

# NEW VIC

# The SNOW QUEEN

## **The Snow Queen: A Visual Story**

A visual resource for children and young adults  
with Autism and Asperger's Syndromes.

This pack is designed to help familiarise your group/family with the story, characters and events of the show. It highlights moments of sudden action, lighting/sound changes and other surprises and explains the story to you as it unfolds.

Production Photography by Andrew Billington

Hello, we are very much looking forward to welcoming you to the New Vic. We hope you're looking forward to *The Snow Queen*. These notes are for you to read before coming to the theatre. They tell you more about the theatre and what happens in the play so that you will know what to expect.

## The Theatre (what the building looks like)

When you arrive at the theatre, this will be the entrance door to the foyer. Go through these doors and on the right hand side you will find our box office. The lift up to the first floor is located to your left and the stairs are in front of you. You can access our auditorium from the ground or first floor level depending on where your seats are or your access needs.



You may be greeted by one of our wonderful front of house team, here is David Sunnuck our front of house manager. They are here to help with any of your needs, do not hesitate to speak to them. We are happy to help in any way we can.



Below is a picture of the auditorium doors, as you go through these you will be met by another member of our Front of House staff who will guide you to your seats and answer any questions you may have.



Below is a picture of one of our sets of toilets, they are on both levels. If you are unable to locate them please ask a member of the front of house team. There is also disabled toilet facilities available.



## The Set (what the stage looks like)

- When you come into the theatre the auditorium lights will be on so that you can find your seat and see the stage. You will sit in your allocated seat to watch the play and the actors will move around on the stage in front of you. As this is a theatre in the round, the actors may feel quite close to you, but don't worry, they won't reach out to you or touch you.
- On one side of the stage you will see an area with some musical instruments laid out. The actors become musicians at certain moments in the story. They will stand and play music here during the show. There will be some recorded sound effects during the show. The sound of children laughing/enjoying themselves outside is playing as you come into the theatre.
- The floor stage floor is painted in colourful blues to make it look like frozen ice.
- The set, which is designed to look like it is made out of books, will change as the action of the story moves to different locations. Sometimes you'll see the actors carrying on props with them. Sometimes things will appear on stage as if by magic.
- Sometimes, the lighting will change—there will be different coloured lights and sometimes it will go darker or brighter as we change place and time in the story. It will only go completely dark on stage at the end of each half.
- Sometimes you might see smoke on stage. Don't worry, it is special stage smoke made from water. It helps the stage lights look exciting! There is real running water in the waterfall and the projections on the floor are there to make it appear as if we are writing on the ice and as if we are swirling through time.

As you enter the theatre this is the view of the auditorium:



## The Actors

Here is a picture of the actors you will see in the play. There is a picture of them out of costume and one of them as a character. Actors tell the story by dressing up in different characters.

When they change character, they will put on different pieces of costume.



**Natasha Davidson**



**As Gerda**



**Luke Murphy**



**As Kai**



**Polly Lister**



**As the Snow Queen**



**Matt Ganley**



**As Bitzer**



**Rachael Garnett**



**As the school teacher**



**Rachel Dawson**



**As Gerda's friend Hanna**



**Lizzie Franks**



**As the Princess**



**Victoria Brazier**



**As Summer**



**Oliver Mawdsley**



**As Soren**



**Katherine Toy**



**As Washernan**



**Molly Roberts**



**As Rifkin**



**James Sidwell**



**As Matthias Muller**



## The Style of our Production

Our auditorium is in-the-round. This means that the action takes place in the centre and the audience are seated around the stage area. There are five aisles down to the stage which actors will use from time to time as their entrances.

Ice skating – This show is set around the frozen world of the snow queen and Bluewater lake, where people used to ice skate in the olden days. Therefore you will be seeing actors entering on rollerblades to give the impression that they are ice skating.

We hope to take you on a journey through this magical story. You will see a sleigh ride, a toboggan journey, a carriage ride deep into the forest and a reindeer journey to find Kai.

There are a number of visual effects in the show. Lights will be brighter and dimmer at points during the show. They will move around the stage, they will change colour.

There are moments in the show when it snows, some of this is above the stage and for two moments it is above the audience on aisles 1,2 and 5.

Our stage managers will bring scenery on, along with actors, and some things will appear under the stage floor other things will be lowered from the auditorium ceiling. More explanation is given in the story notes below.



**The Snow Queen adult and young company**

## Story Notes

These notes describe what happens in the play. Moment by Moment.

If there are any sudden sounds, actions, changes or other surprises you will see this symbol!

### Act I

At the beginning of the show the Actors enter on to the stage. The first group go to what we call 'music corner' this is where the band and the instruments are placed. Most of the music will come from this part of the stage, though sometimes actors move around the stage area and play their instruments as part of the story.



There are moments of singing throughout the show. Characters move into song to express more clearly how they are feeling. All our actors have microphones. This means that the sound of their voices are amplified. Therefore, at some moments actors voices, when singing, may be loud !

The instruments that are the loudest are the drum kit, the trumpet and the tuba. These all live in Music corner but there are some songs, especially the opening ice skating song where the drums are loud !

