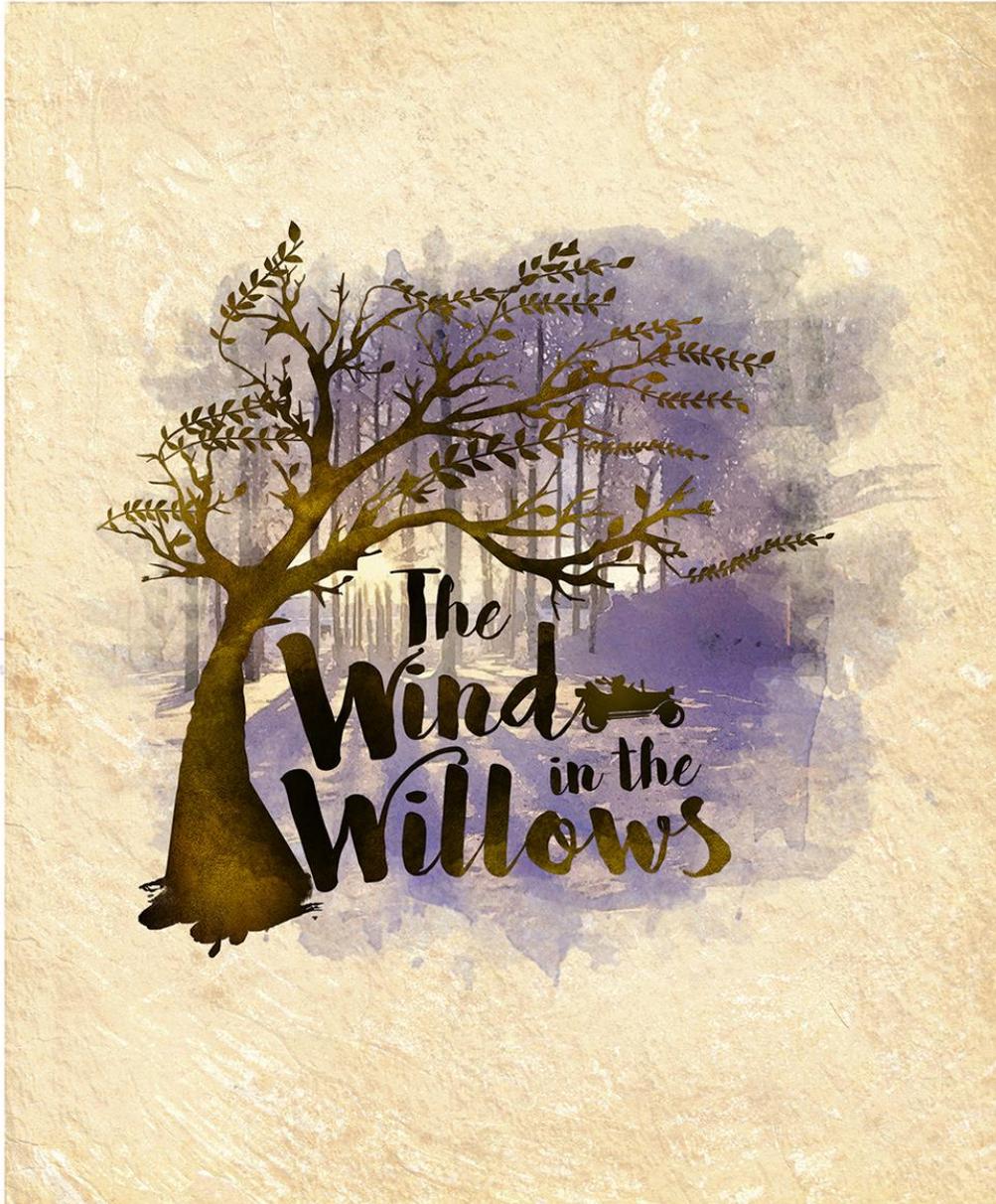


NEW VIC



Relaxed Performance Visual Story Guide

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

We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to the New Vic and we hope you're looking forward to seeing *The Wind in the Willows*. 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.

At times the show is **fast paced, high energy**, and **actors** play multiple characters **with lots of different costumes**. There are a few scenes with **moderate threat** but these are **not prolonged**. This guide will help identify these moments and anything else you might want to know before you visit.

