



# THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD



## VISUAL GUIDE FOR RELAXED PERFORMANCES

# **THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD**

## **VISUAL AND ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCE GUIDANCE**

### **Relaxed Performances**

If you are attending a specific relaxed performance, there will be a 'chill out' space provided. You can leave and re-enter at any point. There will be signs for the space in the theatre when you arrive, and the theatre staff will be able to assist you.

### **BSL Performances**

If you are attending a specific BSL performance, there will be a BSL interpreter on stage during the performance. Tall Stories use integrated sign language, and so our signer is a trained performer who is rehearsed into the show. For The Gruffalo's Child, our signer is Jeni Draper. She will be dressed in similar costume to the Narrators and will move with the cast around the stage. Please use the access booking line or email address and specify your requirements to box office so that they can seat you in the most appropriate part of the theatre.

### **Audio Described Performances**

A trained Audio Describer will be in a box at the back of the auditorium with a view of the stage and will conduct the description live. An introduction is given prior to the show. During silent intervals in the show (e.g. when there is a scene change and no dialogue), verbal commentary describes the setting, costumes, characters, facial expressions, body language and action. The description does not interfere with the performance but fills in the gaps.

### **How long does the play last?**

55 minutes – with no interval

### **What is the play about?**

The show is based on the book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. The play includes all the text from The Gruffalo's Child book, but we add some more words, songs, lots of fun and some audience participation. There is plenty of music in the show with all the actors singing songs and interacting with audiences on a regular basis. The characters are friendly and approachable.

**Counting, rhyme, rhythm and repetition** form a large part of the production, so feel free to sing-a-long, dance and answer back when the feeling takes you!

The performance opens with three storytellers coming out onto the stage. It is cold and they throw snowballs at each other and two of the storytellers run away to hide. The remaining one starts to tell us the story of the Gruffalo's Child.

**The Gruffalo** is asleep in his cave having a bad dream about **The Big Bad Mouse**. As he awakens, **The Gruffalo's Child** enters the scene and asks her dad what he was dreaming about. He says that

he was dreaming of a mouse; a terrifying, gruesome, horrifying mouse. **The Gruffalo's Child** starts to laugh, saying mice are tasty and she and her dad should go out hunting for some.

But **The Gruffalo** says: "No Gruffalo should ever set foot in the deep dark wood" and sings a song to explain why. **The Gruffalo's Child** pretends to promise that she will follow his advice as this is the only way she will be able to avoid **The Big Bad Mouse**. He gives her a toy, **Stickman** to protect her.

As soon as **The Gruffalo** has fallen asleep, **The Gruffalo's Child** ignores her father's warning and decides to venture out into the snow with Stickman by her side. She's not scared – she has **Stickman** to protect her and she sings 'Stick with Me'.

On her way through the wood, **The Gruffalo's Child** first encounters the **Snake**, who is throwing a 'skin-warming party' to celebrate shedding his old skin. He teaches the **Gruffalo's Child** a dance and asks the audience to clap along. **The Gruffalo's Child** asks him if the **Big Bad Mouse** is invited to the party? **Snake** asks for a description of **The Big Bad Mouse**, so **Gruffalo's Child** tells him – he is

*'terribly strong, his scaly tail is terribly long, his eyes are like pools of terrible fire, and his terrible whiskers are tougher than wire!'*

**Snake** doesn't believe her, but when she says she is hungry and quite fancies some 'scrambled snake' he gives her a tip of where mouse will be.

*"The Big Bad Mouse is down by the lake eating Gruffalo cake"*

**The Gruffalo's Child** continues her journey through the wood. She then encounters the **Owl** who is teaching flying lessons. He asks the audience to join in for a lesson. He hasn't seen **The Big Bad Mouse** either and upon learning that he is facing a Gruffalo, he tells **The Gruffalo's Child** that the mouse is

*"Somewhere nearby, eating Gruffalo-pie"*

**Owl** runs off and **The Gruffalo's Child** continues her journey. She soon comes across **Fox** who is a bit of a trickster and tries to sell the Gruffalo's Child to the audience! He sings 'I Could Sell the Sunshine'. Then, also scared he might be eaten tells her that the **Big Bad Mouse** is –

