

POLKA

THE NUTCRACKER

A MAGICAL,
MUSICAL
QUEST



Social Story

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Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

The Nutcracker

A festive, magical quest for the whole family.

When squabbling siblings Clara and Fritz receive a mysterious Nutcracker toy from their flamboyant Aunty Drosselmeyer, Clara is certain that she doesn't want her accident-prone younger brother anywhere near it!

But with rumours of an evil many-headed Mouse King trying to ruin Christmas in their new family home, Clara might just need the help of Fritz to save the day.

Please note, this performance contains flashing lights, the use of haze, audience interactions and scenes that young children may find scary.

Creative Team

Directed by **Alex Scott**
Set and Costume Designed by **Sam Wilde**
Lighting Designed by **Joshua Pharo**
Sound Designed by **Sharon Tsang**

Cast

Clare Beresford
Dominic Conway
Lakeisha Lynch Stevens
Shamira Turner
Caroline Partridge

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



Café

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



Main Theatre

This is where the performance will take place. To get there, you will go up a set of stairs between the Box Office and the Play Den. The Polka Staff will show you where to go, and how to get to your seat.

This show offers a relaxed environment meaning you can move around the space, make noise or leave the auditorium at any time.

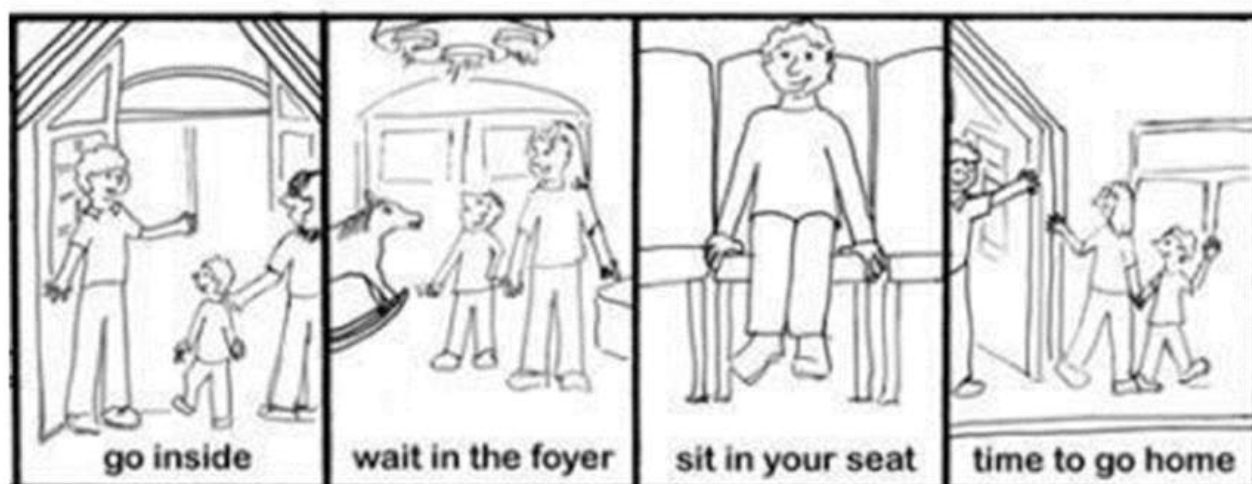


Chill Out Space

This is located outside of the Main Theatre upstairs. You can leave the theatre at any time and come back in when you are ready. There will be a TV monitor which will relay the live action happening on stage, so you don't have to miss anything.



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 1 hour and 30mins, with an interval.

Please note, we have ear defenders available at Box Office, should you need a pair.

