**The Animals and Children Took to the Streets**

**Introductory Notes**

Welcome to this introduction to **The Animals and Children Took to the Streets**, at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. The production is created by 1927 and is written and directed by Suzanne Andrade. The Film, Animation and Design is by Paul Barrett and the Music is by Lillian Henley.

The audio-described performance will take place on Saturday 9th March. There will be a touch tour at 6 pm, the introductory notes will start at 7.15 and the performance itself at 7.30. The play lasts for 70 minutes, with no interval. The live audio description will be given by Ruth James and Alison Clarke.

A notice outside the theatre tells us that this show is not suitable for children under the age of 10 and that under 14’s will not be permitted unless accompanied by an adult.

The performance features live action and live music combined with projection and recorded sound. There are three performers, all women, who take on all of the live roles. They have white painted faces, like clowns or mime artists, with heavy black eye liner and bright red lipstick. They indicate the different characters they play, both male and female, with rapid, transforming changes of costume.

When we enter the auditorium, the open stage faces us: a black curtain extending over the full width and height of the stage with three large screens that stand in front of it with narrow spaces between them. The central screen is wide, flanked on both sides by two identical tall narrow screens. They are used for projection. As we enter, the screens show a projection of tall city skyscrapers under a black, starry sky. Each screen has a window set into it - a small square opening with rounded edges. These are curtained with a pale cloth and later by net curtains. In the left-hand screen, the window is high up; in the middle screen it is central and, on the right, the window is lower down. Behind this last window is the unseen piano, played live during the performance.

As the audience gather, performers dressed as Usherettes prowl the auditorium. They wear leopard-print shirts with short black skirts and fishnet tights. Leopard-print air-stewardess-style hats perch on their heads. Their faces are pale and their bright red lipstick matches their long red gloves. In an insistent monotone they offer us ‘Granny’s Gumdrops’ in green and white striped paper bags, sealed with a sticker depicting a miserable small boy.

As the performance begins, we move to Bayou Mansions. The projection depicts a tall apartment block on Red Herring Street, in the Bayou, a rundown area of a city. The outside of the building is shabby and the three windows have shutters and lacy net curtains. There are drainpipes and extractor fans, all drawn in a schematic, sketchy style, a kind of gothic cartoon. To the right of the central window sits a black cat and to the left is a line of washing. Cockroaches and lizards race up and down the walls.

Here we meet the three **Gossips**, who live in the apartment block. They appear at their windows, their heads tightly wrapped in identical leopard print scarves, wearing matching leopard-print robes in black and gold silky satin.

We also meet the building’s **Caretaker**. He is often found at his window, in the top left screen, writing in his Caretaker’s Book, a flat cardboard shape, labelled Book. He writes in this with a flat pen, labelled Pen . He has wild black hair which sticks straight up from his white face, his eyes staring out from behind heavy, dark-framed glasses. The Caretaker wears a black shirt and black trousers held up with red braces. He grimaces constantly, twisting his mouth to the left. His thoughts and words are spoken by a recorded male voice.

Next to appear is **Agnes Eaves**, a new arrival at the block . Agnes appears prim and proper in a fitted red dress, with a black and white polka-dot tie at the neck, and little red cloche hat. She wears red tights and flat black shoes. A long black pigtail hangs down her back. Later, Agnes also wears a red painter’s smock over her dress.

Agnes’ daughter **Eavie i**s an animated figure, a little girl about six years old. She too wears a red cloche hat, with a red top with a black tie at the neck, and checked red skirt. Little Eavie has black gloves, little white socks and black shoes

We move to the Junk Shop on Red Herring Street, owned by Mrs Villykar. She wears a black turban, with a design of a red fish skeleton on one side. She also wears a full-length black coat, which again features a design of red fish skeletons around the hem.

The Junk Shop is projected onto the central screen. A roller shutter has the name – Mrs V’s Junk Shop scrawled across it, as if in black paint which has run. The door is to the left. Sometimes, the shop counter appears on the left. On it are the words Mrs V and Daughter’s Shit Shop Est. 1927.

To the left of the Junk Shop is another building, lit with a red light. A projection of a flashing sign reads Girls, Girls, Girls. Above, through the window, a prostitute’s hand beckons potential customers. To the right is another building, this one a solicitor’s office. From the window here, the solicitor looks out. He wears a red jacket and a red hat. A sign reads: All Cases accepted, No Crime Too Big.

Mrs Villykar has a daughter, named **Zelda**. Zelda wears a calf-length red pinafore dress with a design of black fish skeletons arranged vertically around the skirt’s hem. Under the dress is a red and black striped t-shirt. Zelda also wears a black cap with red fishbones. She has an eye patch over her right eye.

Zelda is the leader of a gang of girls and boys called **The Pirates**. They are animations, and all wear black and red t-shirts with either red or black dresses or trousers. Their hair is scruffy and they all wear eye patches.

Other animations depict policemen, top hatted gents, and children - all black silhouettes, zooming swiftly through various locations – through the Bayou Mansions the streets, or through a green city park. We also meet the City Mayor, represented by a tall black screen that is carried on, with a white M on the back.

Other screens are also carried on and represent beds, shop counters and doors, when the relevant projections shine onto them. The windows are also used as the kiosk windows of a railway station, a cinema and an icecream van.

All the props in this production are flat and made of cardboard and labelled to identify them, like the Caretaker’s Pen and Book.

**Cast**

Genevieve Dunne

Rowena Lennon

Felicity Sparks

Also - Performer Usherettes

**Creative Team**

Voice of the Caretaker is spoken by James Addie

Costume by Sarah Munro and Esmeralda Appleton

Music by Lillian Henley

Film, Animation and Design by Paul Barrett

Written and Directed by Suzanne Andrade

Created by 1927