**Father Christmas programme notes**

Hello everyone. Theatre Royal Plymouth presents “Father Christmas”, a “Pins and Needles” production of the story by Raymond Briggs. My name is Gwen and I will be audio describing the show for you today.

Father Christmas is played by Nathan Masterson, the puppeteer is Amber-Rose Perry and the actor/musician who makes all the sound effects is Stacey Ghent.

On the stage we can see Father Christmas’s house. On the left is a block of scenery which shows the green front door of the house. It is the outside view because it is crusted with snow and there is a window panel at the top of it. Next to it is an oven with a curtained window above it. Next to the oven hangs a frying pan, which Father Christmas cooks his breakfast in. There is a tea towel and an apron, and the radio which Father Christmas listens to, to get the weather forecast. In the centre of the room is a double bed. There are pillows and a duvet, and a couple of drawers are in the base of the bed. A pair of slippers is on the floor beside the bed. When the bedding is taken away, the bed becomes a table. A flap can be opened in the top of the table to show the sink where Father Christmas has his morning wash. Behind the bed we can see a fireplace. Above it hangs a calendar, showing the date 23rd December, and there is also a clock. The fireplace section slides back later on to show Father Christmas on his sleigh, pulled by two reindeer.

To the right of the bed, his dressing gown hangs on a peg next to a wooden kitchen chair. The right hand section of scenery contains a cupboard, the dog kennel and a door marked “loo”. When Father Christmas goes to the toilet, the door opens up in three sections so we can see his head and feet, but not the bit in the middle! Later on this door becomes the way in to the reindeer stable, and the reindeer look out over the top section of the door. When Father Christmas sets off on his travels on Christmas Eve the scenery blocks on the left and right are moved out of the way.

Above and behind the house is the skyline of a town, with rooftops and chimneys. A full moon hangs in the night sky. Above and to the right of the scene is the musician’s platform where the one musician plays instruments: the trumpet, recorder and ukulele, and she makes sound effects for the things that Father Christmas does.

There are puppets appearing in the show, operated by the puppeteer who wears red striped pyjamas and a brown striped pullover. There is a puppet cat and dog, both made of wood and jointed so they move realistically. There is also a chicken, which lays eggs through a hole in its front. The two reindeer first appear as heads only, one on each of the puppeteer’s hands. Later they appear as full sized reindeer, pulling Father Christmas on his sleigh.

Father Christmas himself is a jolly man with a bald head and fat tummy. He has a grey beard and a bit of grey hair on either side of his head. When we first see him, he wears blue striped pyjamas. When he gets dressed, he puts on a blue shirt, red trousers with braces, then black boots with white fur trim. Finally he puts on a red coat, with white fur trimming, a matching hat and a pair of red gloves.

Toward the end of the story, special lighting effects project rain falling from the sky. It also shows Father Christmas’s sleigh pulled by reindeer, flying through the night sky. Some artificial snow falls from the ceiling on to the audience.

In a moment, the story will start, with Father Christmas fast asleep in his bed. Enjoy the show!