

**Visual Story for the  
Relaxed Performance of...**

THE PLAY THAT GOES  
**WRONG**



**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 3pm**  
**DUCHESS THEATRE**  
**Catherine Street, London, WC2B 5LA**



## Contact Us

If you would like to have a familiarisation visit to the Duchess Theatre before the relaxed performance date in September, please contact our Access Team on 0330 333 4815 or email [access@nimaxtheatres.com](mailto:access@nimaxtheatres.com)

## Touch Tour

If you would like, you could come for a look around the stage to see how some of these things are done. If you think this might be helpful and you would be interested let us know when you book your tickets

If you have any questions about your visit please feel free to contact our Access Team on 0330 333 4815

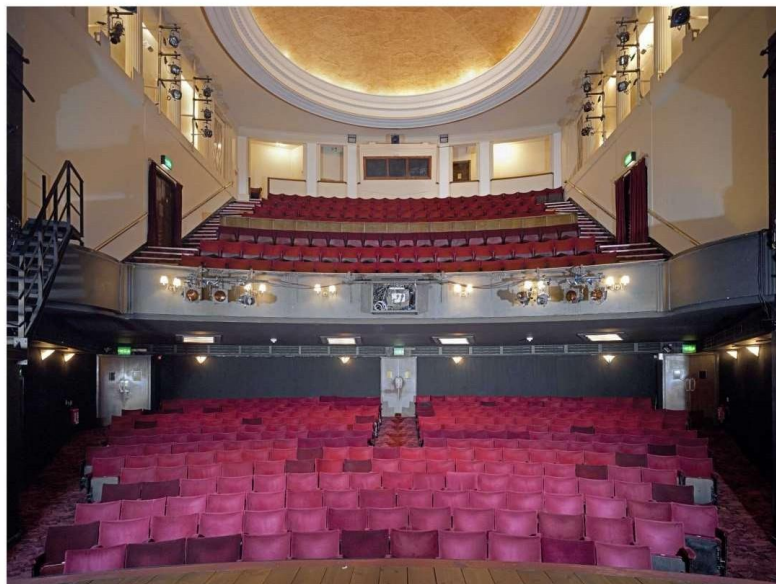
**We hope that you enjoy the show and your time with us here at the Duchess Theatre**



# Key Information about your visit

This visual story is designed for visitors coming to the relaxed performance of *The Play That Goes Wrong* to help prepare you if you are curious or anxious about your visit.

- The relaxed performance will start at 3pm.
- Act 1 is roughly 1 hour, then there will be a 20 minute break (interval) followed by Act 2 which will be roughly 45 minutes.
  - The show will finish around 5pm.
- We will open the front doors at 2pm on the day of the relaxed performance. You are welcome to arrive from this time onwards to use any of our facilities and to purchase drinks and show souvenirs.
- The auditorium (pictured below) will open at 2.15pm so you will be able to take your seats from this time ahead of the show starting at 3pm.



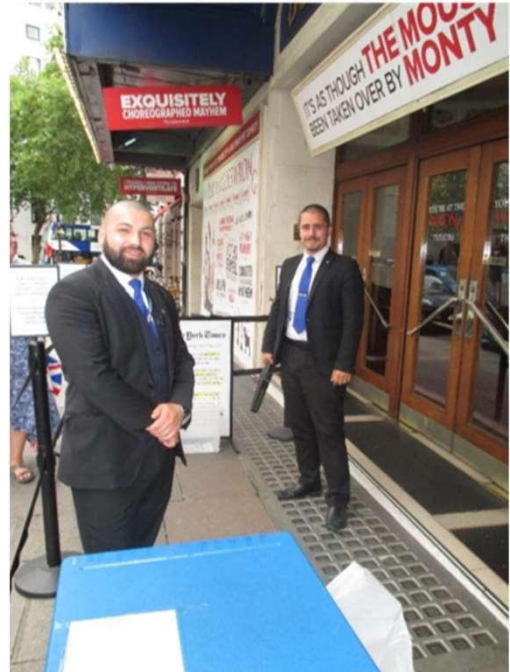
The Duchess Theatre has been home to *The Play That Goes Wrong* for 10 years.

# Your Journey at the Duchess Theatre

When you arrive at the theatre you will be greeted by our friendly security staff (As seen in the picture to the right). You

may need to wait in a queue at this point, this can get busy and noisy. The queue will be along the side of the building to the middle front doors.

