

Kneehigh  
ON TOUR

# HANSEL & GRETEL



Memory Aid for Students:  
Don't Write Notes, Watch the Show!

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## 2. Overview

Hansel & Gretel is based on the original fairytale by The Brothers Grimm. A brother and sister are abandoned in the woods by their parents after a famine strikes.

After leaving a trail of petals and pebbles, Hansel & Gretel are able to make it back to their parent's house. However, After seeing how the famine has worsened and how little food there is to go around, they leave once again. **"It has to be done!"**

They are guided to a house made entirely of delicious-smelling bread by a bird, and are lured in by a kind old blind woman who fills their bellies with scrumptious treats. However, after becoming suspicious of the number of teddy bears and children's shoes... and bones... that are scattered everywhere, Hansel & Gretel discover the kind old blind woman is in fact... a WITCH!


The witch puts Hansel in a cage and feeds him up so that she can eat him. It looks like disaster is about to strike when his tricks to convince her he is still thin fail, but his plucky sister Gretel devises a plan which frees Hansel and gets rid of the witch forever!

Hansel & Gretel discover the witch's stores of food which they take back to their parents. And they all live happily ever after...

### Emma Rice, Director, on 'Making a Show':

"There is no formula to the way we make theatre. However, it always starts with the story. No, it starts before then. It starts with an itch, a need, an instinct.



"Each one is raw, relevant and personal. Stories have an ability to present themselves, to emerge as if from nowhere. But they never are from nowhere. This is the seminal moment of instinct. This is when your subconscious stakes its claim and intervenes in your carefully ordered life. I sit up when a story taps me on the shoulder. I respect co-incidence. I listen to impulse. One of my most hated questions when making theatre is 'Why?'. 'Because', I want to answer, 'Because...'.  


"For me, making theatre is an excavation of feelings long since buried, a journey of understanding. Bruno Bettelheim in 'The Uses of Enchantment' his book about children's relationship to fiction, states that "our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find

meaning in our lives". He argues that by revealing the true content of folktales, children can use them to cope with their baffling and confusing emotions. My fascination with certain stories is fuelled by my own subconscious. *The Red Shoes* charts the pain of loss, obsession and addiction, *The Wooden Frock*, follows the slow and faltering healing process, *Tristan & Yseult* is

a poem to love and its madness and *The Bacchae* a terrifying glimpse at the beast in us all. These are not children's themes but I often approach them in a childlike way. In my experience, our basic needs and desires are the same - to be communicated with, to be delighted, to be surprised, to be scared. We want to be part of something and we want to feel. We want to find meaning in our lives.

"The event of live theatre is a rare chance to deliver all these needs. We can have a collective experience, unique to the group of people assembled in the theatre. I don't want the fourth wall constantly and fearfully placed between the actors and their audience, I want the actors to speak to their accomplices, look at them, to respond to them. I want a celebration, a collective gasp of amazement. I want the world to transform in front of the audiences eyes and demand that they join in with the game. Theatre is nothing without the engagement of the audience's creativity. Theatre takes us right back to Bruno Bettelheim and his belief in the therapeutic and cathartic nature of stories. We tell them because we need them.

"Months before rehearsals begin, I start work with the creative team. We gaze at books and films, sketch and begin to form a concept; an environment in which the story can live, in which the actors can play. This physical world holds meaning and narrative, it is as much a story telling tool as the written word. Stu Barker (musical director and composer) and I exchange music we have heard, that inspires us or just feels right. We talk of themes and feelings. From these conversations he creates a musical palette of melodies and sound-scapes. With the writer or writers, we talk and dream. We map out the structure and the overall shape of the piece. They go away and write collections of poems or lyrics or ideas. Each writer works in a different way but what none of them do is to write a script or a scene in isolation.



"It is this fertile palette of words, music and design that we bring to the rehearsal room. As I said, Kneehigh is a team.

