

THE NUTCRACKER AND THE MOUSE KING VISUAL GUIDE

Cornerstone is association with Goblin proudly present

The Nutcracker and the mouse king

by E.T.A. Hoffmann



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CORNERSTONE ARTS | ENTERTAINMENT | CULTURE
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This visual resource is an insight into Cornerstone Art Centre in association with Goblin Theatre's production of The Nutcracker and the mouse king. It is suitable for children with an Autistic Spectrum Condition, sensory and communication disorders and those with learning disabilities.

ABOUT THE SHOW

How long does the play last?

Act 1: 50 mins

Interval: 20 mins.

Act 2: 30 mins.

Total running time: 1 hour 40 mins.

If you need to leave the theatre at any time to go to the toilet or if you need a break then you are welcome to do so and our lovely ushers will be on hand to assist you.

What is the play about?

On Christmas Eve, Maria and her family find themselves in a dusty old toy shop. When everyone goes to bed the toys in the shop burst to life with music, singing and dancing. Maria meets the Nutcracker, a toy who has been cursed by the evil Mouse King. Together they must find a way to lift the curse and save Christmas for everyone.

This show is about creativity, imagination and working hard to overcome adversity in an inventive and determined way. It's also a story about friendship and family.

The show is based on the short story written by ETA Hoffmann written in 1816. This is a new musical version which has been vividly brought to life with new songs and music, performed live by actor musicians supported by a talented young company. Told through words, dancing and song, this show is for everyone aged 3 and up.

The Characters (in order of appearance)

Drosselmeyer, Customers to the shop, The Eviction Man, Mum, Louie, Marie, Clara the Doll, Claude the Accordion Monkey, The Toy Soldiers, The Nutcracker, The Mouse King and his staff, Nate.

The characters will sometimes speak directly to the audience, so feel free to sing-a-long and answer back when prompted.

The Actors

The show is made up of five professional actor musicians and a cast of ensemble children from the local community. The actors playing Maria and Drosselmeyer are the same throughout the show, Nutcracker and Nate is played by another actor, Mum, Mouse King and Clara the Doll is played by another cast member and lastly Louie and Claude The Accordion Monkey is performed by another actor.

MEET THE CAST

Kate Spencer – Drosselmeyer (The Toymaker)

This is Kate!



Kate trained at Rose Bruford College and Columbia College, Chicago.

Recent theatre credits include: Great Expectations (Derby Theatre), Alice in Wonderland (The Octagon Theatre), Rapid Response (Derby Theatre), A Long Morning Quiet (Crucible Theatre), Rift (Crucible Theatre), The Hunting of the Snark (Sherman Theatre/Hong Kong's Academy of Performing Arts), The Macbeth Curse (Prime Theatre/The Octagon Theatre) and Abstains (20:20 Vision).

Television/Film credits include: Doctors (BBC), My Life As A Bully (Firehorse Productions).

During the show Kate plays the tambourine and the flute.

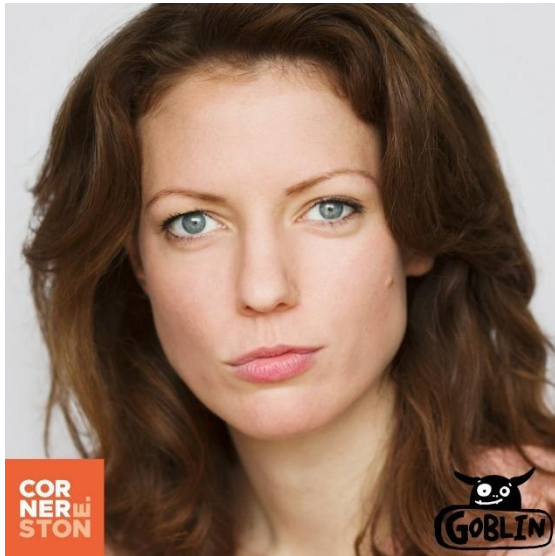
At the beginning of the show, Drosselmeyer enters from the back of the seats and walks down the stairs and then onto the stage. Along the way she might say Hello to you!

This is Kate as Drosselmeyer.



Kate stays in this costume throughout the show. But you might notice a slight change to her hat at the beginning of Act 2.

Clare Aster – Mum / Clara the Doll / Mouse King



This is Clare!

Clare trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. She has worked internationally as a classical musician, and as an actor has performed at the Stockwell Playhouse, the Minack Theatre, and in numerous fringe theatres, short films and commercials. She is delighted to be performing in Oxfordshire for the first time with Cornerstone and Goblin.

During the show Clare plays the piano, the saxophone and percussion. This is Clare as the Mum.



This is Clare as Clara the Doll.



This is Clare as the Mouse King.



Rob Gathercole – Louie, Claude the Accordion Monkey

This is Rob!



Rob trained at Rose Bruford College on the Actor/Musicianship course, graduating in 2016. His credits include: Jeremy/Assistant M.D. in Dreamboats and Petticoats (UK Tour), Fred Scrooge in A Christmas Carol (GLYPT), Tin-man in The Wizard of Oz (Immersion Theatre, Open Air Tour), Senator Fipp/Tiny Tom/M.D. in Urinetown (Stratford Circus) and Yepikhodov in The Cherry Orchard (Rose Bruford). Rob is also a musical director and composer; his work includes musically directing the premiere of The House of Usher (The Hope Theatre), and is resident composer for Immersion Theatre, currently working on their next UK tour of 'The Jungle Book'. He has also written an original musical comedy, 'The Downfall of the School'.

