





MARVELLOUS: A VISUAL STORY

A visual resource for neurodiversity children and young adults including those with ASD.

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.

Hello, we are very much looking forward to welcoming you to the New Vic. We hope you're looking forward to Marvellous. 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. The team are here to help with any of your needs so please 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 the doors you will be met by another member of our Front of House team who will guide you to your seats and can answer any questions you may have.



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



CHILL-OUT AREAS

If anyone wants to leave the auditorium at any time during the performance, there are quiet areas that you can visit. You can relax here if you need a little break before going back in to watch the performance.



Ask the ushers where the quiet areas are and they will show you.

THE SET (WHAT THE STAGE LOOKS LIKE)



- When you come into the theatre auditorium, the lights will be on so that you can see the stage and find your allocated seat to watch the play. 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.
- Above and across the stage there are letters hanging down with light bulbs in them which spell 'Marvellous'. The floor has wooden tiles and these tiles move up above the stage to create a table that becomes the kitchen table and a hospital bed.
- The set is designed to look like a performance stage at the start of the play. The set will change as the action of the story moves to different locations. Sometimes you'll see the actors carrying 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 the first half of the play.
- As you enter the theatre, this is the view of the auditorium:



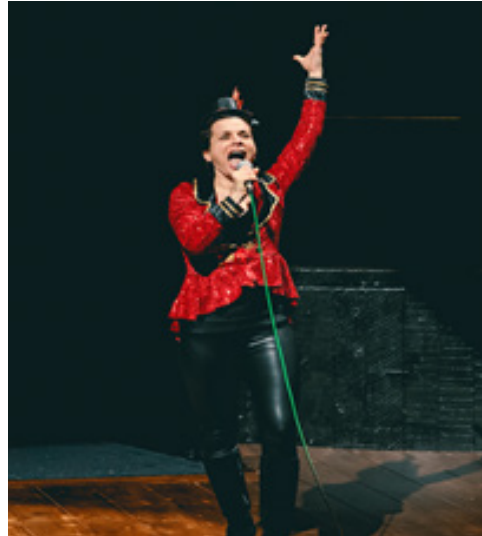
THE ACTORS

Here are pictures of the actors you will see in the play. There is a picture of each of them out of costume and one of them as a character. Actors tell the story by putting on an item of costume which can be a jacket or a scarf to represent different characters.

Suzanne Ahmet



As Suzanne



Charlie Bence



As Charlie



Gareth Cassidy



As Gareth



Alex Frost



As Alex



Michael Hugo



Real Neil



Jerone Marsh-Reid



As Jerone



Daniel Murphy



As Daniel



THE STYLE OF OUR PRODUCTION

- Our auditorium is in the round. This means that the action takes place in the centre and the audience is seated around the stage area. There are five aisles down to the stage.
- Neil Baldwin: this production is about the story of the local hero Neil Baldwin. The seven actors will all play Neil Baldwin by using his glasses to transform into him.
- There are several visual effects in the show: lights will change colour; they will be brighter and dimmer at different points during the show; and they will shine on the stage and onto the audience.
- There are moments in the show where the letters above the stage will be lit and at one moment they will move onto the stage. Sections of the wooden floor will move up to create a table.
- During the show, the actors and our stage manager will bring props onto the stage. The actors will also pretend to be cupboards and animals. More explanation is given in the story notes below.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PERFORMANCE?

The performance is split into two halves. During the performance, you are free to leave the auditorium and return as and when you need to. In the middle of the performance, there is a break called the interval. This lasts around 20 minutes. During this time, you can leave the auditorium if you would like to or you can stay in your seat.

We have highlighted sections for sensitivities to particular stimuli.

The story notes describe what happens in the play moment by moment.

If there are any sudden sounds, actions, changes or other surprises you will see these symbols:

This image
stimulus



= a visual stimulus

This image



= an audio

STORY NOTES



The actors are on stage getting ready before the show starts. They start the show by telling the story of Neil Baldwin. As they get ready to start the show, the Real Neil disrupts their performance by asking them if he can join. The actors are not keen on this idea but he insists. The actors realise that they cannot avoid having him in the show as he joins them on stage. Real Neil then directs the rest of the actors on how to tell his story by starting at the beginning with his mother and father.



Recorded music is played



There will be a moment when the stage will be dark apart from a lit square. As actors introduce themselves their square lights up. Real Neil is sat with the audience. He isn't real Neil but an actor playing him.



Suzanne becomes Mary Baldwin and Gareth becomes Harry Baldwin, Neil's parents. Neil's parents meet during World War II and they both work in a munition factory. Harry introduces Mary to football and they continue dating by going to Stoke matches. They get married and buy a season tickets for their honeymoon. Mary gives birth to Neil. Neil struggles with his speech and he goes to see a speech therapist which helps him to develop his speaking skills. Neil is also bullied at school by Eric Ackersley but Neil gets his own back by pretending to be Guy Fawkes to scare him.



Recorded loud football music and firework sound effects



Projection on the flow with football pitch and gentle flashes of lights representing fireworks



Daniel plays Neil in this scene. Neil tells his mother, Mary that he would like to leave school to earn a living and his teacher encourages him. His mother Mary is unsure about this since she thinks Neil is still young. Neil wants to become a butcher, football manager, clown, and Vicar. Mary isn't very keen on any of these ideas because Neil doesn't like blood, he is scared of clowns and he would need to study to become a vicar. Neil isn't keen on studying but he thinks he can go to Keele University. Mary encourages him to have dreams but he needs to be realistic too. In response to this, Neil says he will become a Prime Minister.