The shared imagination is greater than any individuals so we begin the rehearsal process by returning to the story. We tell it to each other, scribble thoughts on huge pieces of paper, relate it to our own experience. We create characters, always looking to serve and subvert the story. Actors like Mike Shepherd and Craig Johnson delight with their deft improvisation, breathing life and naughtiness into the bones of the story, performers like Bec Applebee and Eva Magyar use their painfully eloquent bodies to create physical poetry and story, Giles King and Tristan Sturrock tickle and disarm with their tragic clowns. Stu's music is used to help create the world, to guide and inform improvisation and release feeling. Lighting is used from day one, the design is developed with ideas coming from the devising team. The writers are in rehearsal. They watch and inspire, feeding in their poetry, their lyrics. They respond to improvisation and craft scenes and characters alongside the actors. Layer upon layer the world is created, the story released.

"We lay the foundations, then we forget them. If you stay true to the fundamental relationship between yourself, your team and the subject matter, the piece will take on a life of its own.

Armed with instinct, play and our building blocks of music, text and design, Kneehigh do fearless battle. One of our most used phrases in the process is 'hold your nerve'. There is no room for neurosis or doubt, these will only undermine the process, hold your nerve, stay open and delight in the privilege of making theatre.

"Each writer, Anna Maria Murphy, Carl Grose and Tom Morris bring their own beautiful and distinctive voice to the work. But remember, these texts represent just one layer of the worlds that Kneehigh creates. As you read, close your eyes from time to time. Let a tune drift back from your childhood or recall a painting that made your heart pound. Remember falling in love or losing control, leaving a loved one or laughing 'til you cried. Now the work lives. Now there is a connection. Now there is meaning."

**Emma Rice, Joint Artistic Director, Kneehigh Theatre**

## Mike Shepherd: Why Do We Do Theatre?

We do theatre because it's live.

The components of performance and audience create a different chemistry each and every night, there is no formula. On a good night we might "gel" an audience, take them on a journey and leave them somewhere they never expected to be. On a good night the auditorium can crackle with enchantment and excitement, it's all a delicate and indefinable balance to be lost or found every night.

Theatre is live – it's not like cinema where, sadly, most of the audience need a bucket of coke and a trough of popcorn to enjoy; it's not the casual channel flipping experience of TV – it aims to engage and transport so please: watch rather than take notes.

In response to the frequently asked questions about process and style... There is no Kneehigh formula or style. This is demonstrated by the three very different shows currently playing: The raw but crafted dance theatre of The Red Shoes; the elegant and rich inspiration of Brief Encounter; and the anarchic improvisation of Hansel and Gretel.



Why do we do theatre? Because anything could happen and leaps in the dark are imperative.

