

**NEW VIC**



# **COPPELIA**

## **A MYSTERY**

**Adapted and directed by Theresa Heskins**

***Coppelia - A Mystery***  
**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.



**Box Office 01782 717962**

**[newvictheatre.org.uk](http://newvictheatre.org.uk)**



Hello, we are very much looking forward to welcoming you to the New Vic.

We hope you're looking forward to *Coppelia - A Mystery*. 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, pictured here.

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 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 are also disabled toilet facilities available.



Our Front-of-House staff will guide you to your seats and answer any questions you may have.

## The Style of our Production

*Coppelia - A Mystery* is a promenade performance. This means the action takes place in different spaces both outside and inside the theatre and the audience follows the characters to move between these spaces. Don't worry, a character called Swanhilde will always help you find the way! There is a Front-of-House team who will help you too. Before the performance begins, you can move around the outdoor spaces and explore the streets filled with wonderful shops.

Just before the performance begins, the Front-of-House team will help you find a seat outside Dr Coppelius's shop.





When the performance begins, you will meet the first character who is a young girl Swanhilde. You will meet Dr Coppelius too and watch his beautiful doll dance. Dr Coppelius is inside his shop with his doll and Swanhilde is outside with you.





Then you will move into the auditorium which is in the round.

This means that the action takes place in the centre and the audience are seated around the stage area. Swanhilde and the Front-of-House team will help you find your seat.

In the auditorium is Dr Coppelius' workshop. Dr Coppelius is a wonderful toy maker and his workshop is full of things that help make his creations: there are limbs hanging from the ceiling; tools; an oven where he cooks his meals; and a large table with two chairs at either end.

At one end of the table is his very favourite creation: a precious life sized doll called Coppelia.



After being in the auditorium, Swanhilde will take you back outside to watch the final scene. Swanhilde will help you find the way with the Front-of-House team and they will help you find a seat.





Once the performance finishes, you can walk around the outdoor spaces and look again at all the wonderful shops: there are lots of different ones to find. You can smell the beautiful flowers, look up into the trees, touch the branches and listen to all the different sounds outdoors.



# 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.



Corinna Brown  
*Swanhilde*



Michael Hugo  
*Dr Coppelius*



Kira McPherson  
*Coppelia*



Farhaan Shah  
*Amadeus*

## Story Notes

In this section we will tell you exactly what happens in *Coppelia - A Mystery*. This will help you understand the story and let you know about anything unexpected that happens.

### Before the performance begins:

You are free to walk around all the outdoor spaces. There are lots of shop windows to look through and beautiful flowers to smell. You can touch the glass on the shopfronts, feel the plants, listen to the music and explore the whole space. There is a walkway suitable for wheelchairs and if you need any additional help, the Front-of-House team will always be close by.



## **Scene 1:**

Once you have sat down in the outdoor space, Swanhilde will arrive from outside the right hand side of Dr Coppelius' shop. She is brightly dressed and very excited. She loves Dr Coppelius' shop and wants to talk to you all about it. There is music and Swanhilde will tell you about her very favourite toy from Dr Coppelius' shop: a beautiful life-sized doll. Every day at exactly the same time, Swanhilde comes to watch this doll dance.

When it is the right time, curtains open inside the shop window to reveal the doll. Music plays from both the violin player and recorded sound. The doll does her dance and Swanhilde is very excited. She joins in the dance too. When the doll stops dancing, Dr Coppelius appears. This might surprise you as he pops out through a small opening from inside the shop. He is behind the glass and tells the doll to take a bow.

Swanhilde is very excited. She wants to buy the doll and have it as her own. She hammers on the glass loudly to try to get Dr Coppelius' attention. He keeps popping out through the small opening but won't sell her the doll. Swanhilde gets very cross and bangs on the window even louder.

Suddenly, Dr Coppelius appears outside the shop. He is very cross with Swanhilde for both banging on his shop window, making it dirty and for her wanting to buy his doll, his very special creation.

He leaves again and Swanhilde bangs on the shop window even louder! He pops out through the same opening behind the glass and is very angry now. While Swanhilde keeps on banging the window, he comes back out in front of the shop and tells her very firmly that the doll is not for sale and she is to leave straight away.

He tells her to go away and she calls him 'Weirdo.'

Dr Coppelius leaves and Swanhilde tells us that she has a plan. She wants us to follow her into Dr Coppelius' workshop. We can all get up now and follow Swanhilde with the Front-of-House team inside the auditorium. The violin player comes with us and music plays throughout.

