

Jack and the Beanstalk Audio Description Notes

ACT ONE

Good afternoon / evening ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls and welcome to this Qdos entertainment production of Jack and the Beanstalk, produced by Jonathan Kiley, and directed by Ken Alexander. There is a five piece orchestra playing eight instruments and led by Shaun Critten on the keyboard.

Act 1 will last for approximately 70 minutes followed by a 20 minute interval . My name is Pauline and I will be describing the action in the 9 scenes of Act 1, and Act 2 will be described by my colleague Sylvia and her programme notes will start 5 minutes before curtain up.

The word pantomime originally came from Roman times when performers would express their meaning through gestures accompanied by music. Now it is a theatrical entertainment, mainly for children, with music, topical jokes and slapstick comedy based on a fairy tale or nursery story.

Synopsis

We join the villagers in the little fictional village of St Mary's on the Turn and learn they are being held to ransom over taxes by the Giant and his henchman, Fleshcreep.

They are a happy band but they do not have the cash to pay the Giant and they need a hero to fight and overcome him and end his reign of terror.

Characters and costumes

Giant Blunderbore, 3D image.

Princess Apricot, wears a tight gold peplum bodice over a puff sleeved blouse topping a full knee length skirt. Her long golden hair is adorned with an Ann Boleyn style headress. She is a sweet naive girl looking for love.

Jack Trott, wears velvet brown trousers, a hip length patchwork suede waistcoat over a full sleeved shirt and finished with knee length black boots. He is a brash brave hero

Dame Trot, has a red striped waisted dress covered with a full white apron, white tights and matching ankle boots; the outfit is finished with a high crowned mob cap over black curls.

Fleshcreep, sports a dastardly moustache and wears the obligatory black. A tattered edge cloak covers a black slash sleeved waistcoat over a black shirt and black velvet trousers and black boots. He carries a whip and wears a tricornered hat. He is evil personified.

Spirit of the Beans A glamorous giggly magical crowned figure in gold lame edged with down. She carries a large wand.

King Crumble, A red ermine edged cloak is worn over a gold waistcoat and white shirt and a white jabot at his throat. He wears pantaloons and buckled shoes. He is a doting father and wants the best for his kingdom.

Simple Simon, A baggy spotted shirt is worn under a yellow waistcoat trimmed with red and he has on red trousers. Simon is the joker but loyal to his brother and mother.

Day-Zee the cow, a brown and white large uddered cow with huge brown eyelashed eyes and a smiley mouth

Scenes

1. The Prologue

A wide curved canopy of opaque glass supported by a metal fretwork, now illuminated with a green light; frames the softly illustrated backdrop of a castle in the sky, shedding light on the village and lighthouse below. Beside the village is a huge beanstalk curling up to the castle. Two iron fretwork porches are on either side of the canopy and are topped with tiled roofs and a small chimney. The words 'Jack and the Beanstalk' are emblazoned above the beanstalk on the left. The sea can be glimpsed in the distance. Red lights will flash and there will be thunder and lightning to herald Fleshcreep's appearances and silver fireworks for the Spirit.

2. The village

The male and female dancers open the action. The girls wear full knee length skirts with peplum waistcoats and the boys, full sleeved shirts with hip length waistcoats over pantaloons. Elizabethan panelled houses are set higgledy piggledy at the back. A small house complete with stable door and a heart shaped window is on the left with a flower laden trellis outside it. A turreted house is on the right and it has a small conservatory at the front. The characters use a narrow central flight of steps to descend to the ground. Princess Apricot is discussing Giant Blunderbore and his evil henchman Fleshcreep (who appears in a cloud of smoke.) Jack is introduced and we are aware that he and Apricot are attracted to each other. We also meet Simple Simon astride a dairy tricycle which holds three milk churns.

3. On the way to the Garden Party

A softly illustrated backdrop depicts a farm with an old gipsy caravan on the right and a barn behind with a ploughed field seen through a five bar gate on the left. Fleshcreep and the Spirit taunt each other before the King and Apricot appear to talk about the coming garden party. The king has shed his cloak and the Princess is in a white dress with soft pink ribbons.

4. The King's Garden Party

A grand building with arched windows and wide balustrade stairs set in the centre. Market barrows are set on either side of these. The children stand at the back clutching balloons whilst the villagers dance and celebrate but the Princess is captured by a disguised Fleshcreep.

5. On the way from the Garden party

Simon and his Mum walk past the gipsy caravan and farm and are discussing how to rescue the princess.