The show runs at;

Act 1 is approximately 1 hour

The interval is approximately 20 minutes

Act 2 is approximately 40 minutes

Your visit to the New Vic Theatre

This is the New Vic from the outside



The theatre entrance looks like this on the outside



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, if you were not sent tickets in the post this is where you will pick them up from. 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 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 Customer Services and Front of House Manager, and some of our helpful ushers. 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.



There are toilets on the ground floor and up the stairs on the second floor. They look like this;



Your ticket will tell you which door you need to go through, if you are not sure where this is ask an usher and they will direct you. The doors into the auditorium look like this.



When you arrive in the auditorium (this is the room where you will see the play), the lights will be on so you can find your seat and see the stage. There are lots of ushers around who can help you if you're unsure where to go, as you can see from the photo they will be dressed in black.

Our theatre is in the round, this means that the performance happens on the stage in the middle, and the audience sit all around the stage. The actors will be telling you the story of *The Wind in the Willows* from the stage, the aisles and sometimes on platforms high up, and close to the audience.

THE ACTORS

Here are pictures of all the actors you will see in the play. There is one picture of each actor out of costume, and one of them in costume. When our actors change character, they will change some of their costume too.

This is Alicia, she plays **MOLE**.



This is Richard, he plays **RATTY**.



This is Emma, she plays **BADGER**.



This is Laura, she plays **PORTLY OTTER**, and Laura also plays a policewoman.



This is Sophia, she plays **MRS OTTER**, Portly's mum, and she wears a headscarf with ears on, and has a longer tail than Portly because she is older.



This is Rob, he plays **TOAD**, and this is his main costume. He has a few costume changes in the show so you will also see him in a white outfit, and a colourful hat and apron.



This is Kieran, he plays FOX, the leader of the Wild Wooders, and Kieran also plays a salesperson and a policeman.



This is Andy, he plays a **WILD WOODER** and the **MAGISTRATE** in court.



This is Robyn, she plays a **WILD WOODER** and the **CLERK** in court



This is Anne-Marie, she plays a **WILD WOODER**, a **LAND LADY** and the **WASHER WOMAN**



This is Matt, he plays the **HORSE**, a **WILD WOODER** and the **JAILER** and a few other characters



The characters visit many locations throughout the production, and to give you, the audience, a clear idea of where we are the actors will bring on lots of different props and set to help tell the story. This can make the play fast paced and means things appear as if by magic - this is very exciting!

The Young Company

There are 8 young company members in each show, they play lots of different roles including Spring Animals, Wild Wooders, Salespeople, a jury in a court room and field mice.



Both the adult and the young company play lots of different parts to tell the story of *Wind in the Willows*.

Warnings and Symbols

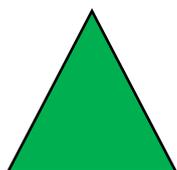
All our actors play lots of different musical instruments and sing, dance and even have a stage fight. As there are live instruments in the show sometimes it can be a bit loud, and due to some of the locations the play is set in the lighting can be a bit dark. To help you to know about any unexpected moments in *The Wind in the Willows*, below are a few handy symbols to warn you about certain things might happen. These will be details in the scene-by-scene guide will highlight both the story and any of these moments.



Look out for this **blue star symbol** in the scene-by-scene guide, to see which scenes have loud or sudden sounds, or surprising moments.



On stage, there is a band set up next to one of the entrance and exit points. A lot of music comes from here, but it can also happen elsewhere on stage, or even in the aisles. Look out for this **red music note symbol** to see which scenes have energetic songs.



In some scenes moving images are projected onto the floor to help you understand where the scene is taking place. This projection is a bit like a little film; it will move constantly and then disappear as though it was never there. Look out for this **green triangle symbol** to see when the projection will appear on stage.



Not all our characters get along in the story of *Wind in the Willows*, the Riverbank animals and the Wild Wooders don't like each other very much and at one point they have a fight. Don't worry, this is all very safe and no one will actually hurt one another. Look out for the **purple square symbol** to see when this fight takes place.