The Nutcracker

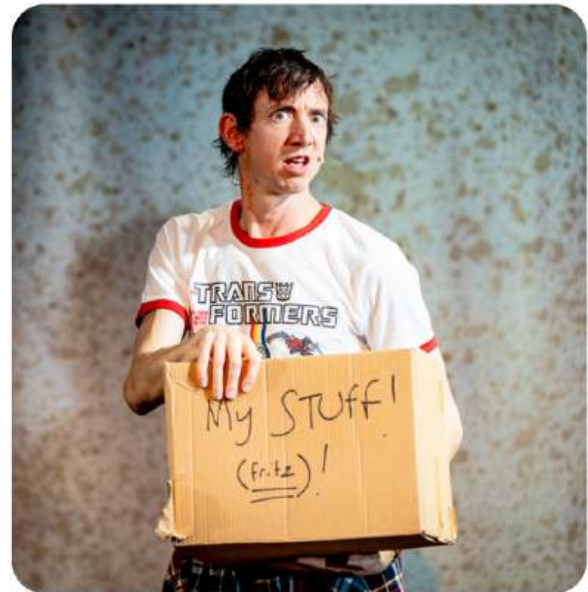
This show has 5 actors and all of the actors will play more than one role. They will change costumes to represent their change in character.

This is what the characters look like:

Clara



Fritz



Mouse King



Sugar Plum Fairy



Aunty Drosselmeyer



Dad



Narrator



Elder Mouse



Puppet Clara



In one scene Clara will be played by a puppet, to show that she has shrunk.

The Mouse Band



This is the performance space and set as you first see it:



As you enter there is Christmas music playing at a low level.

There are festoon lights throughout the auditorium, some will be on the ceiling above you and the walls around you.

The stage has lots of large drapes hanging up and is covered with cardboard boxes at each side.

There are also instruments on the stage that the actors will use. They are decorated with blue tinsel.

At the front of the stage are blocks of pretend cheese which are all lit up.

There are some curtains at the back on the stage which will open throughout the show for actors to enter through. This will be called 'the portal'.



During the show, the actors will interact with you. You are welcome to respond to characters performance, sing along and laugh or smile at any time.



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.



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 projections, or something visual happening onstage that will help with the storytelling.



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



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



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 the audience may clap, sing and dance. You can join in, too!

If you are watching our designated Relaxed Performance, some lights will be reduced or removed. The characters will not approach any audience members.

Pre-show - The Mouse Band



As some of the audience are coming in, before the show actually starts, the five actors will enter as the mouse band and introduce themselves to the audience. You can respond if they ask questions.



The band will play well-known Christmas songs. The instruments they will use are a xylophone, a guitar, a tambourine, bells, a shaker and an accordion. You can sing, clap and dance along if you would like to.



The band will then put their instruments away as the show is about to start...



Prologue



One of the mice will begin to narrate the story and the other actors will use cardboard boxes to help create different images onstage. The stage will get a little darker and the cheese lights at the front of the stage will pulse. The sounds of a clock chime will play when 'Big Ben' is mentioned.



When the narrator talks of the 'dilapidated house' one of the other mice will kick and punch a small cardboard house to make it look 'dilapidated' and old.



A car will appear onstage through 'the portal'. It is made of cardboard boxes, but it will have real lights as its headlights. It will be accompanied by car driving sound effects.





As the family arrive at their house, thunder and rain sound effects will play and the lights will change to blue.



As they open the door, sounds effects of a key and a creaking door will play.

Scene 1 - The House



As Clara and Fritz explore the house, they will make their way down into the audience, near the front, left of the stage.



When Clara and Fritz start talking to everyone in the audience, the lights in the auditorium will come up a little, so they can see you all. You can respond to what they're saying. Anytime the actors talk to the audience, the lights will come up in the auditorium.



When the family start moving their boxes from the car to the house, a dramatic version of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker theme will play, it will get darker on stage and the lights will pulse.





The actors will pick up boxes that spell out 'The Nutcracker' in letters that are lit up.



Once the family have finished unpacking, the stage will become lighter and calmer a version of the Nutcracker theme will play underneath the scene.



When the family enter Clara and Fritz's room, a lightbulb hanging at the back of the stage will flicker. The stage will also get lighter again.



