**Introduction**

**Jack and the Beanstalk – Lyric Hammersmith**

Hello and welcome to this introduction to the audio described performance of **Jack and the Beanstalk**, written by Joel Horwood and co-directed by Jude Christian and Sean Holmes.

We’re looking forward to welcoming you to the Lyric Hammersmith on Sunday 17th December. The show begins at 5.30pm. If you’d like to explore the set and costumes, come along to the touch tour before the performance at 4.00pm. The pantomime lasts for two hours and fifteen minutes, with an interval of twenty minutes.

We’ll repeat this introduction live in the theatre 15 minutes before the show, so we can let you know of any last minute changes and you can check that your headset is working. **Jack and the Beanstalk** will be audio described by Ruth James and Alison Clarke.

If you’ve never been to a pantomime before, here’s **what to expect**. Unlike other plays where people sit and listen quietly, at pantomimes you’re allowed to shout out and sing along, boo the baddies and cheer the goodies. Some characters will ask you to greet them with songs and actions. Once or twice they throw sweets out to us or even ask a member of the audience to come up and take part. We’ll describe all of this during the show. There’s also a pit just in front of the stage, where the band sits and play keyboards and drums.

Please note that this performance includes flashing lights, strobes, loud bangs, songs, sweets and advanced woodwind. The music is often very loud – we’ll try to avoid speaking then but you may need to turn us up using the volume control, the wheel on the right hand side of the headset but please don’t forget to turn it down again!

When we enter the auditorium most of the stage is hidden behind a huge brightly coloured front cloth, In the centre are the words JACK and THE BEANSTALK in enormous letters The words sit on top of great big cartoon-like images of familiar London landmarks, painted in vivid shades of red, yellow, green and blue. These are arranged in a chaotic jumble radiating from the centre and tangled among huge, vivid green beanstalk leaves. Among them are The Shard, Tower Bridge, St Paul’s Cathedral and a London Underground sign. Perched on the J of Jack is a bright blue and pink pigeon.

This is a very sparkly panto. Silver and blue curlicues soar above and around the sides of the front cloth, framing it with a swirling glittering border of silver and blue curlicues. These are dotted with hundreds of tiny twinkling bright lights. As we wait for the show to begin coloured lights wash across the front cloth bathing it in green, blue or a rosy red. Coloured lights also sweep across us.

**Jack and the Beanstalk** is a tale of changing fortunes, romance and magic, with lots of jokes thrown in. The story takes place in the village of **Ye Olde Hammersmith**, in London. We visit the Marketplace, a Castle and Jack’s home. We also go up to Cloudland, to the home of a fearsome Giant.

All of the sets are made with colourful backdrops and a few pieces of scenery. Backdrops are fabric painted with the place where the scene is happening and they cover the whole width of the stage.

The first person we meet is **Daisy the Cow.** She’s a black and white cow, with baggy, furry, white trousers with black patches and a furry black and white tail that swishes. Daisy’s satin shirt is patterned with black and white diamond shapes over a bright pink t-shirt. One of everything is black, the other white – so her sleeves, leggings, converse sneakers, fingerless gloves are all one black, one white. Daisy wears a white and black hood; she has bright pink ears, with a large hoop in her right ear, and little pink horns. In her real ears under the hood, she has big gold hoop earrings. Around her neck hangs a large round golden ball. Daisy has a friendly round face with round pink circles painted on each cheek and smiles a lot.

Daisy meets **Fairy Cucumber.** As you’d expect, she’s dressed in green, in silk breeches, that is, trousers that end just below the knee, green tights and a green silk top. Even her eyeshadow is a bright green. Around her shoulders floats a net cloak of green and gold net, that sweeps out behind her, and her black curly hair is wrapped round with a golden silk scarf. Fairy Cucumber also has strings of pearl necklaces and golden hi-top sneakers and when she appears she throws golden glitter into the air.

They are joined by a group of animals in different coloured velour tracksuits – yellow hens, with ruffles of yellow feathers round their shoulders and red beaks, pink mice with tiny ears and grey rabbits with round powder puff tails. These animals are played by an ensemble of young performers who dance enthusiastically and play all the remaining characters.

With Daisy, we go to the Market Place of Ye Olde Hammersmith. Here we find the people of Ye Olde Hammersmith, who are very poor and dress in a mismatched assortment of ragged clothes of green, blue, red and green. The Market Place is framed on both the left and right by three tall curved columns brightly painted to look as though they’re made of stacks of rough pieces of wood. These are edged in round lights. At the back of the stage are three wide curved steps. These stretch up to a walkway across the whole width of the stage and people can bound in and out going up and down them. They are painted blue and edged in gold. Like the columns they are also edged in round lights. Behind them the wall is covered in big blue swirls.

The stalls in The Market Place are small barrows on wheels, placed either side of the market place - one on the left and two on the right leaving a wide space between them in the centre for the villagers to gather. Each stall has a large bright umbrella in rainbow colours shading the goods for sale. These are sparse, reflecting the lack of produce the village can make or grow and how poor everyone is.

Here, we meet **Jack**. Jack is a tall, slim girl in a short bright pink and yellow dress over knee-length green trousers, green tights, pink converse sneakers and pink fingerless gloves. At the back of her dress is a long pointy yellow hood lined with pink sequins. Her long black hair is tied into two messy plaits, with a bright pink glittering bow. Jack has a wide smile and dark eyes and is kind and generous.

