THE GINGERBREAD MAN

The Drum

Saturday 5th January 2019 @ 3pm

Good afternoon and welcome to the Drum for this relaxed performance of Stuff and Nonsense's delightful production of the classic tale, The Gingerbread man. Directed by Niki

 McCretton, with music by Matt Huxley and puppetry by Holly Miller.

I am Veryan and will be describing what is taking place during the show, but first I am going to tell you what the sets, characters and costumes look like.

This show cleverly combines live action from just two performers, Duncan Taylor and Chloe Mantripp who take the parts of many different people and manipulate the magical puppets.

This is the adventure of a deliciously smelling and very brave Gingerbread Man. A biscuit who has to use his wits to escape anyone who might find him rather too tasty for his own good. Will he be faster than a goose? Can he cross a river without getting wet and soggy, and can a gingerbread man really travel the world? Well, over the next exciting hour, we shall see.

 As the audience take their seats, the set is on full view. In the centre of the stage is a raised platform - this slopes down into ramps at either end rather like a platform at railway station. Several large green travelling trunks and old brown leather suitcases are stacked on the platform with more trunks and cases in differing sizes on the ground on either side. A long line of cases stand on the ground in front of the platform. These suitcases and trunks are multi-purpose; their lids flip down turning the interior of the cases into the different locations on The Gingerbread Man's journey, these include a case containing cooking ingredients, another turns into an oven, while a dome lidded trunk becomes a goose pen. Here The Gingerbread Man has a close encounter with four handsome white geese who peer out from under the trunk's lid. Like all geese, they have very long necks ending in pointed faces with black eyes and wide brown beaks. Another creature the Gingerbread man will meet at the farm is a hairy goat called Nathan.

The ramp on the right turns into a church filled with a puppet vicar and choir, while the ramp on the left swivels forward to reveal the stage curtains of a nightclub.

 Hanging floor to ceiling behind the platform on the right is a very large rope climbing net, whilst stacked behind the net is an assortment of props. Draped through the net is a shepherd's smock. Other important props include an old fashioned gramophone with a 78 record on the turntable and a huge fluted horn; also, later in the story a long ladder will be produced and slotted into the stage so that it stands upright.

Hanging overhead in the auditorium are masses of multi-coloured light bulbs.

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The first character we meet is the station porter played by Chloe - she is dressed in black trousers with a loose black jacket, black boots and a black cap on her head - her long dark brown hair hangs down her back in a long plait. Next, we meet the Gingerbread Man, played by Duncan - he wears a brown tweed three-piece suit with a white shirt, red tie, sandy coloured suede shoes and a hat perched on his gingery coloured hair. He is young with a friendly face and sports a sandy beard. Duncan will also play the farmer when he will pull on a yellow shepherds smock and Chloe will transform from the porter into the farmers wife, Nelly by pulling on a long black velvet dress. Later on, she will become a cunning fox, when she will be dressed in red and black. The puppet fox is made from a red fox mask and bushy red tail.

On his travels, the Gingerbread Man will have to cross a wide river and visit many places including a busy city where he'll encounter a policeman, news seller and even visit a barber's shop. The city is created by suitcases piled up to form buildings, the cases now with glowing windows set into them. When his travels take him worldwide, the different places he visits are indicated by suitcases with silhouetted images of the countries, like the Eiffel tower for Paris and the Taj Mahal for India.

When we first see the gingerbread man biscuit, he is about 12" high, ginger in colour and slightly fluffy with dark chocolate button eyes and three purple jelly buttons down his front. When describing the action, I will refer to him as 'Ginger'.

During the show, the actors will sometimes talk to the audience, asking you questions, so please join in, and enjoy the fun.