When Clara introduces her toy, 'Princess Roaress', superhero music will play in the background and as Fritz introduces his toy, 'Fireosaurus', the lights will turn yellow.





Once their Dad re-enters the room, the Superhero music will stop and the softer Nutcracker music will return. The lights will return to their neutral state.



As the dad talks about not expecting visitors, a doorbell sound effect will play.

Scene 2 - The Visitor



Aunty Drosselmeyer will enter through 'the portal' and, after a couple of lines, she will throw sweets on the stage.



When Aunty Drosselmeyer says Clara and Fritz have a 'sharing present', her voice will echo.





As Aunty Drosselmeyer tells the story of how she found the Nutcracker, the background music will get louder, the lights will change to purple and there will be a 'swoosh' sound effect.



During the storytelling moment, paper will be thrown on stage as snow, tinsel will also be dropped on stage to represent magic and Aunty Drosselmeyer's voice will echo.



As Clara and Fritz fight over the Nutcracker, a dramatic version of Carol of the Bells will play and increase in volume during the scene.



After the Nutcracker snaps, Dad will re-enter through 'the portal'. When he exits, thunder and rain sound effects will play again.



Scene 3 - The Nutcracker



As Clara fixes the Nutcracker, the lights will get dimmer. When she adds the final splinter, the Nutcracker itself will light up. The lights will change to blue and pulse (including the festoons). The Nutcracker will start to shake in Clara's hands and the dramatic Nutcracker music will return.





The stage will get darker and 'the portal' will open to reveal the Sugar Plum Fairy, who has a pink light-up wand. At this point the lights will turn pink.



As the Sugar Plum Fairy leaves, the Mouse King will enter through 'the portal'. The lights will change to red and the dramatic music will return. There will also be haze.



Clara will run and hide from the Mouse King near the audience on the left of the auditorium.



The Mouse King will summon his heads and they will appear as puppets, controlled by two of the actors. They will have glowing red eyes and will be wearing ruffs around their necks, similar to the Mouse King. It is okay if you find this moment scary.



As the scene continues, the dramatic Carol of the Bells music will become louder and the lights on stage and in the auditorium will pulse.



When Clara gets captured she will back away through ‘the portal’ and it will close behind her. The lights will become brighter and Christmas music will start to play. This is the end of the first half and there will now be an interval.

Interval



Christmas music will play throughout the interval.

Part 2



When the second half starts, there will be a little bit of haze and the Mouse Band will come back onstage. They will sing one song before heading back into the story. During this the lights will be pink. You can sing-a-long again if you want to.





As the narrator starts telling the story again, the lights will turn blue and the festoons in the auditorium will be multi-coloured. Synth music will play throughout the scene.



Clara will pop out from the trap door at the front of the stage with a small puppet version of herself.





When Fritz comes onstage looking for Clara, he will ask the audience if you've seen her. You can shout out, point and respond to him if you like.



When Clara and Fritz are talking about working together to stop the Mouse King, the Superhero music will play and the lights will turn red and orange.



As the Narrator talks about Fritz getting 'smaller', her voice will echo.



When the Nutcracker makes Fritz small, the festoons will pulse blue and green.

Scene 4 - The Cheesy Five



The Elder Mouse will enter this scene through 'the portal'. There will be haze and the Elder Mouse's voice will echo. Choral music will play underneath.



As the Elder Mouse begins to tell the tale of the Cheesy Five and the Mouse King, a 'swoosh' sound effect will play and the Elder Mouse's voice will echo again. Shadow puppets will appear on the curtain at the back of the stage, depicting moments from the story the Elder Mouse is telling. The Carol of the Bells dramatic music will play underneath.



When the mouse trap 'snaps' in the story, the lights will turn red.



As the Elder Mouse talks of 'terrible magic' there will be thunder sound effects and the lights will turn blue. The Mouse King with his heads will be made out of shadow puppets. The eyes of the head will still be red. It's okay if you find this moment scary.