You will need to show your bags to the security staff and they may ask to see some of your personal belongings. The security staff might also use a handheld metal detector over your clothes.



If you need to collect your tickets you will have to go to our Box Office where our staff will help you. This is pictured to the left and is in the main foyer just beyond the front doors.



If you would like to buy a programme (which will tell you more about the cast and the show) or look at any merchandise, you can also do this in the foyer right next door to the box office.

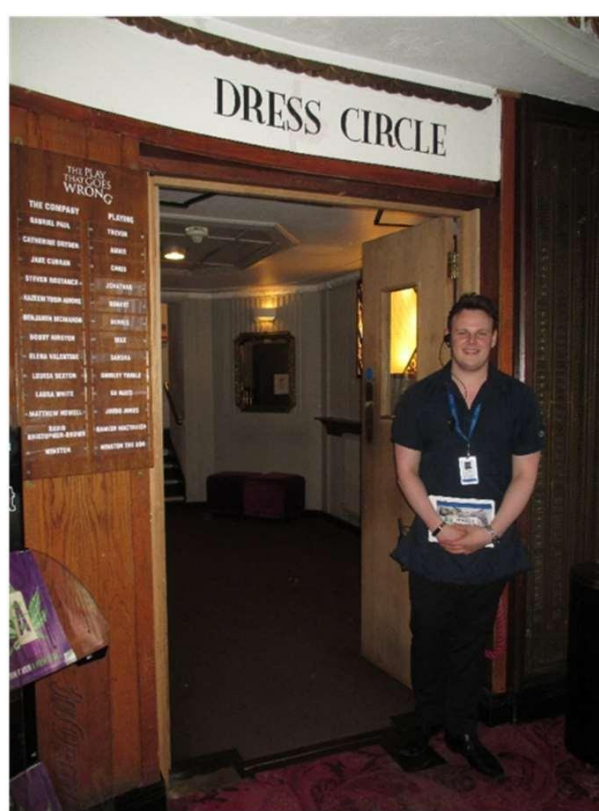
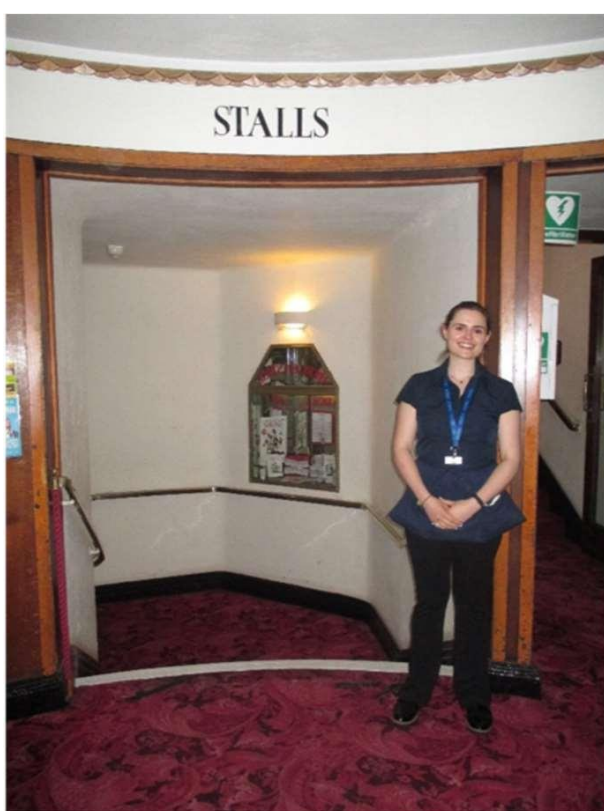




# Your Journey at the Duchess Theatre

Once you have your tickets you will then need to hand them to a member of front of house staff who will tear off the small part and hand you back the rest of the ticket. They will then guide you in the right direction towards your seats, the bars and toilets.

The theatre has 2 levels; the Stalls and the Dress Circle.



Please feel free to ask any of our staff questions about facilities, the theatre and the show. They will all be dressed in the uniform in these pictures and be identifiable by Nimax lanyards.

We will also have some volunteers from Go Live Theatre Projects available to help answer any questions and to help point you in the right direction if needed.

