

KNEEHIGH THEATRE'S
**HANSEL &
GRETEL**

16 December 2010 – 2 January 2011
Queen Elizabeth Hall



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KNEEHIGH THEATRE

In Cornwall in 1980, a village school teacher began running theatre workshops in his spare time. In due course a mixture of people became involved: a farmer, the sign writer from Tesco, several students, a thrash guitarist from a local band, an electrician... no actors, nobody who had been trained. The workshops took place in the spirit of cheerful anarchy and casually slipped into performance, and finally the production of shows.

There were no theatres or arts centres in Cornwall; Kneehigh created theatre for families in locations within their communities, village halls, marquees, harbour sides... and less conventional places. They created theatre on cliff-tops, in preaching pits and quarries, amongst gunpowder works and arsenic wastes, up trees, down holes, where the river meets the sea and where woodland footpaths end.

From its home, still in Cornwall, Kneehigh has built a reputation for creating vigorous and popular theatre for audiences throughout the UK and beyond. The company now finds itself celebrated as one of Britain's most exciting touring theatre companies. It creates vigorous, popular theatre for a broad spectrum of audiences, using a multi-talented group of performers, directors, designers, sculptors, engineers, musicians and writers. It uses a wide range of art forms and media as its 'tool kit' to make new and accessible forms of theatre. A spontaneous sense of risk and adventure produces extraordinary dramatic results. Themes are universal and local, epic and domestic.

Running time – two hours and 20 minutes including interval

CAST

Gretel	Joanna Holden
Hansel	Chris Price
Father/The Witch	Carl Grose
Mother/The Bird	Edith Tankus
Musician/Johann	TJ Holmes
Musician/Wilhelm	Benji Bower
Stage Manager/Animator	Fay Powell-Thomas

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Mike Shepherd
Assistant Director	Simon Harvey
Writer	Carl Grose
Musical Director	Ian Ross
Co-Composers	Stu Barker & Ian Ross
Designer	Michael Vale
Lighting Designer	Mike Gunning
Sound Designer	Jason Barnes
Puppetry Consultant	Sarah Wright
Mechanical Sculptor	Rob Higgs
Choreographer	Emma Rice
Producer	Paul Crewes
Production Manager	David Harraway
Lighting Operator	Liam Cleary
Sound Operator	Phil Innes
Wardrobe/Props	Ruth Shepherd
Props	Sarah Wright
Set Construction	Bristol Old Vic
Puppet Makers	Lyndie Wright Geraldine Spiller Sarah Wright

KNEEHIGH THEATRE

Chief Executive	Emma Rice
Joint Artistic Directors	Mike Shepherd & Emma Rice
Producer	Paul Crewes
General Manager	Charlotte Bond
Assistant Director	Simon Harvey
Company Stage Manager	Steph Curtis
Communications Manager	Anna Mansell
Finance Officer	Sarah Comacchio
Development Officer	Matt Armstrong
Project Administrator	Elizabeth King
Office Administrator	Chloe Rickard
Graphic Designer	Dave Mynne
Production Photographer	Steve Tanner
Illustrator	Swiftie

A Kneehigh & Bristol Old Vic Co-Production

run away children hide in your dreams

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As a child (this is true), I'd spend many hours up a tree at the bottom of the garden. When it was in leaf anyone below couldn't tell whether I was up there or not; I was in a world of my own away from parents and siblings. It was from that tree that I watched the 'Goosewoman'. I never knew what she was called but she was squat and moved fast, close to the ground, swishing a stick. Christmas was coming, the geese were getting fat, and it was at this time of year, as an eight-year-old boy, that I witnessed the deep, dark stuff of nightmares. Out from the goose shed came the Goosewoman. I remember her dressed in a faded blue thick canvas apron, a fat goose gripped firmly under her arm and a small chopper in her hand.