The stage scenery is made to look like books. Books contain stories written down and we will tell you a story through our performance. The first thing the character of Gerda does is she brings a book centre stage and opens it. This pop-up book lights up. She opens three in total spelling out 'once upon a time'. Whilst doing this, she sings. She is accompanied by some off stage singing voices too.



A group of actors enter. They are all on rollerblades. The floor is like a frozen lake and they skate/blade their way across it. They are well rehearsed and trained, so there is no need to worry about them.

As the scene continues, a close friendship develops between two characters Soren and Karen. They declare their love for one another, and skate letters into the ice. This is done using projections from above.



As Karen is skating a letter 'e' she stops centre stage. She pretends that the ice is cracking. Soren and Karen begin to shout ! As they fear she will fall through the ice. When the ice finally cracks the actor is positioned in the middle of the stage, on what we call a trap. This is operated by some of the stage management who safely lower her down under the floor of the stage. As she is lowered down there is a loud cracking sound !

Karen falling through the ice is the story of how the snow queen became the snow queen. The snow queen is a lady, from long ago, who fell through the ice and is frozen in a moment in time. She is not a bad lady, she is trapped in her icy world wanting to solve the word puzzle, wanting to feel warm again.

As the actor goes down on the trap the lights will go darker and projections will swirl around the stage. This is a darker moment of the show in terms of the amount of light !



We move into a school room scene. Kai and Gerda are at school with their friends. We move through the school day and we learn that picture books are 'for home and not school'. There are two distance ruler slaps in this scene ! This is done by one of the actors making the slap sound. Nobody is actually hurt. The teacher speaks to audience directly during this scene but only usually to those in the first few rows.

As we move from the school room we head into the 'roof-top' scene. Here we imagine that Kai and Gerda are on the rooftops of their houses. There is some 'haze' or theatrical smoke used in this scene ! This gives the appearance of the smoke from chimneys. This is all controlled and safe.



As Kai walks across from one rooftop to the other the actors make the sound of his creaky shoes using their voices and a violin.



Gerda tells the story of the snow queen from her pop-up book. A group of young people, known as our Young Company, appear. They are dressed in sparkly snowflake costumes and dance around the stage. This is the indicator of the first entrance of the snow queen. ! The Snow queen enters centrally onto the stage. She has a wig and some stage make up to make her look icy cold. Remember she is just an actor in a costume and make up.



Polly, the actress who plays the Snow queen is absolutely lovely, kind and friendly she is just playing at being cold and harsh. There is loud singing here. !

After the snow queen exits Kai tricks Gerda into thinking the snow queen is back, creeping up behind her. Kai scares her and she screams !

She is not really scared, again just acting. Her and Kai have a little falling out and she exits back to her side of the rooftops. They say they won't be friends but they are just pretending.

The next scene is set on a Sunday morning, there is no school and the young people are off tobogganing. This is racing in the snow. They bring on their toboggans with them. They cannot travel far in this space because it is in the round and so we use music and lighting to make it look like they are travelling down the hill.



Bitzer wins the race. Kai enters into the scene and wants to have bitzers winning sledge. They argue about it and Kai suggests they fight for it. ! They have a distance fight. This is when there is space between the actors and they imagine fighting. It works well in the round and there is no contact between them so everyone is safe. There are some musical moments on the punches. Everyone has rehearsed it many times and are just pretending.

Once Kai has been on his journey the snow queen enters onto stage from Aisle I. She walks down it with audience on either side but makes no contact with them. She is accompanied by the young company snowflakes. Two actors enter dressed as swans and the Snow Queen go on an imaginary sleigh ride. The lighting, sound and projections give them the sense of flying even though they remain still. Fake snow is dropped onto the stage from above. This is done by our technical team.



The characters in the play do not understand that Kai has gone with the snow queen. They think he has died, but he has not. Gerda knows he is with the Snow Queen and so begins her journey to find him and rescue him. The actors pretend to search for him. Looking up the aisles beside the audience for a brief amount of time. !

Gerda is alone by the lake. An actor enters down aisle 4 with a little robin puppet. This is a beautiful little pretend bird that is made to move by the actor, the bird's tweet is played on an instrument by another actor. This bird gives Gerda the confidence to continue her search for Kai.



Her journey takes her into the garden of 'Summer'. As we move into this scene. 3 flower garlands drop from the ceiling into the space ! The character of summer enters. She is dressed in a very flowery dress. She is accompanied by two flowers, her friends, Lily and Rose. They bring on a piece of carpet that looks like grass. The scene is bright and high energy, they take props from books and discard them again. They sing and dance. The music plays loudly here, including a trumpet solo. !



While Gerda is in the garden she remembers Kai. He appears underneath the stage, as if trapped in the ice. ! All we see is the shadow of his hands on the stage floor. The lights dim to show him up clearly. He is not trapped, the actor is safe and well under the stage with a member of stage management.

Gerda wants to leave the summer scene to continue her journey to find Kai but cannot due to the shoes she has been given, they want to stop her from leaving. The actual shoes have no power over the actor, the actor is making it look like they do. !