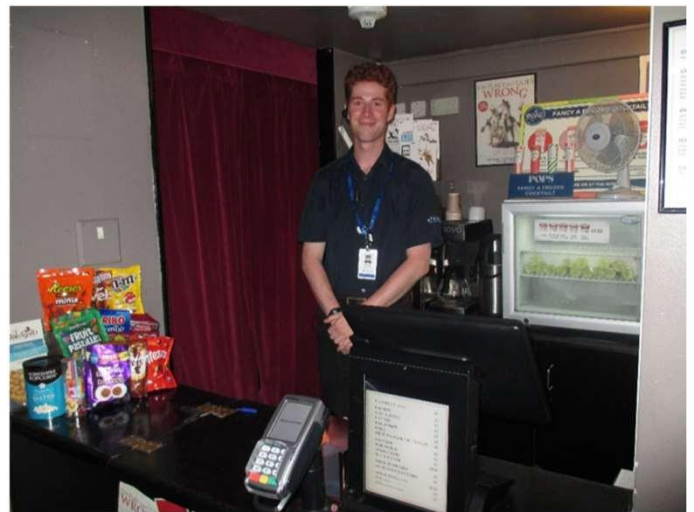
# The Stalls



If you are seated in the Stalls there are 20 steps down to the auditorium level.

You will also find Gents, Ladies and an Accessible toilet on this floor.

## Cloakroom



## The Stalls Bar



You will find the Stalls bar (pictured above) a further 4 steps down from the Stalls corridor.

You can purchase drinks and snacks from here.

This bar will be used as a **Chill-out Area**.

Down the stairs from the foyer you will find the cloakroom (pictured above) This is where you can leave your bags and coats.

This is also where you can collect a headset or loop to help you hear the show if you require one.

## Stalls Auditorium

Once you are ready to sit down and the auditorium is open there will be staff to guide you to your seats



# The Dress Circle



## Dress Circle Bar

Here you can purchase drinks, snacks and programmes to take inside the auditorium

If you are seated in the Dress Circle there are 11 steps from the Dress Circle bar to the Dress Circle auditorium entrance.



If you are seated in the Dress Circle the Gents toilets can be found a further 8 steps up and the Ladies toilets 24 steps up from the auditorium entrance.

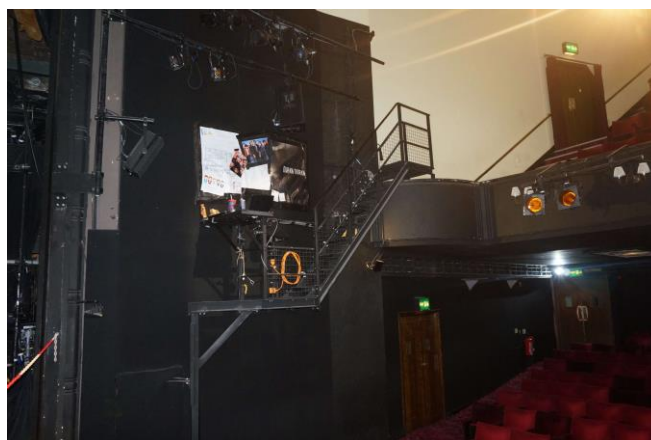
## Dress Circle Auditorium

Once you are ready and the auditorium is open there will be staff to guide you to your seats





## **Other useful information**



**The picture above is what we call “Trevor’s Perch”. This cast member will come in and out of the Dress Circle auditorium throughout the show to access this perch.**

### **Chill-out Area**

This area will be in the [Stalls Bar](#) and is there for you to use if you would like to come out of the auditorium and take a break from the show. You can go back into the auditorium again when you want to. If you want to know where this area is please ask a member of staff to show you the way.

### **Mobile Phones & Tablets**

**Mobile phones and tablets will be allowed to be used inside the auditorium during the show for this relaxed performance. However, we ask that you do not take photos or record during the show.**

### **Show Changes**

We are going to tell you a lot more about the play in the next few pages but for your information, at this performance the lighting, sound and some of the effects in the show have been altered in order to reduce anxiety and to provide a less stressful experience.



# What is the Play About?

Often it is nice to know what it is we are about to see. We're going to tell you all about the show in the next few pages but here is a brief spoiler free\* outline of what the play is about.

'The Play That Goes Wrong' does exactly what it says. It is a play that goes wrong! The Cornley Drama Society - an amateur dramatics group - are putting on a production of a murder mystery play called The Murder at Haversham Manor.