She made her way to an upright post, positioned the goose – whose neck waved innocuously this way and that – until it lined up, for an instant, above the post. In a flash the chopper flew and its head fell. Blood everywhere and I clung to the comforting branch which I straddled. Then, in my shocked state, with a child's logic, I decided that something had to be done to dispel this living horror just outside the comfort of my family garden. I stuffed a hessian sack (this is true), with dead leaves and newspaper, sneaked a box of matches from the mantelpiece, set fire to the sack of combustibles, opened the goose shed door, threw in the sack, slammed the door tight shut, and ran. I ran from one end of St Austell to the other – this was in the days when St Austell had two ends and a heart in the middle – until I found myself in the middle of the woods: Menacuddle Woods. There I hid as darkness fell, staring at my *Hopalong Cassidy* watch.

I stayed until midnight, the witching hour, the hour when time stands still, when time starts again, when, hopefully, there can be a new beginning. Then I made my way home, the deed done, the hour passed. Home to worried parents, an ear-clipping policeman, and a scowling Goosewoman.

Why have I revealed this secret from the past? I'm sat in a

reflective mood around the dying embers of our fire pit at the Kneehigh barns. We've just finished a period of 'play' with the story of Hansel & Gretel. It's a dark, elemental story: the children abandoned in the dark forest, and the old witch enticing them into the horrors of houses where children are cooked and eaten!

Of course these dark fairytales connect us to the dark fears of childhood: The terrifying realisation that life is finite; that there is a world to step into without home, without parents. This is connected to that time at the top of the tree at the bottom of the garden looking up at the sky, and grappling with the concept of infinity, the void!

Mike Shepherd



'Hansel & Gretel is a show about home, about the need for it, and the quest for it. Home sometimes presents itself in the most surprising forms, just beware of sugary imitations and never stop looking!'

Emma Rice
Kneehigh Theatre Chief Executive

A NOTE FROM JUDE KELLY

Now in their 30th year, Kneehigh Theatre is one of our great British institutions. Staying loyal to their base in Cornwall but lauded internationally, the expertly conceived and beautifully crafted worlds they create continue to confirm that they are true masters of originality. Every nook and cranny of their shows are artworks in themselves, every performance a magical journey into a place you didn't know could exist... and so we're really excited to have their wonderful re-telling of Hansel & Gretel with us at Southbank Centre this Christmas. We hope you enjoy it.

Jude Kelly
Southbank Centre Artistic Director



things in the flesh aren't quite what they seem

BIOGRAPHIES

JOANNA HOLDEN (GRETEL)

Joanna's theatre includes *Queen Bee* (North East Theatre Consortium), *Venetian Twins* (The Bolton Octagon) and Cirque du Soleil's *Varekai*. Joanna was a founder member of The Northern Stage Ensemble performing in *A Clockwork Orange*, *Elmur McCurdy*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Edmond*, *Play*, *A Ballroom of Romance*, *Pinocchio*, *Animal Farm* and *The Elves and The Shoemaker*. She has also worked at the Bush Theatre, National Theatre, Royal Court, Sheffield Crucible, Perth Repertory, Soho Theatre (nominated most outstanding newcomer), Riverside Studios, Gate Theatre, Tristan Bates Theatre, Tricycle Theatre, Polka Theatre, Gilded Balloon and with Vtol dance company, Cartoon De Salvo, Told by an Idiot and Ridiculousus.

CHRIS PRICE (HANSEL)

Theatre includes *Oh What a Lovely War* (Northern Stage), Dan in *Heartbreak Soup* (The Empty Space), Stanley in *Brief Encounter* (Kneehigh), Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shared Experience), Sweeney in *Dealer's Choice* (Benchmark Productions), Robert Zeinfeld in *Forget Me Knot* (Benchmark Productions), Chief Weasel in *Wind in the Willows* (Take 6 Theatre) and Nick in *To Be Someone* (RSC Fringe). Television Includes Steve Mitchell in *Badger* (BBC).