The Landlord of Ye Olde Hammersmith is the Baddie – **Fleshcreep**. He’s played by a woman, and is quite small, but very imposing and loud. He wears a black tunic with golden stripes and pockets made of moneybags with gold pound signs on them. Fleshcreep has red tights that match his fingerless gloves and a blue cape with the large letters FC written in gold on the back. Fleshcreep has a thin dark-blue moustache and tiny goatee beard that are drawn on and sparkle in the light. His knee-high black boots have blue heels and ridiculously large curly toes. When he first appears, he has red hair, sculpted into a point high above his head and later wears a tall hat made of the letters FC in gold and blue. Fleshcreep plays the flute and the bassoon for no apparent reason and his first love is Money.

Fleshcreep has succeeded in his search for money and lives in a Castle, near Hammersmith. When Jack goes in search of her fortune she bumps into **Jill**,Fleshcreep’s son, alone in his bedroom. Yes Jack is a girl and Jill is a boy, that’s panto for you. A painted backcloth takes us into Jill’s bedroom, filled with a huge heap of painted teddy bears of huge shapes and sized pile high and filling one whole wall. The only other thing in the room is a large portrait of Jill’s Dad, in all his glory this stands in pride of place in a gold frame with the words ‘I heart Dad’ scrawled across it.. Jill is very tall and thin and wants to be an actor. This means he dresses dramatically, with skin-tight black jeans under a loose, flowing white satin shirt and short black waistcoat. Around his neck is a white Elizabethan ruff – a collar that stands out stiffly with lots of pleats in it. Jill wears sparkling silver boots with red pompoms on the toes. His bobbed hair is black and straight, hanging to his neck and with a short fringe over his pale face. Not only is Jill’s room filled with Teddies but he acts with a Teddy he calls Yorick. He even has a coat made of sewn-together Teddies!

We whisk down to the farm to join Jack and her Mum, **Dame Lotte Trottalot** with their single cow, Daisy. The farm is represented by three small ramshackle sheds, which stand open, each displaying an array of basic farm implements and garden tools hanging on the back walls. One of the sheds has a higgledy piggledy chimney. There is also a cluster of coloured plastic buckets stacked against the wall of one shed and a scary looking milking machine which Daisy is bundled inside. It’s a huge cylinder which only leaves her head and shoulders poking out. A dial and a large red button control the machine. A couple of battered milk churns also stand forlorn and abandoned in a shed.

**Dame Lotte Trottalot** is played by a man and so is very tall and towers over everyone except Jill. She wears a lot of very colourful and extravagant costumes and her face is brightly made-up with bright blue eyeshadow, round red circles on her cheeks and a bright red tiny rosebud mouth. Dame Lotte is a farmer, and when we first meet her, she is wearing a dress with a skirt over a hoop, like an upturned saucer, covered with felt shapes of gardening tools – a trowel, a fork and lots of flowerpots. On her head is a large yellow wig made up of plastic-looking swirls, with a silver watering can. She also wears yellow DM boots, blue lycra tights, red socks and yellow fingerless gloves. We’ll describe the other outfits, all with fabulous wigs, as they appear. Every time Dame Lotte comes on, she greets us with ‘Ey up you lot!’ and we answer with ‘How’s it growing?’

Jack sets off on the road to market to try to seek her fortune. The road winds away from us, passing brightly coloured cottages and sign posts pointing the way ‘to market’.

Next we move quickly to Jack’s bedroom, where the light is dim and Jack’s bed stands in the centre with just a small lamp attached to the head of her bed. There are shelves holding books and a toy Daisy.

We move on to Cloud Land, the domain of the giant. At the top of the beanstalk, the area is surrounded by blue and white swirling clouds, with tiny blue and white sparkling lights and a signpost pointing to the Castle. This is a hostile place, dominated by towering metal gates with a giant sized lock. The gates are so high we can’t begin to see the top. They are dark and forbidding and hung with scrawled giant sized signs: ‘go away’ and ‘only giants’. Inside, the Giant is served by

Elves in red, green or gold short playsuits with golden buttons, over blue or red and white striped tights with matching converse sneakers. They have tall pointy hats with gold goggles. The Giant also has a huge white **Goose**, at least 3 metres tall, with a long neck wrapped in a red scarf to match her huge red feet and beak.

We’re also asked to sing along during the show. There’s the traditional Hammersmith song

*Glory Glory Hammersmith*

*Glory Glory Hammersmith*

*Glory Glory Hammersmith*

*Hammersmithmas everyone!!*

Later there’s a songsheet and we’re invited to sing along. The words are:-

*Ain’t no mountain high enough*

*Ain’t no valley low enough*

*Ain’t no river wide enough*

*To keep me from getting to you babe*

**Cast and Creative Team Credits**

Cast (in alphabetical order) –

Jill is played by Daniel Fraser

Daisy the Cow by Kayla Meikle

Jack by Faith Omole

Fairy Cucumber is played by Cherrelle Skeete

Fleshcreep by Vikki Stone

And Dame Lotte Trottalot by Kraig Thomber

All the other characters are played by members of the young ensemble:

Montel Bowen, Olivia Rose David, Lucy Havard, Jack Pallister, Tienne Simon and Amelia Stevenson

The Musical Director is James Taylor

The Composer and Arranger is Corin Buckeridge

The Sound Designer is Nick Manning

The Lighting Designer is Tim Deiling

The Designer is Jean Chan

and the Co-Directors are Sean Holmes and Jude Christian.

That’s the end of these introductory notes. We’re looking forward to meeting you at the touch tour. If you have any queries, please call the Lyric Theatre on 020 8741 6850.