**Mike Shepherd, Joint  
Artistic Director, Kneehigh  
Theatre**

## 3. Credits

Father, The Witch

Gretel

Hansel

Mother, The Bird

Musicians

Stage Manager/Animator

Director

Assistant Director

Writer

Musical Director & Co-Composer

Co-Composers

Designer

Lighting Designer

Sound Designer

Puppetry Consultant

Mechanical Sculptor

Choreographer

Producer

Production Manager

Relights & Lighting Operator

Sound Operator

Wardrobe

Set Construction & Technical Support

Props Maker

Puppet Makers

Graphic Designer

Production Photographer

Illustrator

Carl Grose

Joanna Holden

Chris Price

Edith Tankus

TJ Holmes & Benji Bower

Fay Powell-Thomas

Mike Shepherd

Simon Harvey

Carl Grose

Ian Ross

Stu Barker

Michael Vale

Mike Gunning

Jason Barnes

Sarah Wright

Rob Higgs

Emma Rice

Paul Crewes

David Harraway

Liam Cleary

Phil Innes

Ruth Shepherd

Bristol Old Vic

Ruth Shepherd

Sarah Wright

Lyndie Wright

Geraldine Spiller

Dave Mynne

Steve Tanner

Swiftie

## 4. Scene Structure

| Scene Number | Scene  | Music   |
|--------------|--|---|
| ACT 1        |  |   |
|              | Pre Show (musicians - 5 mins before curtain up)                                    |   |
| 1            | Chorus Enter<br>Rabbit introduction to Hansel & Gretel<br>The Apple chain reaction | Take Each Day As It Comes   |
| 2            | Timber' Family set up  | Home Theme<br>Kindling Waltz                                      |
| 3            | Chickens - Maurine & Dianne  |   |
| 4            | Continue Family set up & chicken feeder.   |   |
| 5            | Enter Johan & Wilhelm for 1st Birthday   | ■ Birthday Song   |
| 6            | Famine 1   | Famine Wind   |
| 7            | Skinny Chickens  | Chicken Tango<br>Take each day as it comes (The Wind has a Bite). |
| 8            | Family - Enter Johan & Wilhelm for 2nd Birthday                                    | Birthday Song   |
| 9            | Famine 2   | Famine Wind   |
| 10           | Family   | Fine & Dandy  |
| 11           | Farandole Dance into the forest.   | Farandole   |
| 12           | Night time in the forest<br>Rabbits  | Forrest of Fishbone   |
| 13           | Skinny Dianne into Mother eating worms   | Chicken Tango<br>Goodbye Maureen<br>Life Is Hard                  |
| 14           | Mouse trap contraption   | Fine & Dandy<br>Hunger Lament                                     |
| 15           | Hansel & Gretel Leave and we see the Bread house and the Witch                     | Warmth in the Wilderness  |

| ACT 2 |   |   |
|-------|---|---|
| 16    | Musicians enter through the audience  |   |
| 17    | Hansel & Gretel wake up & meet the bird<br>Meet the Old Lady<br>Old Lady & Bird Cooking / Feeding | The Familiar<br>Bread House<br>Cooking  |
| 18    | Witch hunting 'Night hangs Open'  | Stoke the Flames<br>(Fall asleep Children)<br>Mary's Gone a hunting<br>Stoke the Flames<br>(Run away Children ) |
| 19    | Witch reveal<br>H&G captured<br>Rabbits   | Witch Reveal<br>Take Each Day<br>Stoke the Flames   |
| 20    | Bird Monologue  | The Familiar  |
| 21    | Gretel sets up Contraption  | Stoke the Flames  |
| 22    | Final Contraption & Witch burn  | Witch Death   |
| 23    | H&G look in the cellar & go home<br>Rabbits   | Warmth In the Wilderness  |
| 24    | Family Reunion<br>Enter Johan & Wilhelm   | Home Theme<br>Take each Day (Major)<br>Big Band lead out to Home Theme  |
| END   |   |   |

## 5. The Script

*The SUPERNATURE CHORUS stand in silhouette and sing:*

SONG

Once upon a time  
When suns were trusted to shine  
And birds, they sang the songs of May  
A saying was often spoke of this way -  
Take each day as it comes  
Take each day as it comes  
Take each day as it comes  
Take each day as it comes...

*Two RABBITS appear. They sing a long, nibble at the ground, etc.*

RABBIT 1

I like grass.

RABBIT 2

Me too. It's sweet.

HANSEL

Father? Will this wood-chopping lesson put me  
on the right path to becoming... a man?

FATHER

Oh, I hope so, son. I hope so.

HANSEL

"With the grain, not against it." Continue.

*FATHER offers his offers to HANSEL as MOTHER & GRETEL skin a rabbit.*

MOTHER

That's it darling. Cut around the throat. Now,  
skin it. Like removing a glove! Rip! Rip it!

FATHER

Home sweet home, eh Graham? Oh, he's frisky  
today, Hansel!

HANSEL

Father? Will I have a ferret in my trousers one  
day?

FATHER

We'll see son. We'll see.

DIANE

I saw omens, Maureen. Portents.

MAUREEN

Omens! Portents!

DIANE

I saw a buzzard flying backwards!