CARL GROSE (WRITER/FATHER/WITCH)

Carl has worked as a performer on the following Kneehigh Theatre productions: *The King of Prussia*, *Strange Cargo*, *Wagstaffe the Wind-up Boy*, *Nights at the Circus*, *Cymbeline*, and *Blast!*: *A Cornish Exposé*, *Don John*. His writing for Kneehigh includes *Quick Silver*, *Tristan & Yseult*, *The Bacchae* (co-written with Anna Maria Murphy) and *Cymbeline*. Carl has also written for *Told by an Idiot*, BBC Radio and the National Theatre. He co-founded the Cornish company o-region. Recent plays include *Superstition Mountain* for o-region and *Grand Guignol* for The Drum Theatre, Plymouth.

EDITH TANKUS (MOTHER/THE BIRD)

Edith Tankus trained at L'Ecole Jacques Lecoq, and L'Ecole Philippe Gaulier in Paris and Concordia University in Montreal. She is co-founder and co-artistic director of Magpye Theatre, Toronto. For Kneehigh she performed *Wardnurse* at Battersea Arts Center and played the title role of *Rapunzel* at Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall, on a UK tour and on Broadway. Other work included her award-winning solo shows *Hurricane Gerty* and *Not Yet, At All* which toured theatres and schools throughout Canada and the US. Her directorial debut, *Nearly Lear*, is touring through Canada, the US, Australia and United Kingdom – including the New Victory on Broadway, the Kennedy Center, Washington and the Sydney Opera House. She's worked with Circus Remedy, collaborated on the Gemini-award winning film *Tucked into Bedlam* and has performed in a wide range of television and theatre. She is currently working on an adaptation of *Cinderella* which will be premiering in Toronto in the Autumn of 2011.

BENJI BOWER (WILHELM/MUSICIAN)

Benji is a composer/multi instrumentalist/producer and founding member of Unforscene, UFS productions and Bower Brothers Inc.. Theatre Credits include *Papa Please Get the Moon For Me* and *We're Going On a Bear Hunt* (Bristol Old Vic/Travelling Light), *Aesop's Fables* (Bristol Old Vic/Scamp), *Stickman* (Scamp Theatre), *Strange Case* (Bristol Old Vic/Pervasive Media), *Ugly duckling* (Travelling Light), and *City of One* and *Jollity Farm* (Myrtle Theatre). TV Credits include composing for *Cult of a Suicide Bomber* (Channel 4), *Comics Britannia* and *Rude Britannia* (BBC4), and *Blown Apart* (BBC2). Benji has worked for Kudos & Tru Thoughts, and has been a session musician for Alice Russel, Bonobo, Hundred Strong, Ben Westbeach, and Troubleman.



TJ HOLMES (JOHANN/MUSICIAN)

TJ hails from Cornwall. He began his musical career as a chorister at Westminster Cathedral. He trained at Central School of Speech and Drama. Recent Theatre credits include *Spend Spend Spend!* (Watermill), *As You Like It* (Dir Tim Supple, MD Nitin Sawhney, Curve Theatre), *Cider with Rosie* and *Merchant of Venice* (Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds), *World Cup Final 1966* (Beggars Belief & BAC), Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* (National Tour), *The Chimes* (Southwark Playhouse), *Hot House* (Teatro Vivo), *Rumpelstiltskin* (Quirk), *Dracula* (Scary Little Girls), *Axe for the Frozen Sea* (Bedlam), *The Little Prince* (Streetwise Opera), *The Government Inspector* (Miracle), and *The Jew of Malta* (Hall for Cornwall). TV and Film credits include *Doc Martin* (ITV), *A Rogue & a Patriot* (Channel 5), *Harry Hill's Christmas Burp* (Channel 4), and *The Voyage of the Mystery* (Collective Arts). Other work includes *Composer / MD Cider with Rosie* (Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds), and various projects with Past Pleasures.

FAY POWELL-THOMAS (STAGE MANAGER/ANIMATOR)

Fay graduated from Brighton University 2001 and since then has been Stage Managing and Performing with a variety of companies. As well as *Hansel & Gretel* Fay toured with Kneehigh's *Journey To The Centre of the Earth*. She has toured extensively with Shakespeare's Globe throughout the UK and Europe and also works with Cornish dance company Cscape.

