse of Amber flying on Santa's sleigh. He is very confused.



Amber wakes up from the sofa extremely excited to share the news with Grandad that she has found the missing Christmas spirit – it's at Auntie Mina's! They call Mina to share the good news.

She then realises that Blitzen never fixed her Mum's snow globe and begins to feel a little sad again. Grandad looks at the snow globe to fix it but realises it isn't broken - Blitzen fixed it after all!



*They both proceed to read out the poem 'Twas the Night before Christmas' on the magical Christmas day. They will use props as they perform the poem together.*



The End.



The show has now finished. At the end of the show everyone will clap their hands, which is to show the actors and production team that they have enjoyed the show.



Please stay seated after the applause as the actors will bring out a miniature version of Father Christmas and his reindeers. As this happens, it will begin to snow in the theatre (carpeted areas are the main areas where the snow will fall).

Thank you for coming - we hope you enjoyed the show!

**Polka is reopening! Discover our wonderfully refurbished venue.**

Whether you're seeing a show or getting creative in a workshop, relaxing in the Café, or exploring our free-to-access indoor and outdoor play spaces, we can't wait to welcome you back!

Connect with us on social media [@polkatheatre](#)



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