The problem is, they are not actually very good and they make a lot of mistakes. As the play goes on things get worse and worse and hopefully it is very funny!



*\*A spoiler is when someone tells you what is going to happen before it actually happens. Some people like to be surprised when they watch things but others would rather know in advance. Both options are just as good as each other so it is up to you. If you don't want to know any spoilers then don't read the section of this document called 'What Happens in the Play' or ask someone else to read it first and tell you the important bits!*

# What is a 'Play Within a Play'?

In this play, the actors are playing two roles as the characters themselves are also doing a play - This is called a 'Play within a Play'. It occurs in quite a few shows like 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' or 'Hamlet'. It can, however, be a little confusing so we are going to explain it a little to help you through the rest of this guide.

- **Actors:** When we talk about the 'Actors' we will be referring to the performers themselves - the people who will be performing for you on the day.
- **Characters:** The play is about 'The Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society' and they are the first set of 'characters' we will get to know. The 'actors' are playing a group of amateur performers who are themselves putting on a play called 'The Murder at Haversham Manor'. So when we talk about the 'Characters' we will be talking about the members of the Cornley Polytechnic Society.
- **Roles:** So, our 'Actors' are playing 'Characters' that are putting on a play and as such they all have another 'Role' within that play. When we talk about the 'Roles' we will be referring to the parts they are playing in 'The Murder at Haversham Manor'.
- **Costumes:** A costume is the clothes that an actor wears when they are playing a character. Our 'Characters' all wear costumes for their roles. When they change their costume it is because they are taking on a different 'Role' in the Murder at Haversham Manor. On the next page you will see some pictures of the costumes.

Phew, okay, on with the show...

THE PLAY THAT GOES  
WRONG

# The Characters and Roles



**Character Name:** Chris

Chris is the leader of the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society and director of this production. He has worked very hard and he really wants it to go well.

**Role:** Inspector Carter

The Inspector is the detective in charge of solving the murder.

**Character Name:** Robert

Robert thinks of himself as the star of the show. He is a bit of an old fashioned actor and has a tendency to overdo things a little.

**Role:** Thomas Colley Moore

Thomas is the best friend of the murdered man, Charles, and brother to Charles' fiancé.



**Character Name:** Dennis

Dennis has joined the company to make new friends, he's very nervous and a bit forgetful.

**Role:** Perkins

Perkins is the butler at Haversham Manor. He's quite old but very wise.

**Character Name:** Annie

Annie is very friendly and a little bit shy. She doesn't have any desire to be on stage.

**Role:** None

Annie is the stage manager of the Cornley Polytechnic and so her role in the company is backstage... at least at first!





# The Actors, Characters and Roles



**Character Name:** Max

This is Max's first time on stage and he is having the time of his life! He doesn't really understand the rules of theatre and he's a bit clumsy.

**Role:** Cecil Haversham

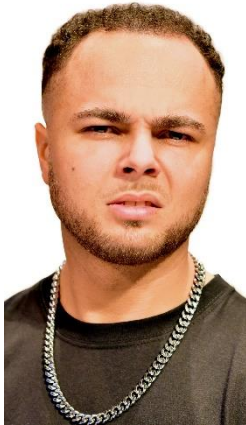
Cecil is Charles' brother and unknown to anyone else he is having an affair with Charles' fiancé.

**Character Name:** Sandra

Sandra thinks she is a very good actor, but she is a bit vain and she doesn't listen very well.

**Role:** Florence Colley Moore

Florence is due to marry Charles but she has been having a secret affair with Cecil.



**Character Name:** Trevor

Trevor is a technician, he wants to do his job well but gets distracted easily. He doesn't want to be on stage.

**Role:** None

Trevor is the show's technician so he doesn't have a role in the play... at least at first!

**Character:** Jonathan

Jonathan tries his very best but sometimes he is a little over enthusiastic.

**Role:** Charles Haversham

Charles is the Lord of Haversham Manor. At the beginning of the play Charles has been murdered, or so it seems...



# The Understudies



Our Understudies are some of the most important people in our show. Not only do they do some amazing stuff backstage every night to make the show work, they also cover all of the other actors' roles if they are off sick or on holiday.

# The Set

The 'Upper level' represents Charles' private study. The floor here moves up and down very safely to make it seem as though it is falling.

The main door.

Fake bookcase with a hidden compartment behind it.