MIKE SHEPHERD (DIRECTOR)

Mike Shepherd started Kneehigh in 1980 and has been involved in almost every project since. He is an actor, director, teacher and, probably most importantly, a theatre maker. He is joint artistic director with Emma Rice and director of the Asylum.

SIMON HARVEY (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR)

As well as a performer, Simon is Kneehigh's Assistant Director working on recent Kneehigh shows including *Cymbeline*, *Rapunzel*, *Brief Encounter*, *Hansel & Gretel* and *The Red Shoes*. He has also performed in *Wagstaffe the Wind-Up Boy*, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, *Tristan & Yseult* and *Blast!*. In 2002 he formed Truro based Theatre/film production company

o-region with a number of other collaborators for which he takes on role of Artistic Director. Recent work includes directing the touring show *Laughing Gas* (by Carl Grose / Nick Darke) and producing and performing in *Superstition Mountain* (by Carl Grose). He has also produced the feature films *The Midnight Drives* by Mark Jenkin and *Weekend Retreat* by Brett Harvey.

IAN ROSS (MUSICAL DIRECTOR/CO-COMPOSER)

Ian is a multi-instrumentalist with around ten years experience as a performer and composer ranging from New York fashion week to the jazz world stage at Glastonbury festival. Ian played with Bristol based ska-hip-hop phenomenon Babyhead, the inimitable high tea lovelies The Zen Hussies and manouche collective Trio Bastoune and its sister project Bartoune. For Kneehigh he has worked on *Red Shoes*, *Brief Encounter* (WestEnd) and *Don John*.

MICHAEL VALE (DESIGNER)

For Kneehigh Michael has worked on *The Asylum Project*, *Cymbeline*, *Rapunzel* and *Fastburn*. Since leaving the Theatre Design Course at the Riverside Studios (now the Motley Design Course), Michael has designed the sets and costumes for over 140 theatre and opera productions both in the UK and abroad. Companies he has worked with include The Royal Shakespeare Company, The National Theatre, Manchester Royal Exchange, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Sheffield's The Crucible Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, The Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, English Touring Opera, Almeida Opera, English Touring Theatre, Told by an Idiot, Warsaw's Globe Theatre, Tokyo's New Galaxy, Antwerp de Vlaamse Opera and Los Angeles Opera. He also works as a director.

ROB HIGGS (MECHANICAL SCULPTOR)

Rob makes mechanical machines and things 'usually out of old scrap and junk'. He says: 'I like them to show how excessive or pointless most of our use of technology is. Also I like them to break things or at least squash them a bit.'

SARAH WRIGHT (PUPPETRY CONSULTANT)

Sarah was the puppetry consultant for Kneehigh Theatre's *Brief Encounter*. As a puppeteer Sarah has worked extensively with the Little Angel Theatre; credits include *Venus and Adonis* (with Royal Shakespeare Company), *The Little Mermaid* and *Jabberwocky*. Other theatre includes *The Tower*, *Planitrium Silo*, *Hotel* (with Silo Theatre, Amsterdam), *Queen of Spades* (with Green Ginger and the Welsh National Opera) and *Fish Clay Perspex* (with Faulty Optic). As a director Sarah has worked on *Cupid and Psyche* and *Angelo* (for The Little Angel Theatre). As deviser and consultant, *Satyagraha* (Improbable Theatre) *Comedy of Errors* and *Arabian Nights* (Royal Shakespeare Company). Sarah is also a puppetry tutor at Central School of Speech and Drama.

