



# Education Pack



## Introduction

Welcome to the magical world of Pantomime, where you will experience all the wonder and magic in our enchanting theatre, Buxton Opera House. We can't wait to welcome you and your pupils to our theatre and this year's production of Dick Whittington.

We want your visit to our theatre to be extra special, and so we have created this education pack to help you make your visit both entertaining and educational. This pack contains information, resources and activities to suit a wide range of different ages and abilities. Please feel free to use it as you wish, differentiating the content as and where you need to. The information in this pack has been designed so that you can create photocopies to distribute and use in your classroom.

We hope your visit to our theatre is a magical one, and we hope you enjoy the show and find this pack useful and supportive of your educational outcomes. We would love to hear your feedback on this pack so that we can develop and improve both the format and content each year. If you do have feedback, please feel free to email [participation@boh.org.uk](mailto:participation@boh.org.uk).

We hope you enjoy our pantomime and this accompanying education pack.

Best wishes,

***The Learning and Participation department***

*\*Teachers/staff: Please note that the pack contains a scene breakdown of the pantomime, therefore if the children have not yet seen the pantomime, please retain this section so as not to give away any spoilers!\**



## The History of Pantomime

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Pantomime is a unique British tradition commonly found in theatres up and down the UK throughout the winter holiday period. In fact, Pantomime has become a British institution but its origins are from beyond British shores.

The Pantomime we see today can be distinguished by its dramatisation of a classic fairytale told through the use of eccentric characters and absurd situations. It's a place where blokes dress as women and women dress as young princes, where good triumphs over evil and the audience are as much part of the action as the pantomime cow, the beanstalk or the magic carpet. The stories are told with a gigantic emotional heart through the use of acting, song, dance and intriguing illusions and magic. This is no surprise considering the word Pantomime means 'all kind of' (panto-) 'mime' (mime); although 'mime' is a performance of actions and not words.

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### Commedia dell'arte

This quirky British tradition has its origins in the commedia dell'arte. Commedia dell'arte actors performed improvisations in the streets of Italy using a range of stock characters that were recognisable to audiences with the use of distinctive masks. Like commedia, pantomime uses stock characters and familiar scenarios and in particular the 'harlequin' and the 'clown' are typical commedia characters often found in pantomime.

### Harlequinades

Harlequinades were comical sequences found in pantomimes where the lead characters (the harlequin and the clown) would perform a mimed sequence, often slapstick was involved, and could be identified as a magical transformation or chase scene. They began as short sequences after dramatic action, later expanding into longer versions, and the lead characters of the Harlequinade became firmly embedded in the structure of pantomime.

### Joseph Grimaldi (Clown)

Joseph Grimaldi is recognised as one of the most famous pantomime clowns. His contribution to the genre was huge and many of his developments are still present in today's pantomime, such as cross-dressing (which the Dame and principal boy characters do), comic musical numbers and slapstick.





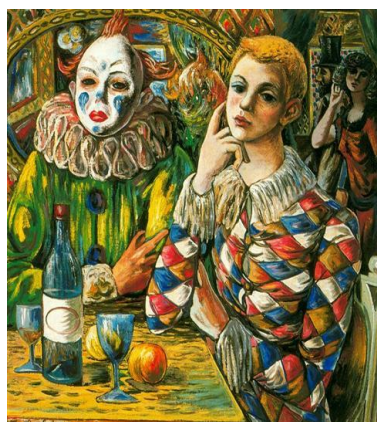
### Dan Leno (Victorian Dame)

Dan Leno was a music hall performer who became one of the most famed dames in pantomime history. From 1886, Leno played the role of the dame in every pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Dury Lane for the next 15 years!



#### Commedia dell'arte

Image credit:  
<https://hilberry.wordpress.com/tag/commedia-dellarte/>



#### Harlequinades

Image credit:  
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/rafael-zabaleta/harlequin-and-clown-with-mask-1942>



#### Joseph Grimaldi (Clown)

Image credit:  
<http://www.arthurvercoepedlar.goldiellpromotions.com/images/Josephgrimaldi.jpg>



#### Dan Leno (Victorian Dame)

Image credit:  
[https://stmargarets.london/assets/images/2016/PANTO\\_Dan\\_Leno\\_Pantomime\\_Dame.jpg](https://stmargarets.london/assets/images/2016/PANTO_Dan_Leno_Pantomime_Dame.jpg)



## Stock Characters of Pantomime

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Much like the traditions of Commedia dell'arte, Pantomime is made up of similar and recognisable characters in each story. We call these 'stock' characters. Below, you can discover the traditional stock pantomime characters and what they are called in 'Aladdin'.