## **Scene 2:**

Swanhilde and the Front-of-House team will help you find your seats in the auditorium. The doll you saw in Dr Coppelius' shop window is now sitting at one end of a large table. The table is set for dinner and Dr Coppelius is cooking the meal. Swanhilde does not want to be seen so she keeps hiding in different places whilst she watches what Dr Coppelius is doing. Music plays while Dr Coppelius tastes his stew which is cooking on the oven. He tries to entertain the doll (which he calls 'my little Coppelia') by doing lots of different tricks. He asks her to eat but she doesn't move at all. Dr Coppelius finishes eating his stew, washes up the dishes and throws Coppelia's food out.

Dr Coppelius tells Coppelia he will go out and buy her favourite cake to cheer her up.



He puts on his brightly coloured coat and top hat, tells her not to touch anything and leaves the doll sitting at the table.

Swanhilde comes out of hiding to look round the space. She feels the doll limbs hanging from the ceiling, bounces on the chair which is beside the oven, smells the stew and flicks the washing up water. Swanhilde decides that she wants to play with Coppelia and starts to talk with her. She says 'Coppelia, walk' and unexpectedly the doll gets up and walks. Then Swanhilde tries another idea 'Coppelia, stop' and the doll stops. Swanhilde gets more and more excited and tries lots of different games with Coppelia: walking, skipping, stopping, rubbing tummy whilst patting her head and hide and seek. You will hear lots of music and sounds during this: the sounds are of the creaky joints of the doll moving around for the very first time.

Swanhilde decides to try something new. She tells Coppelia to touch the hot stove. Coppelia obeys the command and puts her wooden hand on the hot stove. We hear a sound of sizzling as she burns. Swanhilde quickly gets Coppelia to stop touching the stove.

Swanhilde is enjoying the game so much that she gets Coppelia to do more and more actions which get quicker and quicker. Coppelia obeys and the music gets louder as both Swanhilde and Coppelia move around frantically. Swanhilde shouts in excitement: she is very loud and is enjoying being entertained by the doll but suddenly the doll crashes to the floor because she has broken. Swanhilde tries to command Coppelia to get up but the doll is broken. Swanhilde hears Dr Coppelia returning so pushes the broken doll back under the big table.

Swanhilde decides to trick Dr Coppelius. Her mum has bought her a dress exactly like the dolls and she takes off her coat to show you it. She sits at the table to pretend to be Coppelia to see if she can fool Dr Coppelius.

Dr Coppelius brings in the cakes and when his back is turned, Swanhilde takes a bite and then goes very still again, pretending to be the doll. Dr Coppelius realises something is wrong but he cannot work out what. This happens again until finally he believes that his doll has magically come to life. He is absolutely delighted and he and Swanhilde dance together to beautiful music. The music is played both by the violinist and through the speakers in the auditorium.

At the end of the joyful dance, Dr Coppelius is full of delight and calls the doll, 'my little Coppelia.' Swanhilde cannot stop laughing at him. She laughs and laughs until she cries. She tells Dr Coppelius that she is just a girl and that his precious doll is broken under the table. Dr Coppelia is devastated and pulls the table back. You will see the doll with broken parts. Dr Coppelia chases Swanhilde out of his workshop and Swanhilde tells you all to follow her back outside. Swanhilde and the Front-of-House team will help you find your outside seats again.

### **Scene 3 (final scene):**

Swanhilde enjoys the thrill of what she has just done. Dr Coppelius arrives along the path pushing a cart which has his previous doll in it. The doll is obviously broken with legs facing different directions. He is very sad and angry so he shouts at Swanhilde. She wonders why a doll is so precious to him and he explains that he lost his own daughter many years ago: pretending



he still has his daughter Coppelia is the only way he can cope and now even that is lost. Swanhilde really wants to help somehow so she begins to put the broken doll back together. Dr Coppelius refuses to help. There is still something missing though - the eyes. Swanhilde tries to find the missing pair of eyes and eventually finds some up a tree. She brings them down and puts them back into the doll. Dr Coppelius is still very unhappy and turns to leave.

Suddenly, Coppelia the doll moves. Swanhilde and Dr Coppelius are very shocked. Coppelia slowly comes to life and moves around the cart where she asked Dr Coppelius, 'Are you my daddy?'. Dr Coppelius replies, 'Coppelia, my little Coppelia.' Something wonderful and magical has happened.

Now Coppelia, Dr Coppelius and Swanhilde all join in a joyous dance with lively music. At the end of the dance they will all take a bow and wonderful the story has come to an end. The audience will clap (this can be loud sometimes).

### **See you soon!**

We hope you've enjoyed reading about *Coppelia - A Mystery* and found it useful. If you need any more information about the production, please do get in touch and we will happily help.

We're really looking forward to welcoming you to the New Vic Theatre.



Photographs by:  
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