Chaise Longue

Grandfather Clock

Our set designer Nigel Hook has created a beautiful and amazing set where nothing is quite as it seems. Lots of the pieces are capable of moving or falling off as you will see throughout the show. Don't worry though, everything is carefully practiced and very safe!



# What happens in the play?

Things go wrong constantly throughout the play and at times it can make it quite hard to keep up with the storyline, here is a helping hand. The moments in purple are where something goes really wrong!

## ACT ONE

The Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society are presenting an old fashioned Murder Mystery play called 'The Murder at Haversham Manor'. The play is set in a big stately home somewhere in England on a snowy night in winter.

The play begins with the Character Chris who, as the director of the play, gives a short speech about the performance.

As the 'Play Within a Play' begins the character Robert and the character Dennis in their roles as Thomas and Perkins, discover Charles' dead body on a chaise longue in his private rooms. Thomas immediately makes a phone call to Inspector Carter to get police help and call in the character Sandra in her role as Florence and the character Max in his role as Cecil, they are both very upset. Cecil is certain the death was a suicide and reads a passage from Charles' private diary that seems to say he knew his fiancé was cheating on him and was heartbroken.

The Inspector arrives very quickly and he asks Perkins and Thomas to take the body upstairs so that it can be examined. (Robert and Dennis try to do this but the stretcher they are using to lift him breaks and Jonathan is left to sneak off-stage.) He follows them leaving Florence and Cecil downstairs alone. The audience find out about their affair and Cecil proposes to Florence. Meanwhile, upstairs in Charles' study, the inspector discovers a letter in Charles' jacket. Whilst Perkins is checking the body for fingerprints, Thomas is sure he sees the dead body breathing.

Back downstairs the inspector conducts some inquiries, firstly he questions Perkins about how well he knew and liked Charles. Perkins tells him that they were very close and he could have no motive to kill him. Then he questions Florence and reveals to her that he has read the letter found in Charles' pocket and now knows about the affair. (Some of the lines between Sandra and Chris do not make much sense as the lines they are speaking go out of sync with one another as they are not listening properly) Sandra is outraged that the Inspector would suspect her of such a thing and begins shouting for help.

At this point the actress playing the character Sandra gets knocked out by the door and her body is then dragged off-stage through the window. From this point onwards the actress playing the character Annie will take over the role of Florence.

Finally he questions Cecil about his relationship with his brother which Cecil admits was strained. The inspector accuses him but he denies any wrongdoing and leaves. The inspector is left alone to ponder who might be the murderer when he discovers a ledger (a kind of book for banking) with Charles' newly written last will and testament inside. Cecil and Thomas enter the room and the Inspector leaves via the elevator to examine this new piece of evidence.

In the downstairs room Thomas receives a confusing phone call from his accountant telling him that some money has been stolen from his bank account. Cecil then admits to Thomas that he has been having an affair with Thomas' sister. Thomas is very upset and they end up having a sword fight in which Cecil gets hurt. They exit the stage and gun shots are heard from somewhere in the house.

The Inspector, Perkins and Florence and gather in the downstairs room (This is Annie's first entrance in the role of Florence). Just then, Cecil comes reeling into the room with gunshot wounds and dies. Perkins and Thomas take the body outside and Florence has an hysterical episode at the loss of her lover. (Annie doesn't know how to represent the emotion properly as she is not an actor.) The Inspector asks a few more questions of the assembled group and they realise that the murderer must be one of the people currently in that room. (Dennis keeps saying a line from earlier in the scene and so they have to do it five times, with everyone getting increasingly angry with Dennis!)

# What Happens In The Play?

## ACT TWO

The play starts again with another speech from the character Chris (not in his role), apologising for the mistakes in Act One. (When the curtain is lifted for the start of Act Two the cast are not ready and there is chaos all across the stage.) When the 'Play Within a Play' starts again the Inspector goes off in search of the murderer. Thomas, Florence and Perkins stand horrified at all the destruction and the clock strikes twelve.

From upstairs in the study, Inspector Carter calls through the voice pipe (A way of communicating between rooms in large houses) to Thomas asking him to come and join him. The Inspector reveals a gun that he has found, he tells Thomas that he knows it was him that killed Cecil and that 'that wasn't the plan' suggesting that the inspector and Thomas may have had something to do with this evening's horrors.