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### The Dame

The Dame is a female character but is always traditionally played by a male actor. The dame is often the comic driving force behind the pantomime and she encourages audience participation throughout.

### The Principal Boy

The Principal Boy is the hero of the story. Traditionally this role is played by a female, however today in some versions is played by a male actor.

### The Principal Girl

The Principal Girl is always played by a female and is sometimes the key focus of the story (like Cinderella for example.) The Principal Girl always ends up marrying the Principal Boy which is a glamorous closing scene to the pantomime.

### The Villain

Traditionally in pantomime, the baddie always has a scheme to defeat the hero. Their plans may be to steal the heart of the princess, destroy the hero or claim some much sought after treasure. This character is often welcomed with a sea of boos and hisses from the audience.



## Classic pantomime techniques

**Audience participation:** pantomime is different from most other theatre shows in that the characters often address the audience directly. The audience is also encouraged to hiss, boo and cheer and to talk back to the characters – they often respond to an actor's appearance with a greeting learned at the beginning of the show.

**Slapstick:** This is the use of physical comedy; Charlie Chaplin was a prime example of this back in his day. This is where comedy is created through exaggerated actions or behaviours, examples could be water buckets falling on people's head, slipping on a banana skin or characters running into one another. This type of comedy must only be carried out by trained professionals or you have a Stage Combat teacher present.

**Song and dance:** Some pantomime producers use specially written songs but others prefer the actors to sing pop songs and pop classics, as these songs will be familiar to the audience. It's important that the dancing is of a high standard and that the choreographer creates interesting moves and patterns with the dancers on stage.

**Slosh scene:** This is again very similar to 'slapstick' but this particular scene involves the characters getting messy and normally cake, water, flour or bubbles go everywhere! Scenes like this should only take place with the permission and presence of a director or adult.

**The ghost in the gloomy wood:** Similar to that of audience participation but for this comic moment the audience is encouraged to shout out the location of the ghost to the characters on the stage at the time.

Pantomime is all about having fun, escaping normality and having a good laugh and in most cases the sillier the better!





## Cast List

### **King Rat – A Cockney gangster**

King Rat is a mean, tough character who wants to become Lord Mayor of London. He has a pack of rats under his control.

### **Fairy Bow Bells – A Cockney Fairy**

This fairy is the spirit of the city of London, and she draws her magic powers from the sound of the city's bells.

### **Dick Whittington – A country lad from Buxton**

Dick is a poor boy hoping to find fame and fortune in London, where he believes the streets are paved with gold.

### **Alderman Fitzwarren – A miserly shopkeeper**

The Alderman is an important man and he runs a shop in London's Cheapside district. He's very mean and loves money.

### **Alice Fitzwarren, Alderman Fitzwarren's daughter**

Alice helps to run her father's business and has much more up-to-date ideas than her old-fashioned dad. She loves Dick Whittington.

### **Sarah the Cook (The Dame)**

Sarah helps to run the shop and also cooks for Alderman Fitzwarren and Alice. She's a fun character who wears colourful costumes.

### **Tommy - a tough and lovable cat**

Tommy is a friendly but tough little cat who loves to fight London's rats.

### **Percy the Pest Controller**

Percy is employed by the local council to catch rats, but he insists on sticking to the rules in everything he does, which annoys some people!

### **Belsheera the Warrior Queen**

Belsheera is the head of a group of female warriors who capture Dick and his friends after a shipwreck.



## The Story of Dick Whittington – the Pantomime

### Act 1

**Prologue:** King Rat tells the audience he plans to force the people of London to make him Lord Mayor by sending a plague of rats to torment them. He meets Fairy Bow Bells, who says a boy called Dick Whittington is on his way to London. She tells King Rat that Dick's destiny is to defeat him and become Lord Mayor.