As the summer scene ends Summer sings and there is a dimming of the lights and a rumble sound effect of thunder. ! The lighting goes to a cold blue and the snowflakes arrive. This is the indication that the snow queen is returning. !

The Snow queen enters the stage as two ice palace gates are wheeled on by two actors, also dressed as The Snow Queen's Snowflakes. The gates drop down and then open. As they open there is a loud cracking sound. ! The Snow queen and Kai enter the palace.

The Snow queen wants Kai to find the words, to solve the puzzle. The words are hidden in the icy floor. If he completes it she promises to give him the whole world and a new pair of skates.



At the end of the act the Snow Queen indicates to the sky with her hands and it begins to snow. This snow is controlled by our technical team, it is not real snow it is made from foam. The air is blown through it and it begins to fall. This is not dangerous at all and it will be on for a short amount of time. The fans, on the snow machines, can make a loud noise. !

## **INTERVAL**

The play has a pause and will start again in 20 mins. You will see the stage crew changing the set ready for part 2 and this will give you the chance to leave the auditorium, have a drink and use the toilets before the second part. The actors are back stage so you will not see them during this time. As the interval nears its end there will be a little bit more of the pretend smoke which will come down from the ceiling. This helps to make it look icy for the beginning of part two.



## ACT 2

Kai enters on his hands and knees in a new costume. This costume has been made to look like it is freezing, with patches of glittery fabric. But the actor is not cold, he is just pretending.



The Snow queen enters down aisle 5 onto the stage and exits again up aisle 2 on the opposite site.

A Crow enters. This is not a real crow, but a puppet. ! Its movements are made by the actor as are the sounds/bird calls. This is a friendly crow.



The actor who plays Gerda makes it sound like she is crying ! because she is missing kai. She is just pretending, she isn't really upset in real life and does this every show.

Gerda goes to a palace to meet a princess, they provide her with maps, food and clothes. They make a pretend carriage on stage and she pretends to travel into the forest in it. She

doesn't move anywhere. The journey is made with lights and sound. The sound/music can be quite loud at this point. !



The Snow Queen enters down aisle 2 and leaves exiting up aisle 5.

Gerda's carriage is stopped by a group of Robbers who bring out some pretend guns and knives. ! These are pretend. The guns do not fire, the knives are not sharp. They practice with them every day and are entirely safe.

You may see some eyes in the set. These are just cut out and lit from behind. They are not real eyes.

The robbers scene is lively, they shout a lot. There are arguments in this scene, tension and loud moments of dialogue and music!

This scene lasts an extended period of time, around 10 minutes. !

There are fake moments of fighting and fake hand biting !



There is a fake fire on stage. It is made from paper and it is lit with a light to make it look like a fire and that it is burning, but it is not.

During this scene Kai appears, for a brief moment, under the stage again, shadow hands as if trapped.

There are a number of puppets used in this scene. These are operated by the actors. We meet a Dog puppet and some pigeon puppets.



An actor does a back flip. !

The robber girl can appear to be angry and threatening as she has a tantrum. ! She agrees to let Gerda go to find her friend. The robber girl falls out with her mum and they, like kai and Bitzer in act one, have a distance fight. ! The mum falls to the ground pretending to be hurt but she is not.

Gerda sets out on a journey to find Kai with the help of the robber girl's reindeer. The reindeer is played by an actor and made up from a couple of actors all working together.



Into the final scene the Snow Queen enters down aisle 5. She approaches Gerda as if she is going to reach her, touch her, grab her. ! But she won't. She never does. It is rehearsed that she doesn't.

Gerda and Kai join hands, Gerda tries to escape. Kai tries to drag her towards the snow queen. He is desperate for them to touch hands. They nearly touch but then Gerda breaks free. She completes the story and spells out Eternity in the ice, the final word that Kai was looking for has been found.



On completing the word the Snow queen informs them both that they have turned time around, that time will now roll backwards. We then travel backwards through the play revisiting characters and moments we have seen before. The actors travel backwards, they speak backwards and a projection swirls backwards on the stage floor.

We briefly revisit the Robbers, the princess, the summer garden, the distance fight between Kai and Bitzer, Kai and Gerda reading together, the school room and finally the first ice

skating scene between Karen and Soren. During the rewind there are flickering lights and some thunder noises. !

The hole in the floor appears again. Karen is about to re-enter. Not the snow queen but the character she was before she was frozen. We are turning the play back, turning time back to the beginning, when a snow queen didn't exist.

When Karen and Soren are together again they skate around and sit together. At this point a storybook is dropped from the ceiling by stage management. This does create a loud bang and may surprise you if you are not expecting it. !

The book opens to read 'The End'. The final note is played and the lights go out. ! At the end of the play the actors will come back onto stage to bow. You can clap your hands to show that you enjoyed watching if you would like to. As they start to exit it will snow again, as it did at the end of the first half just before the interval. ! The lights will come on in the auditorium and it will be time for you to go home.

### **See you soon!**

We hope you've enjoyed reading about *The Snow Queen* and found it useful. We're really looking forward to welcoming you to The New Vic Theatre.