The Elder Mouse will give Clara and Fritz their toy sword and shield to help stop the Mouse King. The choral music will play again.



Scene 5 - The Quest



On the first part of their quest, Clara and Fritz meet the 'Desert of Dust', who will enter through the portal and the lights will turn yellow. Wind sound effects and dramatic music will play



When Fritz uses his shield against the Desert of Dust, it will light-up red.



Clare and Fritz will then run up the left stairs next to the audience.



As the Mouse King enters, the lights will go red again and dramatic music will play. His 'heads' will also come on stage around him.



The Mouse King will start singing, there will be a spotlight on him. The disco ball in the auditorium will spin (if you look up you will be able to see it) and the festoons will turn green and pink.



Towards the end of the song, the lights on stage will turn red.





Clara and Fritz will re-enter via the steps to the right of the audience and the lights will turn blue.



As the Spider enters, the lights will turn pink onstage and a projection of a giant cobweb will appear on the curtains at the back of the stage.



As Fritz goes to defeat the Spider, the dramatic Carol of the Bells music will play.



After the Spider has gone, Clara and Fritz will re-enter through the portal. There will be haze and the lights will turn green.





They will be chased by a 'giant poo' puppet and the lights will flash.



As Fritz falls to his knees, the lights will turn red.



When Clara pulls out her Sword of Justice, the Superhero music will play, the lights onstage will turn yellow and the festoons will turn pink.



Soon the Mouse King's heads capture Fritz. While this is happening, the dramatic Carol of the Bells music will play and the lights will turn red and pulse.





As Clara is left all alone, the lights will turn blue and soft pipe music will start playing. Clara will talk to everyone in the audience, so feel free to respond to her if you want to.



As Clara enters the Mouse King's lair, the lights will turn pink.

Scene 6 - The Showdown



As soon as the Mouse King enters the stage with his heads, the lights will turn red and the dramatic music will play again.



The Mouse King will sing another song, for this the lights will turn blue.



As Clara enters to try and stop the Mouse King, the lights will turn to red again and the festoons will pulse, red and white. The Carol of the Bells dramatic music will play again.



When Clara uses her Sword of Justice against the Mouse Heads, a 'swoosh' sound effect will play and the lights will turn yellow.



As Clara get stuck in the trap with Fritz, the lights will go back to red. But, when they are able to break free of the trap, there will be a bright pulse of light.



When Clara stops the Mouse Heads, another 'swoosh' sound effect will play and the lights will turn yellow.



When the Mouse King picks up the sword, the 'swoosh' sword sound effect will play again and as he gets closer to Clara and Fritz, the lights will turn red, with a brighter light on the Mouse King specifically.





When Clara and Fritz finally convince the Mouse King he is still good, the lights will change to pink and purple and Christmas music will play in the background.



The sound of a clock chiming midnight will play as the Mouse King exits.



The Sugar Plum Fairy will return with a magical sound effect.



As she works her magic to sort out Christmas, the magical swoosh will play again and the lights will pulse.



As Clara and Fritz return to normal size, the lights will turn yellow.



When Clara and Fritz realize the Sugar Plum Fairy has used her magic to decorate for Christmas, the portal will open to reveal a Christmas tree, presents and multi-coloured Christmas lights.

Epilogue



As the Narrator comes on to finish the story, the lights will go back to pink and soft music will play.



When the Narrator talks about the magic the Nutcracker worked on the Mouse King, magical swoosh sound effect will play once again, followed by blue pulsing lights.



The story will conclude with the Mouse Band bowing and then a blackout.





However, the Mouse Band will be back for one final Christmas song! The lights will turn pink and they will collect their instruments. During the song, the lights will pulse lots of different colours and the disco ball will shine again. Feel free to sing, clap and dance along if you'd like to.



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.

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

Discover Polka Theatre

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, there's something for everyone at Polka.

Connect with us on social media [@polkatheatre](https://www.instagram.com/polkatheatre)



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