MAUREEN

I saw a snake swallow itself whole!

DIANE

I saw the moon fall out the sky!

MAUREEN

I saw the sun turn as black as sack-cloth.

DIANE

I saw a family of badgers singin Christmas carols  
- in July!

MAUREEN

Omens! Portents!

DIANE

I tell you, Maureen. This famine does nothing  
for egg production.

*A strange cackling character appears from nowhere with a bicycle. She shoots fire out of her fingertips and brings knives hurtling out of the sky.*

Forest of weariness  
Forest of growing doubt  
Forest of getting lost  
Forest of without  
Forest of without

*Famished, they pull handfuls of bread from the walls and THEY EAT.*

HANSEL

An incredible, edible house! What luck!

GRETEL

It's a dream come true!

*A bread door appears behind them.*

VOICE

Nibbledydee, niddlebyday!

Who's that nibbling at my house today?

GRETEL

Auntie? I accuse you of being... a witch!

*The OLD LADY transforms into WITCH!!!*

HAMLET

Yes! She is a witch, as it's plain to see! Now which one will the witch have for her tea?

WITCH

Yes! Which one's the most succulent? The most falls-off-the-bone? The most melt-in-the-mouth? They're all tough skin and chewy flesh - but I must make my choice over which one to cook!

OLD LADY

Now I've just the cure for rumbling tums. Like shortcake biscuits and sugar plums. What are you hungry for? What's your desire? Once you've tasted you'll never tire of my fabulous gooey banana sponge - or my legendary dish, *duck a la orange*? Howbout roast chicken with crisp golden spuds, followed by pudding with cream by the tub?

*A series of close shaves and near-misses.*

WITCH  
WHERE ARE YOU????

HANSEL  
*(swinging in like John McClean  
from "Die Hard")*  
I'm HERE!

*HANSEL's cage slams into the WITCH. She is knocked into the flames. Her screams and dies. HANSEL is released. Everyone sighs with relief.*

GRETEL  
She's dead.

*Suddenly, THE WITCH BURSTS OUT OF THE FLAMES, SHRIEKING, HER HAIR ABLAZE! KAMIKAZE RABBITS leap out of nowhere and go for the WITCH's throat. She falls back in. Sigh of relief.*

RABBIT 1  
I feel brave today.

RABBIT 2  
And so do I.

*The RABBITS hop with a new-found confidence - then shag.*

*Back home.*

*HANSEL & GRETEL make a shrine of food. MOTHER and FATHER appear in rags, and can't believe their eyes. GRETEL hands MOTHER an apple. She takes a bite.*

FATHER  
Our children.

MOTHER  
Our children have come home!

HANSEL  
*(twitching and dancing in his  
laderhousen)*  
Oh!

GRETEL  
What is it?

HANSEL  
I don't know, I - Oh!

*HANSEL finds a ferret in his trousers.*

HANSEL  
I've got my very own ferret down my trousers!