Mary then encourages him to work for the Potbank, a pottery factory instead. Neil goes to Keele University after work and welcomes the students who think he is a vicar. He meets Malcolm Clarke who later becomes the chair of the football support association and they become good friends as they share their love for football. Neil also tricks George Eastham (Football legend – the 1966 England world cup winning squad) to sign his programme.



There are multiple accents



There is projection of snowflakes on the floor
The actors also pretend to be cupboards.



This is when Neil decides that he will continue collecting signatures for his programmes. He hitchhikes and manages to get signatures from Charlie Cairoli, Tony Benn, Kevin Keegan, Harold Wilson and Prince Charles. Neil attends the football tryouts and decides that he doesn't want to become a footballer instead he joins the circus with his egg and rope act. They give him the stage name Nello. At this point the actor Jerone takes over from Daniel to play Neil.



Loud recorded music



Lighting changes quickly from one colour to the next on stage.

The stage goes dark at the end of act.



The Real Neil welcomes everyone back from the interval and introduces the second act. Jerone is now playing Nello. Nello does his egg act for the circus which is a huge success. The Real Neil tells Nello that he also did a music act, playing the trumpet. Nello does the music act. Real Neil then plays himself as his mother arrives at his caravan to check on him. She is not happy with how he is living. At this point, Neil has a monkey who lives with him. Neil finds out later that the monkey died when Neil left the circus. Neil works in Cosmic Circus and he leaves because they do not pay him. He joins Morrison's Magnificent Circus but discovers Mr Morrison is in the hospital and the acrobats have left for Edinburgh Festival. Neil decides to go back to his caravan but finds it has been stolen and all his costumes have been burned. He called Vicar Reverend Jack for a lift. Neil finds out that his mother had moved to a new house and decides to get a job by making an application for the Stoke City manager role.



Loud recorded music



Egg drop from above the stage.

There is shouting in this scene.

Lou Macari becomes the manager of Stoke City. Neil waits outside in the rain to meet him and he gets Lou to sign his programme. Neil asks Lou if there is any jobs for him like a manager or a kitman. Lou offers him the kitman job after finding out all the things Neil did while he was in the circus. Every match Neil walks on to the pitch with a different costume like Lord Baldwin of Keele, a chicken and a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle. Neil has a lot of fun. The players put him in the laundry skip and wheel him about. Neil enjoys making people laugh. Charlie asks him if they were laughing at him or with him. Real Neil ignores the question and instead tells the story of the underpants. Neil puts on Martin Carruther's black silk underpants and all the players' underpants on top. Martin isn't happy when he finds out but they all find it very funny.



Loud recorded music



Projection of the football pitch.

References to bullying which some might be sensitive.



1993: Stoke testimonial match where Lou brings Nello onto the pitch. Neil shouts instructions to the players. The Villa players let Neil take the ball but Kelly, from his own team, tackles Neil and takes the ball but doesn't score. We learn that Kelly apologises to Neil many years later.



Projection of the football pitch.



Neil's mother worries about how Neil will cope if she is not around as he makes a lot of mistakes with money, including putting an advert in the paper for his own birthday and an electricity bill of £6000 because he gets all the meter numbers mixed up. Mary wants Neil to be able to look after himself. She's worried that when she is not around, Neil won't be able to look after himself. So Mary teaches Neil how to cook but it gets very messy.



Loud recorded music



Actors become cupboards, in the middle of the stage a table is lifted to create the kitchen table.

Ingredients that are used to prep food are sprayed, squirted, crushed and poured across the table and on to the actors.

Stage Manager joins the actors to clear the space



In 1989, Mary encourages Neil to move into his own flat. When Neil is in Reading for the Stoke City match, he finds out that his mother is in the hospital because of a heart attack. He tries to call but can't get through. Big Neville Southall gives Neil money to visit his mother in the hospital. When Neil gets there, he finds Mary in the hospital bed. Neil hopes that his mother would get better. He takes care of her until Mary moves to Thistleberry Care Home where she passes away. After Mary's death, Neil stops doing all the things he loves doing which worries his friends. The social services visit him and he tells them to leave him alone.



Sound of the hospital machines



The table transforms into a hospital bed.
Church windows are lit on the floor
Some might find this scene emotionally sensitive.



Malcolm's friend Francis writes in the Guardian newspaper to celebrate Neil Baldwin's 50th anniversary at Keele University. Peter Booker contacts Neil to make a film about him and Neil agrees. Peter encourages Neil to come to the rehearsals and Neil says he would be there every day. Neil meets Toby Jones and the film wins a BAFTA. Neil is also on the New Year's honors list to receive a British Empire medal.



Projection of the article in the Guardian on the stage floor.
Moving star lights on stage and on the audience.



Recorded Sound



A sock puppet pop out from the stage floor as the character Vic Trigg.

Now Neil runs a retirement home for budgies. Real Neil tells us that Norman Barret did a routine with budgies and when the budgies got older Norman would send them to Neil's retirement home.



Neil has always tried to be happy in his 76 years and he enjoys making others happy. He shares his recipe for happiness from making people laugh to getting a pet. Charlie finally gets to do the speech they all prepared at the end of the play. During this speech, Neil plants a custard pie on Charlie's face and they all have a foam custard pie fight.



Song is sung by the cast.



Moving star lights from the stage to the audience.
The letters above the stage moves on to the stage.