The actors like you to feel like you're part of Mole, Ratty, Badger and Toad's story. So they may look and speak right to you, or they may be really close to you as sometimes they perform in the aisles. These moments are included in the story notes so keep an eye out for them.

Scene-by-Scene Guide

So what happens during the show?

Below are notes on what to expect during the show. Look out for the different coloured symbols to see when there might be **loud music**, **projection**, **surprising moments** or a stage **fight**. There are also some pictures throughout the guide to help you see what the stage will look like, and how the set might change.

ACT ONE

Live music will be played throughout the show by all of the actors, sometimes this happens where the keyboard and drum kit is set - you will notice this section near an entrance/exit point. However, sometimes the actors will start playing from different parts of the stage, and move around with their instruments.

There will also be a bed, table and alarm clock on stage when you arrive. These are there as they are needed for the first scene in the show. When the show is seconds away from starting you will hear a friendly announcement asking you to turn off your mobile phones, as the show is about to begin. The lights will go down a little and the actors will begin to enter down all of the aisles and onto the stage. They will all get into position for the first scene, including Mole getting into the bed. You will see a few of them have instruments. Mole has been hibernating below ground all winter, but now it's Spring! Here we see Mole begin to wake up, and the actors sing a song about the season of spring, which is happening, right now above ground.





Just as Mole puts her blanket over her face to shut out the sunlight her alarm bell goes, and it's that time again - time for spring cleaning! So with a **song called 'Spring has Sprung'**, Mole begins to clean her house. Her bed is whisked away and sections of her home begin to appear around her as she dusts and sweeps - the actors will come on with different props and set to make this happen. Mole becomes fed up of spring cleaning and wonders what it's like above ground! So she throws down her cleaning brushes and begins to climb out of her underground hole.



At this point a large circular piece of fabric **drops into the space** and falls around Mole, the full theatre lights get much darker and the twinkly lights surrounding the balcony come on, it looks very pretty. The lights begin to come up as the stage is filled with spring time animals played by the young company. We are now above ground and Mole is taking it all in.



The river - an animal Mole has heard about but never seen - suddenly lights up and **fish begin to swim** in it. To Mole's surprise an Otter pops up from the river, and then another one! They are Portly Otter and Mrs Otter. The two actors are coming up through special traps below the stage, which allow for surprising entrances.

Portly disappears and Ratty, the water rat, spots Mole in his boat, which is docked near the place all of the instruments are kept.



Ratty's boat is on wheels and able to move across the stage, and so he rows over to Mole. They make friends, and the actors bring out a picnic basket for them, and **Ratty sings a song** to Mole called **Nothing so Nice**. He tells Mole of the scary Wild Wood, and the even scarier Wide World, during this moment the actors play some eerie music underneath.



They arrive at Toad Hall and meet Toad, who is very excited to meet Mole for the first time, and whisks both Ratty and Mole into his house for a tour. When we enter Toad's house the lights get a lot darker, and we see his big staircase, which he, Mole and Ratty get pushed around on to discover the rest of the house; including the library, the hall of portraits, the banqueting hall and a projection of the **stained glass window**.





A large table then gets wheeled into the space, and they all enjoy a humongous luncheon. Ratty feels full up and doesn't want to go anywhere but Toad is soon on to the next thing he can't wait to show Ratty and Mole.



Toad throws off the tablecloth and the actors transform the once banquet table into a colourful caravan by pulling up the sides and adding a few other elements. Mole and Toad quickly jump on board but Ratty takes a bit more convincing, however reluctant he still joins them and they set off on an adventure.

A grumpy horse begins to take them on a journey and they sit back, relax and take in the fresh countryside.



However, Toad forgot the mappy map map and they get a little lost, so lost Ratty has a bad feeling the Wide World might start soon! Then, they can all hear a strange buzzing noise, it sounds a bit like a swarm of bees, as the sound gets louder they realise, "those are no bees", it's a motorcar! The caravan is flung into movement and they all **sing a song** called **Faster than the Fastest Thing**, which has **loud music** and **loud sounds of a beeping car**. Suddenly the caravan is blown apart in slow motion as the passing motorcar drives them off the road.