This is Rob as Louie.



This is Rob as Claude - the accordion monkey.



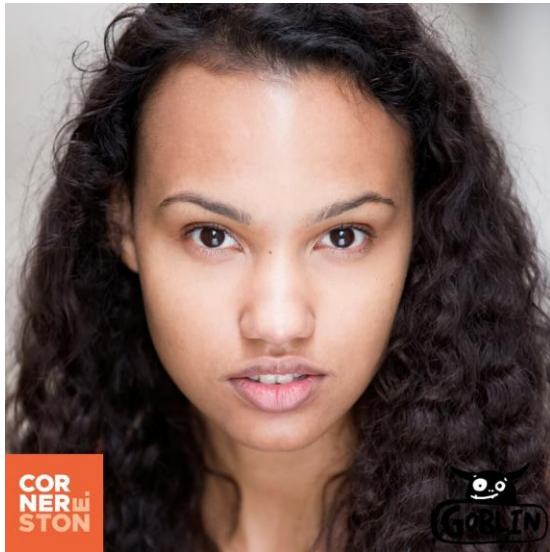
This is Rob as the eviction man



During the show, Rob plays the piano, the accordion, the trumpet and kazoo.

Michaela Bennison – Maria

This is Michaela!



Michaela graduated from the Royal Academy of Music and the University of Southampton, BA (Hons). Theatre credits include: Researcher/Sunday Times Reporter in *Brexit - The Musical* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival); Polly Peachum in *The Beggar's Opera* (Lazarus Theatre Company); Susanna Walcott/Martha Corey in *The Crucible* (Broken Arrow Productions); Artist #3 in *Pool (No Water)* (SJ Theatre Productions); Featured Performer in *Finding Our Way*. Whilst training: Lucinda in *Into The Woods* (Royal Exchange Theatre Company); Armyny/School Principle/Ensemble in *Carousel* (The Royal Academy of Music); Cassandra in *Trojan Woman* (The Royal Academy of Music); Nina in

Memoirs - A Revue Musical (University of Southampton).

This is Michaela as Maria.



Niall Kerrigan – Nutcracker / Nate

This is Niall!



Niall trained at ALRA (The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts)

Theatre credits include: Miss Nightingale (Waterloo vaults), Jack and the Beanstalk (Cast), Rollover Beethoven (Coventry Belgrade), We're Going on a Bear Hunt (International Tour), Woman in the Dunes (Theatre 503), Border control (Old Red Lion Theatre), Donkey (Waterloo East Theatre), Growth (Old Red Lion Theatre), Early One Morning (Jermyn Street Theatre).

During the show Niall plays the guitar and the drums.

This is Niall as The Nutcracker.



This is Niall as one of the customers in the shop.



When Niall plays Nate at the end of the show, he wears a red winter coat and green trousers.

Ensemble Cast

Our ensemble cast are made up of young people aged 8 to 16 from the local community. Please find below images of them in their different costumes, as well as the image above.



THE SET

When you enter the auditorium, you will see a magical, dusty, rundown toyshop full of bric-a-brac and old toys. You will see two ladders in the centre which some of the actors climb up.

You will see on stage left (which is on the right for the audience), there is a drum, guitar and piano. The actors take it in turns to play the instruments.

Stage right (which is on the left for the audience), you will see the door to the toyshop named Drosselmeyer's Emporium.

The 3 large walls of the toyshop rotate and are moved into different positions during the show.

At the beginning of Act 2, the toy shop has been taken over by the Mouse King and the walls are white and stark and all colourful toys have been hidden by the Mouse King. On centre stage, there is a tall chair which the Mouse King climbs up to sit on.

During the last scene, the set returns to the toyshop and the actors create a Christmas tree out of old boxes, tinsel, lights and a star.

LIGHTING

There are different lighting states for each scene in the show. There is a short section during Act 1 where the lights blackout. The audience will know when this is going to happen because Drosselmeyer says "blackout" and clicks her fingers. This only happens for 1 or 2 seconds before they quickly come back up again.

There is a little bit of magic 6 minutes into the show with a bright flame. This lasts for 2 seconds.

Different parts of the toy shop light up during the show including spot lights on special toys.

During the 'game show' section of the show, some of the ensemble cast dressed as toy soldiers walk up the two stairs of the seating area and perform here for approximately 10 minutes. The house lights will be brought up.

Above the instruments, there is a shiny disco ball which during the 'game show' section of the show, gets lit up and sparkles around room.

During the show, there are flashing lights which last for 3 seconds. This happens just before the interval.

There is no strobe lighting or flash photography.

SOUNDS

The show contains recorded music, live music, live singing and live sound effects that help set the scene.

There are recorded sound effects which include The Nutcracker jingle, a chime of a clock and thunder.

During the 'game show' section of the show, the noise levels may become quite loud as the actors encourage the audience to applaud and the Nutcracker cracks Nuts by playing the drums.

For this relaxed performance, we will be turning the overall level of the sound down.

RECOMMENDED AGE

The Nutcracker and the Mouse King is recommended for 3+.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is no pre-show announcement. During the relaxed performance the company introduce themselves at the start. If you need to use a specific electronic device such as an iPad to help with your enjoyment of the show, please inform the ushers as you enter the theatre.

EXTRA INFORMATION

If you need any extra information in the lead up to your visit, please contact our friendly box office team on 01235 515144 or email cornerstone@southoxon.gov.uk

We look forward to welcoming you to Cornerstone this Christmas.