*"Under a tree, drinking Gruffalo tea"*

**The Gruffalo's Child** gets disheartened that she has been told so many different things. She says she doesn't believe in the Big Bad Mouse at all! But then, a smaller **Mouse** appears! Just as **The Gruffalo's Child** is preparing to eat **Mouse**, **Mouse** has a brilliant idea and tells the **Gruffalo's Child** that the **Big Bad Mouse** is coming for a midnight picnic. They sing, The Big Bad Mouse song. **Mouse** climbs onto a tree branch and as full moon projects a large shadow onto the ground making **The**

**Gruffalo's Child** believe she has come across **The Big Bad Mouse**.

In fear she runs back to the safety of the Gruffalo cave and leaves **Stickman** behind by mistake. **Mouse** tries to stop her in order to hand her the wooden toy, but it's too late. **The Gruffalo's Child** has already made her way to her home where she's "a bit less brave...a bit less bored".

The performance ends with **Mouse** putting **Stickman** into **The Gruffalo's Child's** arms while she sleeps.

### The Characters

- **THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD**
- **THE GRUFFALO**
- **SNAKE**
- **OWL**
- **FOX**
- **MOUSE**
- **STORYTELLER**
- **STICKMAN**
- **BIG BAD MOUSE**

There are 3 performers in the play. Two men, one woman. The male actor plays the role of the **The Gruffalo and the predators – Fox, Owl & Snake**. One of the female actors plays The Gruffalo's Child and the other male actor is the **Narrator and Mouse**. Stickman and The Big Bad Mouse are puppets.

The characters will speak directly to the audience, who are encouraged to feel free to sing along and answer back when prompted. This is completely optional so you can choose if you want to join in or not.

The costumes are simple and hint towards the character that the actor is playing without being a full skin type costume, e.g. **Snake wears a snake print coat and moves his body like a snake and Fox wears an orange coloured jacket with a tail and a hat with ears**. The actors' faces are shown throughout the performance so they can have more direct contact with the audience and suit the very physical style of the show. You can see photos of the cast in costume below so that you know what to expect when you come to watch the show.

## The Actors

### **The Gruffalo's Child - Harriet Waters**

This is Harriet. Harriet plays The Gruffalo's Child in the play.



Hello everybody, my name is Harriet Waters and I'll be playing the Gruffalo's Child and I can't wait!

#### **What have been your favourite projects to work on?**

SHEWOLVES was for sure a favourite project to work on. It was a creative and collaborative process with a dream team of people.

#### **What was your favourite story as a child?**

Angelina Ballerina is a classic. When I was little, I used to prance around in my pink tutu like her.



#### **This is Harriet in costume as The Gruffalo's Child**

She wears a furry suit to look like the Gruffalo's Child from the book. The suit has lots of different shades of brown fur.

She has purple prickles on her back

Under the suit she wears a white top

She wears a headband with brown, furry ears attached.

She wears dark brown gloves with white claws at the end.

She wears brown, furry boots with white claws.



## **The Gruffalo, Fox, Snake & Owl – Maxwell Tyler**

This is Maxwell. Maxwell plays The Gruffalo, The Snake, The Owl & The Fox

Hello, my name is Max and I'm an actor musician from Essex!

### **What is your favourite thing to do in the snow?**

Look directly upwards to the sky and see the snow falling straight down towards you!

### **If you were a monster, what would you look like?**

I'd have bigger ears, a bigger nose, greener skin, loads of horns on my head, smaller feet, and a great big tail like a

kangaroo.

## **This is Max in costume as The Snake**



Snake speaks with a light rp accent. He is throwing a party when the Gruffalo's Child arrives looking for the Big Bad Mouse.

As Snake, Max wears a brown and golden and white snakeskin patterned jacket with a black collar.

He wears grey trousers and black shoes.

This is Max as The Owl

Owl is old and a bit forgetful.

He wears a beige cardigan with brown and white knitted feathers on the arms to represent his wings. He also has a pair of orange glasses.

He wears grey trousers and black shoes.



This is Max as The Fox

Fox has a cockney, London accent and is a bit of a trickster.

He wears an orange fedora style hat with ears

He wears an orange coat with a fur collar, fur lined sleeves and pockets.

He has a brown and white bushy tail and brown fingerless gloves.