Surrounded by broken bits of window Mole and Ratty look at what that crazy machine just did to their beautiful caravan. Toad is not helping them put it back together, as the motorcar that just whizzed by fascinated him so much he has become instantly obsessed with the idea of getting one. Many Hands form an imaginary car around Toad and he sets off to find himself a motorcar, "poop poop!". Many hands **sing a song** called **Toad, Toad the Open Road**, and they all disappear, leaving Mole and Ratty in the middle of no where.





Ratty and Mole need to stop Toad from getting into trouble. Ratty needs some advice, and so they set off in search of wise old Badger, who lives in the Wild Wood, and the Wild Wood is scary! Ratty and Mole take a deep breath and head into the scary woods. The **lights get darker** on stage and **four trees made out of fabric are dropped from the ceiling** onto the ground.



The Wild Wooders enter onto the stage from the aisles and begin to **play their instruments**; this can come as **quite a surprise** as the actors can be very close to you! But don't worry, you are very safe. Everyone sings a song called **In the Wild Wild Wood**



As Ratty and Mole hunt for the path to Badgers house they bump into Fox, the head of the Wild Wooders. The Wild Wooders likes to eat river bankers like Mole and Ratty....alive! So they are both pretty scared.

There is a big chase sequence between Mole and Ratty, the Wild Wooders and an unsuspecting bunny rabbit. Mole, Ratty and the bunny rabbit out smart the Wild Wooders by sending them off in the wrong direction. Soon they stumble across a doormat in front of a large tree. Similar to the trees in the Wild Wood this is also made out of fabric and drops in from the ceiling, the doormat signifies Badgers front door, much to Ratty's relief.



When Mole rings the doorbell Badger comes up through a **trap door from under the stage**, so she appears as if by magic.

When Mole and Ratty enter Badger's house the **lighting gets very dark** and there are a few creepy noises coming from around the theatre, but there is nothing to be alarmed about, this is just one of the tunnels to her cosy fire-lit front living room.



When they get inside Portly Otter is there doing some homework, along with two hedgehogs and a rabbit on guitar.



Portly sings a song for Mole and Ratty called **Progress**, it's a poem she has been working on today.

The doorbell goes, Mrs Otter calls round looking for Portly as she was meant to be home for tea hours ago. Mrs Otter marches her and the others off home. Ratty and Mole then tell Badger about everything that has happened, but become very tired and so head off to bed. In the morning, they will deal with Toad.



Meanwhile, Toad has been off in the Wide World buying lots of motorcars, and crashing them! We are told this story through a song called **Poetry in Motion**. There will be a lot of **drumming** during this song which is quiet **loud**.

Just as Toad hands over the money for THREE new motorcars Badger, Ratty and Mole show up to stop Toad making such a mistake. The Salesman and his team leave begrudgingly and Badger tries to reason with Toad - but he is having none of it!





They banish Toad to his bedroom, where he will stay until he has seen the error of his ways. Four posts are brought on by a few of the actors to create the room. Badger, Ratty and Mole take guard to make sure Toad stays in his room and **sing a song** to chart each day.

One day Mole is set up guarding the door to Toad's room when Toad has an idea. He pretends to be very sick and sends Mole off to get a doctor. As Mole has left the door unguarded, Toad sneaks out of this room to escape. The actors change the formation of the posts to create a corridor which Toad sneaks down, and out of Toad Hall.





Toad is very hungry and so heads to the Red Lion Inn to get a Roast Dinner. Outside the pub someone arrives in a Motorcar! Toad gets very excited by this and can't control himself. When no one is looking he decides to give the car a whirl - there can't be any harm in that can there? As you can see from the below picture Toad drives a real looking car. Whilst driving round he **sings Roar of Progress**. The car heads off stage and crashes, to represent this crash the drums are very loud, but don't worry all the actors are OK.





After the crash, Toad is taken to court and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. Immediately he is taken by the jailer from the courtroom into the prison and shown to his new bedroom, a cell. During the walk to his cell **different sounds will come out of the entrance and exit points**, these include dogs barking and screaming. These are just sounds from speakers to give the illusion of people and dogs, but there is nothing really there and no one is being hurt.





After Toad is arrested and taken to jail Badger, Mole and Ratty are very sad. As Toad is going to be gone for so long they get to work by covering up Toad Hall with dust sheets, to keep it nice for when he gets out.