Downstairs Florence and Perkins hear an ominous knock at the door. Fearing it may be the murderer Perkins hides Florence in a secret compartment behind a bookcase (At this point the stage manager Trevor finds himself accidentally on stage and hides inside the grandfather clock) but when he opens that door it is only Arthur the Gardener (Who is played by the character Max who played the role Cecil in Act One). Perkins explains the awful things that have happened there this evening (At this point Max knocks into the pole that supports the upper level knocking it loose and making the whole thing drop a little, making it very precarious for Robert and Chris who try desperately to get out. Robert accidentally breaks the door handle trapping them there).

Back downstairs Arthur reveals that he has found a handkerchief in the grounds that seems to be stained with cyanide (a very powerful poison). They notice that the handkerchief is embroidered with the initials F.C. and conclude that the murderer must be Florence Colley Moore. Perkins reveals her hiding place.

Upstairs the men talk about the last will and testament it turns out that in the event of his death, Charles had left his entire estate to Perkins. They conclude Perkins must be the murderer. (Chris is unable to go downstairs normally and has to jump off the side of the upper level). Just as the Inspector is about to blame Perkins for the murder he is confronted with the handkerchief and blames Florence instead. Just then the phone rings and it is Thomas's accountant again. (Robert is stuck on the upper level and laden with furniture so the cast have to create a chain across the stage to get the phone to his ear. As soon as he puts down the phone he takes all the furniture and starts banging at the broken door until Jonathan comes to help him.)

Downstairs the assembled men blame Florence for the murder, she protests her innocence. (at this point Annie is knocked out with the door by Robert. Luckily Sandra wakes up just in time to take over the role of Florence again.) The inspector leaves Florence in Arthur's custody for a minute and she tries to win him over with her beauty but loyal Arthur resists (At this point Max pushes Sandra into the grandfather clock which surprises Trevor, who is still hidden inside, he opens the door knocking her out again. Together they hide her unconscious body in the clock and Trevor is forced to take on the role of Florence). Eventually Arthur can resist her no longer and they are caught kissing by the rest of the cast.

Florence faints after more accusations but Arthur realizes that Florence can not be guilty as he saw a male figure creeping around the grounds. The Inspector returns his blame to Perkins and has him handcuffed to the chaise longue. Just then Charles bursts in and explains that he was not dead after all. The plan to poison him had failed. He reveals all he knows about the Inspector and Thomas's plan. He tells Thomas how the Inspector was pretending to be his friend but in reality he was stealing from him too.

Thomas shoots Inspector Carter and then Charles poisons Thomas, his former best friend. The play ends with Thomas surrounded by bodies praying that such an awful thing will never happen again.

(This section is pretty chaotic, Sandra and Annie both fight over who will get to play the role of Florence and **the set begins to come apart ending in the whole thing falling down!**)

# What else should you know?

- **Loud noises**

There will be loud noises throughout. These will be both recorded and live. It is all very controlled and you have nothing to worry about but sometimes it can feel a bit chaotic. If you think this may be too loud or too much for you, don't worry, just let a member of staff know when you book or arrive and we'll do our best to seat you somewhere that you feel comfortable. We can also send you a more detailed list of all the loud noises you can expect.

- **Weapons**

In the play you will see two swords and two different guns on-stage. These weapons are not real. The swords are blunted and the guns do not fire real bullets. The equipment is all made especially for use on stage. Late in act one and act two there will be gunshots.

Towards the end of Act One there will be two sounds of Gunshots from off stage. These are just sound effects played on speakers but they are quite loud.

Right near the end of Act Two there will a gunshot on-stage. This comes from the specialist gun that we use on stage but there is no bullet. It is quite loud and can make people jump a bit.

- **Violence**

There is quite a bit of fighting between the characters and in their roles. We call this 'Stage Combat' and we practice it every single day. You should think of it a bit like a dance. At times it might look and sound like people are really getting hurt but we have rehearsed very carefully to make sure nobody actually gets hurt. The sounds you hear are not real, they are being made backstage.

- **Communication**

Sometimes the characters will talk to the audience. You do not need to reply but you can if you want. Just be aware that the actors may talk back! When the actors are not talking directly to you, **you do not need to reply.**

Sometimes in the show the actors may shout at each other, either in their roles or as their characters but they are not really angry with each other.

**If you have any questions before coming to see the show or on the day please don't hesitate to contact us in advance or speak to a member of staff when you're at the Duchess Theatre.**

**From everyone in 'The Play That Goes Wrong' team,  
we hope you have a fantastic time!**