6. Outside Dame Trot's cottage

Simon, Jack and their mum are going to sell Day-Zee.

7. A lonely Road

A seascape of distant cliffs on the right with a path leading through a wooded area down to a beach. The cow is sold to a man dressed in a smock and tatty straw hat, but he is not what he seems.

8. Inside Dame Trot's cottage

We are inside the cottage. A platform supports two single beds set on either side of a set of stairs leading to them. A rocking chair is on the ground floor and a pot bellied stove warms

the whole house. Simon and Jack are sent to bed and the Dame dozes when the Spirit appears with some beautiful fluorescent butterflies.

9. The following morning.

Outside the cottage the beans have sprouted and it is enormous and reaches up into the sky.

Cast

Princess Apricot Michelle Francis understudied Glinda and Nessarose in Wicked at the Apollo Victoria Theatre London.

Simple Simon Bobby Davro is a high profile performer in television, panto and summer shows, corporate entertainment and award presentations and late night cabaret.

Fleshcreep John Challis is best known for Boycie in Only Fools and Horses but he has appeared in hundreds of other TV shows over the last 50 years.

Jack Trott Chico rose to fame from the X Factor and his first single knocked Madonna off the top of the charts.

Dame Trot Jeffrey Holland, is best known for Spike in HI-de-Hi and the footman in You Rang M' Lord? And as Mr Parkin in Oh Mr Beeching.

King Crumble Roy North presented The Basil Brush show in the 70s. He has recently toured with a Halifax based company, Northern BroadSides performing Shakespeare.

Spirit of the beans Rosie Glossop is an experienced vocalist, singing in many theatre shows and Royal Variety Shows.

ACT TWO

Welcome back, my name is Sylvia and I am your audio describer for Act Two. There are flashing lights, thunder claps and flares during the rest of the Panto, I will give you fair warning.

We have to find out if Jack can rescue Princess Apricot from the Giant who lives, at the top of the Beanstalk, in Cloudland.

Scene 1

Amongst the clouds are clusters of large flower heads. The petals form scary looking faces with penetrating eyes.

Fleshcreep has a number of Guardians with him. His girls are dressed in figure hugging black shiny cat suits. On their heads a large metallic flower, each petal a different colour. Red, yellow, green and blue like a toy windmill. The men, carrying flaming torches, wear close fitting gold and black spiky helmets with half masks. Their bold striped black and gold jumpsuits are skin tight. They all dance around our villain who looks even scarier in his black cloak and tricornered hat.

Jack, The King, Dame Trot and Simon have reached the top of the Beanstalk but now they have to decide how to rescue the Princess.

Scene 2

Fleshcreep has a "special guard" at the entrance to Blunderbores home which the "chosen one" and his friends will have to get past.

Scene 3

We are at the entrance to the castle. It's a very old building made of stone with a moat which one crosses via a drawbridge. It has towers and battlements, slit windows and wooden planks protruding out of the brickwork. Thick stemmed vines cover the castle walls. Can the four of them find a way in?

Scene 4

Meanwhile our villain is taking Princess Apricot to his master.

Scene 5

The kitchen is enormous, covered in a thick layer of dust, and cobwebs everywhere. The cupboards, table and chair are so big it makes one feel very small. Together they creep in hoping to rescue Princess Apricot without waking the sleeping Giant!

Scene 6

An old fashioned musical routine led by Simple Simon wearing a brown dustcoat and a flat cap. He is carrying a green bucket. He is joined by Jack as a boxer, red shorts and gloves.

Then the King as a policeman with truncheon.

Followed by two young men in football strips (Argyle and Exeter).

Dame Trot in a cerise scallop hem skirt and bustle. The long sleeved fitted jacket trimmed with green velveteen and matching pompoms. Her black pigtailed poking out under a flat green fabric hat with an old fashioned metal tea kettle perched on top! Her large red handbag and black button boots completes the outfit. She is carrying a large pair of scissors.

Finally a young man dressed in a lilac leotard, a large false bosom and pink tutu, carrying a wand.

Scene 7

We are outside Dame Trot's cottage. The beanstalk has grown so big it disappears into the fluffy white clouds. Dame Trot wonders where Jack is. Then of course there is the evil Fleshcreep. Will our hero rid the village of this villain?

Finale (fi'na..li)

We are now in a brightly lit large hall, spanning a flight of stairs is a magnificent three - hinged arch. Two large urns, full of colourful exotic blooms, stand either side at the bottom of the wide staircase.