There will be an **INTERVAL** of about 20 minutes

ACT 2



★ A season has passed since Toad Hall was covered up and it is now autumn. Mole, Badger and Ratty visit Toad Hall to give it a good dust and to make sure everything is in order. However, there is something very suspicious about the portraits in the frames, they look strangely like Wild Wooders. Suddenly Fox comes alive in one of the frames and the Wild Wooders begin to climb out - they have taken over Toad Hall! This moment always **makes the audience jump**, so get ready.



The Wild Wooders sing a **big song**, and as you can see the **lighting is quite dark**. Mole, Badger and Ratty are outnumbered and forced out of Toad Hall. The Wild Wooders are here to stay! Shockingly, Portly appears with a ham, it turns out she has been hanging out with the Wild Wooders, and has joined them in taking over Toad Hall. Badger, Mole and Ratty are quite upset and leave the Wild Wooders in there.



Meanwhile, Toad is still in prison and we meet Maudie, the jailer's daughter. She has brought Toad some buttered toast as he hasn't been eating lately. Maudie is very fond of animals and has taken quite a liking to Toad. She is fed up of seeing him so sad and has an idea, he Aunt is Washer Woman, and is due in to get the laundry today - Toad could dress as her and escape!





Since being thrown out of Toad Hall, Ratty, Mole and Badger have been in the Wild Wood. The three actors are stood on a platform over one of the entrance/exit points and the **lighting is dark**. They can't get back to Badgers house as all of the tunnels have been blocked up! They bump into Mrs Otter who has been searching for Portly. Mole is forced into telling Mrs Otter that they have seen Portly in Toad Hall....with the Wild Wooders. Angrily, Mrs Otter storms off to find Portly, give her a piece of her mind and to bring her home.





Meanwhile, Toad is still dressed as a Washer Woman and is out and about in the Wide World wondering how he'll get back to Toad Hall, when he comes across a Railway Station! Toad jumps aboard the train, and settles in for a relaxing journey. During this sequence the **lights will be quite dark** and there will be **projection of moving landscapes**. Then a refreshment lady and ticket inspector come aboard the train, Toad soon realises he has no money, and the train guard threatens to throw him off at the next stop.





The refreshment lady, ticket inspector and passengers all realise they are being chased by another train, it looks like the police! Toad kicks open the train door, jumps onto the outside of the train and climbs his way to the front. The police catch up with the train and they chase Toad along the roof. This is all done with ladders, clever staging and a bit of miming, it asks the audience to use their imaginations a bit. Toad gets to the front, kicks the driver out of the driving seat, and drives the train straight towards another train - which is coming towards him! The **projection will move a lot faster** here to let us know how fast Toad is travelling. There is a big slow motion crash where the actors remove all of the parts that make up the train in different directions until there is only Toad left on stage.





Luckily, the horse we lost during the caravan crash happens to be nearby and takes Toad back to Toad Hall. When Toad arrives at Toad Hall Ratty, Badger and Mole are outside planning to take the hall back off the Wild Wooders!

They work together to capture a patrolling Weasel who is guarding the outside of Toad Hall, and then head in!





The Wild Wooders have made themselves quite at home and have eaten all of Toad's food. Ratty, Badger, Toad and Mole head inside and they all have a **big fight**. Mrs Otter turns up, just as Portly is trying to hang Toad's picture back up. She blows her whistle - and everyone stops. Portly explains why she is with the Wild Wooders and how much they have been misunderstood - they hate living in the cold wood and they really hate hunting animals. Here in Toad Hall it's warm and the larders are packed with lovely cheese. Toad loves an appreciation for his home, and invites all of the Wild Wooders to live in his huge house.





The sounds of singing begins to filter through the auditorium and Toad, Ratty and Badger realise its field mice, who go round singing carols this time of year. They all go to take a look at them and join in with the lovely carol the Field Mice are singing.



At the end of the song, the lights will go down. This is the end of the play and you and the rest of the audience can show your appreciation by clapping if you'd like. All of the actors and young company will give a bow before leaving the stage.

Thank you for reading the guide, and we hope you enjoy the show.