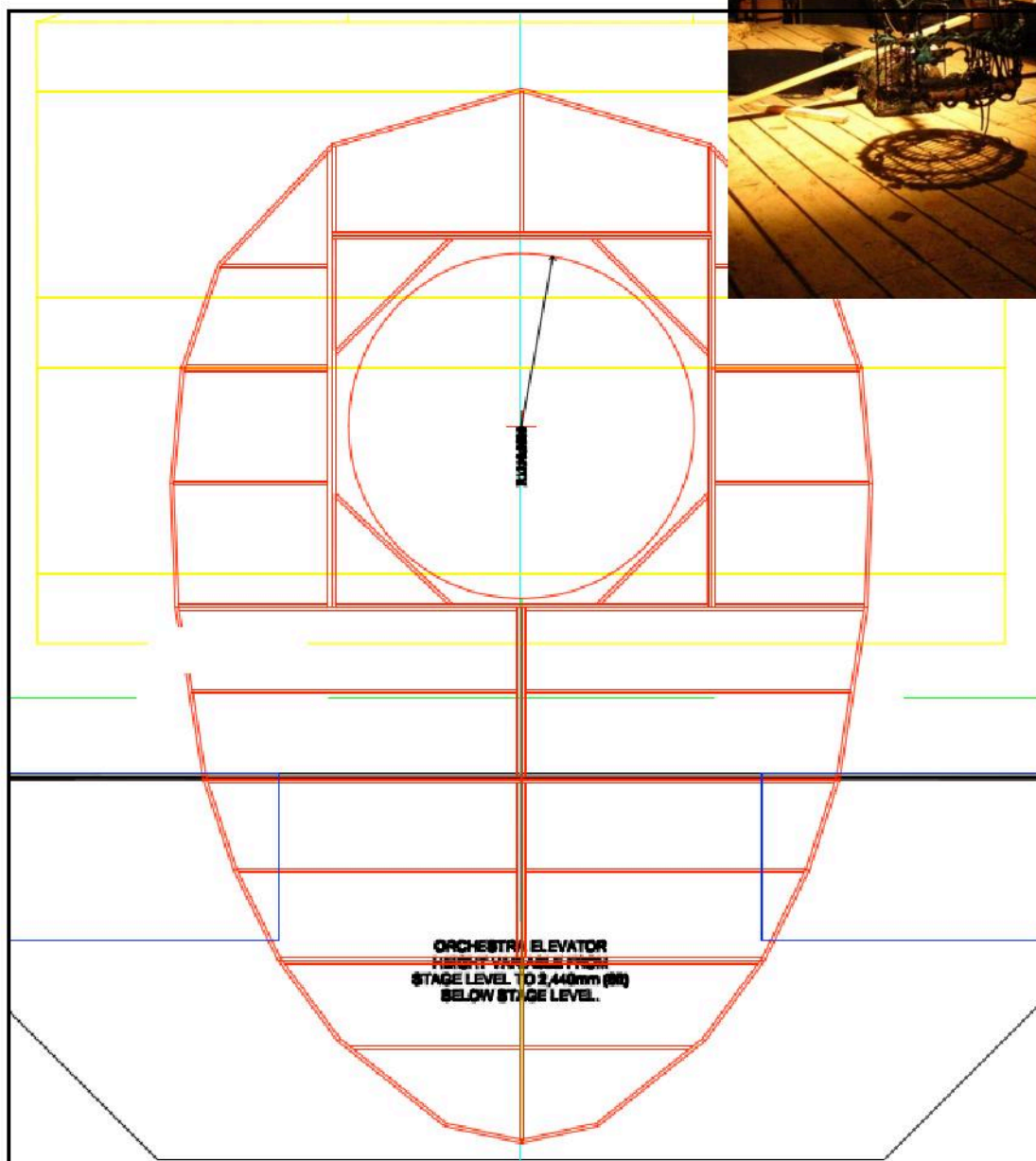
*Everyone cheers.*

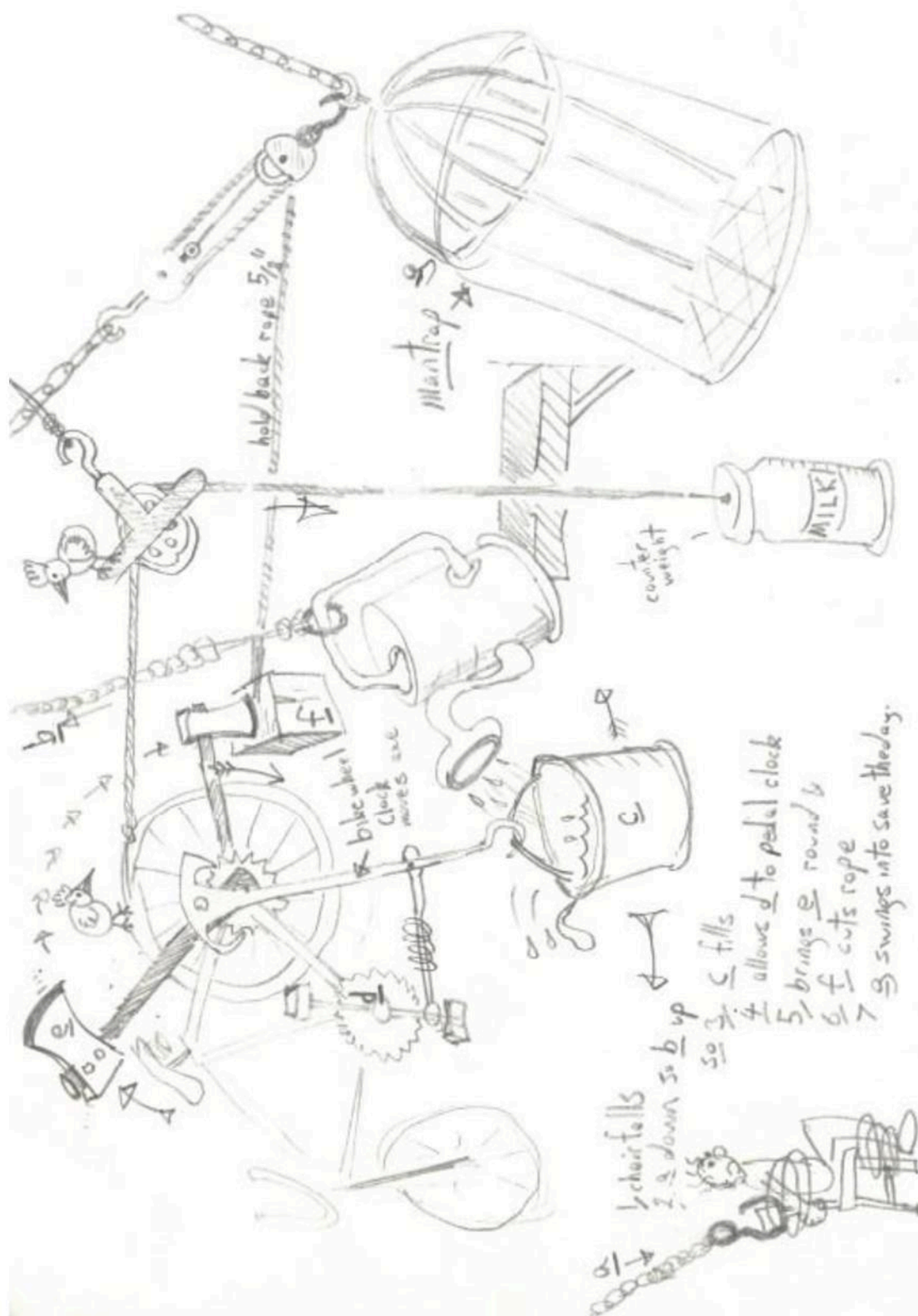
**THE END.**

## 6. Set Design

The production is designed by Michael Vale, who designed Kneehigh's *Cymbeline* and *Rapunzel*, as well as working on over 130 other productions in the UK and abroad. The set is bare wood, with pulleys, winches and ladders overhead, and the 'backstage' workings are visible in typical Kneehigh style. There are traps and cages, amazing gadgets and gizmos from Mechanical Sculptor Rob Higgs, and puppetry courtesy of Puppetry Consultant Sarah Wright. The set conjures a sense of a magical woodland full of surprises and delights

The company uses Rob Higgs' gizmos in the action – most notably for 'Gretel's Big Plan' to defeat the witch, the plans for which are on the next page





Gretel's big Plan

## 7. Costume & Puppetry



The company all wear lederhosen (traditional German dress). This includes the musicians and the Stage Manager. The basic costume is accented with props for different characters.