JASON BARNES (SOUND DESIGNER)

Sound Engineer on *Rapunzel* for Kneehigh Theatre (UK tour and adaptation for the New Victory Theatre NYC). For Bristol Old Vic: *Aesop's Fables* (Bristol, Edinburgh Festival and International Tour), *The Three Musketeers*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Tamburlaine* (Bristol and Barbican), *The Odyssey* (Bristol, Liverpool and West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Arcadia*, *Private Peaceful* (Bristol and tour), *Beasts and Beauties*, *Paradise Lost*, *Up the Feeder Down the Mouth and Back Again*, *One Love* (Bristol and Lyric Hammersmith), *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Blues Brother*, *Soul Sisters*. Other theatre includes *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Bath Theatre Royal and UK Tour); *Quadruphenia* (Plymouth Theatre Royal and UK Tour); *Enjoy* (Bath Theatre Royal, UK Tour and West End); *Once Upon a Time at the Adelphi*, *Noises Off*, *Dr Faustus* (Liverpool Playhouse); *Home* (Bristol Old Vic Studio).

STU BARKER (CO-COMPOSER)

Stu has worked extensively for Kneehigh over the last 14 years as a performer, composer and musical director. Credits include: *Don John*, *Brief Encounter*, *A Matter of Life and Death*, *Tristan & Yseult*, *Cymbeline*, *Nights at the Circus*, *Rapunzel*, *The Bacchae*, *The Wooden Frock*, *Pandora's Box*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Itch* and *Roger Salmon*. Other Composing and Performance includes *The Winter's Tale*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Odyssey* and Philip Pullman's *Aladdin* (Bristol Old Vic); *Absurdia* (Donmar); *Clown*, *Cloudland*, *The Stones* (Travelling Light); and productions for Welfare State International, Horse and Bamboo Theatre and Contact Theatre.

MIKE GUNNING (LIGHTING DESIGNER)

Mike has worked extensively in the UK and abroad with directors including David Alden, Tom Cairns, Robert Carson, Greg Doran, Ed Hall, Richard Jones, Ian Judge, Sam Mendes, Jonathan Miller, Elijah Mo Shinsky, Adrian Noble, Trevor Nunn and Deborah Warner. He has lit many productions for English National Opera including *Il Trovatore*, *Ernani*, *Rigoletto*, *St John Passion*, *Tristan and Isolde*, and *La Bohème*. Other opera work includes *Eugene Onegin* and *Don Giovanni* (British Youth Opera) and *Manon Lescaut* and *Fedora* (Holland Park Opera). Mike has also lit for the Royal Shakespeare Company on tour productions including *Richard III*, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry V* and *The Blue Angel*, whilst other theatre work includes *The Wizard Of Oz* (Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall), *The Brothers Size* (Actors Touring Company), *The Jew of Malta* and *Aunt Dan and Lemon* (Almeida), *Julius Caesar* (Barbican Theatre and international tour), *Medea* (Broadway), *Tales From the Vienna Woods* (Olivier Theatre, National Theatre) and *Kafka's Monkey* (Young Vic).

EMMA RICE (CHOREOGRAPHER)

Emma is the Joint Artistic Director of Kneehigh and for them has directed *The Red Shoes*, *The Wooden Frock*, *The Bacchae*, *Tristan & Yseult*, *Nights at the Circus*, *Cymbeline*, *A Matter of Life and Death*, *Rapunzel* and *Brief Encounter*, which played in the West End, toured the UK and USA and is currently on Broadway.

PAUL CREWES (PRODUCER)

For Kneehigh Paul has worked as a producer on *The Bacchae*, *The Wooden Frock*, *Cymbeline*, *Rapunzel*, *Don John*, *Asylum 2010* (*The Red Shoes*, *Blast!*, *The King of Prussia*). Other producing includes *For Metal!*; working with Southbank Centre Artistic Director Jude Kelly on projects including the Olympic bid for 2012 and, until July 2004, producer at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, where he set up over 40 Productions. Paul has also co-produced commercial tours and West End transfers and has his own company, producing *Doorman* (UK Tour 2005). In 2007 Paul became Associate Producer for The Lowry, Salford, producing *King Cotton* and *Fireflies* and *Beyond the Frontline* this year.



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