## Mouse – Samuel Tracy

This is Samuel. Samuel plays the Storyteller and the Mouse.



Hello. My name is Samuel. I trained in Acting at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

### **What have been your favourite projects to work on?**

I had so much fun playing a singing, dancing goat in the Billy Goats Gruff and transforming into a big bad wolf for The Ultimate Pickle was a delight - Obviously animals seem to be my forte!

### **What was your favourite story as a child?**

I was obsessed with The Little Mermaid as a kid, I would've given anything to be a Merman under the sea (still would to be honest!)

This is Samuel as the Storyteller

He wears a grey top and grey trousers with brown shoes with grey woolly hat.





He wears the same outfit as the Storyteller, but has a brown belt that becomes the mouse's tail.

2 ears are pulled out of the top of the woolly hat.

The costume change is done on stage so you can see her transform into Mouse.

The Big Bad Mouse and Stickman are both puppets.

This is The Big Bad Mouse

The Big Bad Mouse is a shadow puppet. It is large and black with 2 red eyes and arms that move up and down.

The puppet represents the shadow of the Mouse standing on top of a hazel twig to frighten The Gruffalo's Child.

The puppet doesn't speak and appears towards the end of the show for a few seconds.





This is Stickman

Stickman is a large wooden stick with arms and legs. He doesn't speak or move and is held by The Gruffalo's Child.

### The Set



The play is set at night time in the Deep, Dark Wood in winter. There is fake snow on the stage around the bottom of the set. The first scene is in the Gruffalo Cave, and later takes place in the woods whilst the Gruffalo's Child is searching for The Big Bad Mouse. She returns to the Gruffalo Cave at the end of the play.

There is a big circle hanging at the back of the stage. This is the moon and is lit up to show the moon shining at night.

There is a large piece of set at the back of the stage, under the moon. It is painted with lots of trees to look like a wood. The colours are grey and blue. This moves to reveal the Gruffalo Cave at the start and end of the play. The wall revolves to reveal The Gruffalo sleeping on a stump.

In front of this piece, on the left and right side of the stage are large pieces that look like trees. They are grey and blue, to show moonlight and a wintery woodland. The trees are on wheels and are moved around by the cast throughout the play.

At the front of the stage on the left are two pieces that look like rocks / treestumps. They are also a grey/blue colour and have fake snow piled around the bottom. These are sat and stood on and moved around the stage throughout the play.

### **Lighting**

The play is set at night so there are lots of blue / white lighting states throughout.

There is a large moon cloth hanging at the back of the stage, which is lit to show moonlight. At one point this light goes out to show the moon disappearing behind a cloud.

The lights will dim to signal the start of the performance. This will just be for a few seconds.

At the end of the show there will be a blackout on stage to show that the play has finished. It will only be for a couple of seconds before the lights come back up and the cast take their bows.

If you are attending a specific relaxed performance, the houselights will be kept on at a low level throughout the performance so at no point will it be completely dark in the auditorium.

There are no strobe or flashing lights used in this production.

## Sound

All music is pre-recorded with live singing. The cast wear microphones to make sure that everyone can hear them.

There are lots of songs in the show. If you need to familiarise yourself with the songs in advance, we offer a complimentary copy of the CD soundtrack for access patrons. Please contact Tall Stories so that we can arrange this.

Below is a list of songs in the show:

1. The Deep Dark Wood
2. Lullaby
3. Stick With Me
4. I Could Sell The Sunshine
5. The Big Bad Mouse

There are moments where the audience are encouraged to shout out and join in with the songs. This is optional and you don't have to join in if you don't want to.

There are no loud bangs or crashes but at times the characters will shout loudly.

When the Big Bad Mouse puppet appears, there is some atmospheric music played that sounds quite spooky.

If you are attending a specific relaxed performance, the overall volume of the songs and the voices will be brought down slightly.

## Production Shots



## Other information

**Recommended age** The Gruffalo's Child is recommended for ages 3+.

**Running Time:** The play lasts for approx. 55 minutes. There is no interval.

## Announcements

There will be an announcement just before the show asking for mobile devices to be switched off and advising that photography or filming of any kind is not permitted. If you need to use a specific electronic device such as an iPad to aid with communication, please inform the ushers as you enter the theatre