Hansel  
Gretel  
Mother  
Witch  
The Bird  
Puppeteers

Encyclopaedia  
Flying goggles & hat, bag of tools  
Apron, headscarf  
Dress, silky slip! Wig, glasses  
Black body-stocking, bird puppet/hat  
Capes and hats

### The Puppets

Puppet gurus Sarah & Lyndie Wright made the show come alive with beautiful puppets. There were rabbit & chicken puppets (who acted as a chorus and provided comic moments)



## 8. Music

### Original Music - Stu Barker & Ian Ross



1. Take Each Day As It Comes
2. BIRTHDAY SONG 1
3. SONG - Take Each Day
4. BIRTHDAY SONG 2
5. Fine & Dandy
6. Forest of fish bone
7. Goodbye Maureen
8. Life is Hard and Flinty Sharp
9. Fine & Dandy (a tender reprise)
10. Warmth in the Wilderness
11. Stoke the Flames (sporadically throughout Act 2 )
12. Stoke the flames
13. Warmth in the Wilderness (Repeated)
14. Take Each Day (major)

### 10. Warmth in the wilderness

*There's warmth in the wilderness  
There's embrace in the dark  
There's light from the half moon  
There's night's beating heart*

*There's caress in the brambles  
There's hush on the wind  
There's "sleep tight" in the wolf's cry  
The shadows, your friend  
The shadows, your friend*

*You've well earned the right  
You've held in there tight  
Tonight is your night of rest  
You need not take flight  
From this daunting night  
Tonight is your night of rest*

*There's shelter in the dread cave  
there's comfort in the storm  
There's blankets under dead leaves  
There's kindness in thorns  
There's sweet song in the frog croak  
there's sign-posts in the mist  
the dew that falls upon you  
Is a sweet goodnight kiss  
Is a sweet goodnight kiss*



## 9. Background to Kneehigh

Kneehigh now finds itself celebrated as one of Britain's most innovative theatre companies. For 30 years the company has created vigorous, popular and challenging theatre for audiences throughout the UK and beyond. Using a multi-talented team of performers, directors, designers, sculptors, administrators, engineers, musicians and writers, Kneehigh perform with the joyful anarchy that audiences have come to expect from this groundbreaking theatre company.

### The Kneehigh Statement

Kneehigh tell stories. We make world-class theatre. We are based in Cornwall in our breath-taking barns on the south coast and create theatre of humanity on an epic and tiny scale. We work with an ever-changing ensemble of performers, musicians, artists, technicians and administrators and are passionate about our multi-disciplined creative process. We push the boundaries of our art and our business, and strive to surprise and challenge ourselves, and our audiences alike.

### The Kneehigh Mission

We have a commitment to the ongoing spiritual health of ourselves, our community and the theatre. We want to collaborate with our fellow human beings, whether they are adults or children, professionals or outsiders and are hungry to meet and work with new and vivid people from different backgrounds. We want to create event and offer experiences that can profoundly change people's lives. We want to create relevant, innovative and emotionally charged work, to reach out in meaningful ways to the non-theatre going community, to build a non-elite audience and to celebrate our delicious time on the planet.

### The Kneehigh Manifesto

We choose to be based and work in Cornwall, within a community but outside the 'business'. We are inspired by Cornwall and calmed by Cornwall. Here, we dedicate ourselves to thinking outside the constraints of fear and neurosis. We fight for our process and each other. We believe in the principles of play, generosity, vulnerability, ambition, bravery, anarchy and instinct. We profoundly believe that human beings are capable of anything and push ourselves to find new depths, new joys and new excitements in our relationship to our work and our audience.

### The Barns

We are based in a collection of barns on the south Cornish coast, they are at the top of a hill where the road ends and a vast horizon stretches far beyond Dodman Point. By their very nature the barns let the weather in and out again. A large multi-fuel burner needs to be stoked and fed for rehearsals; there is no mobile phone reception and nowhere to pop out for a cappuccino or a snack.



The isolation of the barns, and the need to cook and keep warm provides a real and natural focus for our flights of imagination. This is not a conceit; it is a radical choice that informs all aspects of our work. Although much of our work is now co-produced with larger theatres, we always try to start the creative process at these barns, to be inspired by our environment and where we work. This creative space is at the heart of how we create and conceive our work.

## Previous Shows (2000 – 2010)

### **The Red Shoes**

2000 & 2010

*Winner of the TMS Award for Best Director 2002*

### **Pandora's Box**

2002

Co-Produced with Northern Stage

Conceived & Created by Emma Rice & Neil Murray

Text by Margaret Wilkinson

### **The Wooden Frock**

2003

Co-produced with Battersea Arts Centre in association with West Yorkshire Playhouse

Directed by Emma Rice

Adapted by Emma Rice and Tom Morris

*Nominated for the TMA Award for Best Touring Production 2004*

### **Tristan & Yseult**

2003 –2006

Directed & adapted by Emma Rice

Written by Carl Grose and Anna Maria Murphy

*Nominated for the TMA Award for Best Touring Production 2004*

### **The Bacchae**

2004

Directed By Emma Rice

Written by Carl Grose and Anna Maria Murphy

*Winner of the TMA Award for Best Touring Production 2004*

### **Nights at the Circus**

2005

Lyric Hammersmith, Bristol Old Vic in association with Kneehigh Theatre

Based on the novel by Angela Carter

A new adaptation by Tom Morris and Emma Rice

### **Rapunzel**

2006

A Kneehigh Theatre and BAC Co-Production

By Annie Siddons

Directed by Emma Rice

### **Cymbeline**

2006

Kneehigh Theatre in association with the RSC

Co-commissioned by Nottingham County Council STAGES  
Directed and freely adapted by Emma Rice, written by Carl Grose  
Inspired by William Shakespeare

**A Matter of Life & Death**

2007

Based on the film by Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger

A Royal National Theatre Production

Directed by Emma Rice

Written by Tom Morris & Emma Rice

**Brief Encounter**

2007 –2010

Originally produced by David Pugh & Dafydd Rogers and Cineworld

By Noel Coward

Adapted & directed by Emma Rice

*Winner of the TMA Award for Best Touring Production 2009*

**Don John**

2008 –2009

Kneehigh Theatre in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Bristol Old Vic

Directed & adapted by Emma Rice

Written by Anna Murphy

**Hansel & Gretel**

2009 -2010

Co-produced with Bristol Old Vic

Directed & Adapted by Mike Shepherd

Written by Carl Grose



## 10 Further Information



### The Hansel & Gretel Tour Programme

Available from venues or to buy from our website. Contains programme notes by Emma Rice and company biographies, exclusive drawings by artist Swiftie, and general information about Kneehigh

### The Kneehigh Website

(<http://www.kneehigh.co.uk>) Our website has lots of information about past shows, including rehearsal notes, directors' comments, photos and lots more. Kneehigh Friends can access the member's area which contains even more exclusive treats!

### The Book

Created for Kneehigh's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The Book is lovingly researched and beautifully produced, and chronicles three decades of inspiring and groundbreaking work in sections including **Home, Story, Wonder, Love, Bravery, Naughtiness, and Imagine**. It is available to buy on our website, or by calling the office on 01872 267910

## Inspiration

Bettelheim, Bruno: *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* Knopf, New York (1976)

Grimm Brothers: *Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales* Wandsworth, London (2009)

## Kneehigh Scripts

**Kneehigh's Anthology** - a collection of recent work: *Tristan & Yseult*, *The Bacchae*, *The Wooden Frock & The Red Shoes*. ISBN No. 1-84002-564-6

**Cymbeline** - produced in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company for the Complete Works Festival.

**Rapunzel** - A BAC and Kneehigh Theatre co-production, written by Annie Siddons.

**Nights at the Circus** - A Lyric Hammersmith and Bristol Old Vic production in association with Kneehigh.

If you would like to buy a copy of any of these scripts please contact Oberon Books Ltd  
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