**Scene one:** Cheapside, London. Londoners are singing and dancing in the street, enjoying a Cockney "knees up." Alderman Fitzwarren arrives and tells his daughter Alice that rats have found their way into his grain store, he is worried that his business will suffer if they eat all his grain. After Alice and the Alderman leave, Dick Whittington appears and makes friends with the audience. He tells them that he has no work and nowhere to stay in London. As he is talking, a friendly cat appears. The cat tells Dick his name is Tommy and says he has nowhere to stay, either. They decide to become friends and look for work together. When Dick and Tommy have gone, Sarah the Cook appears. She says hello to the audience and tells them she's looking for a husband.

Alderman Fitzwarren returns and gives Sarah a job to do. As she leaves, Percy the Pest Controller turns up to inspect the shop because people have reported seeing rats there. After eating one of Sarah's cakes he feels ill and leaves, promising to return to finish his inspection. Alderman Fitzwarren goes inside the shop and Dick and Tommy reappear, complaining that they can't find work. Fairy Bow Bells uses magic to make Tommy knock on the Fitzwarrens' shop door, so Dick will meet the Alderman and Alice. The Alderman offers Dick and Tommy a job and a place to stay. Tommy and Alice fall instantly in love.

**Scene two:** King Rat's home in the London sewers. King Rat tells the audience that he's been visiting some gangster meerkats who've shown him how to help stir up panic in London, using fake news reports on Facebook. Two of King Rat's helpers bring in Percy the Pest Controller after kidnapping him at work. King Rat tells Percy he wants him to spy on Dick Whittington and tell him what he is doing. Percy is scared of King Rat and agrees to report back.

**Scene three:** Alderman Fitzwarren's shop. The Alderman turns up to find Dick and Sarah dancing with the customers, and doesn't approve. The Alderman and Sarah leave and Dick lets Tommy in (although he's not allowed in the shop).





Sarah arrives and Dick gets Tommy to hide, but Sarah soon discovers him. She puts him to work making Alderman Fitzwarren's lunch, but Tommy puts the wrong things in the recipe and as a result a giant sausage bursts out of the oven. Sarah and Tommy give up on cooking and decide to go for a takeaway instead.

**Scene four:** A London street. King Rat catches up with Percy and asks what Dick Whittington has been doing. Percy tells him that Dick is working for Alderman Fitzwarren and Alice. As the Alderman is an important man who could help Dick achieve his dream, King Rat takes that as proof Dick is also trying to become Mayor. King Rat tells Percy he has a plan to get rid of Dick, telling Percy to memorise Fitzwarren's safe code when he is next in the shop.

**Scene five:** Alderman Fitzwarren's shop. Dick and Alice chat and it becomes clear how much they like each other. Alderman Fitzwarren turns up with money to put in his safe, just as Percy arrives to carry out his rat inspection, but the Alderman sends Percy home as he hasn't had a chance put down the rat poison he's bought. Dick and Alice sing a song together, then Alice leaves Dick and Tommy to sleep. King Rat appears with Percy and tells him to take Alderman Fitzwarren's money out of the safe and put it in Dick's bag. In the morning when everyone wakes up, the money is discovered in Dick's bag and everyone (except Alice) assumes that Dick has stolen it. Dick sadly leaves the shop and starts to walk home with Tommy.

**Scene six:** Highgate Hill, just outside London. Dick and Tommy are hungry and tired, having walked several miles. They lie down to sleep and Fairy Bow Bells appears. She uses the magic of London's bells to make Dick dream of the fame and riches he can expect as Lord Mayor of London. Dick has a wonderful dream about becoming Mayor and vows to return to London to clear his name.

## Act 2

**Scene one:** The London Docks. Alderman Fitzwarren, Alice and Sarah are going on a trading voyage to foreign lands in the hope of making some money. Sarah is putting together a crew for the ship and Dick Whittington turns up in disguise as an old sailor, trying to get on board so he can be close to Alice and prove to Alderman Fitzwarren that he isn't a thief. Dick and his cat (who is also in disguise) are taken on as crew members and shortly after Percy turns up. He has lost his job as a ratcatcher and also wants to join the crew.



**Scene two:** The London sewers. King Rat appears and warns the audience not to help Dick Whittington. A small rat turns up and tells him that Dick has returned to London and has boarded Alderman Fitzwarren's ship as a member of the crew. King Rat vows to interrupt their voyage and defeat Dick.

**Scene three:** On board ship, below deck. Alice recognises Dick beneath the disguise and they admit their true feelings for each other.

**Scene four:** On board ship, on deck. Dick's false beard falls off during exercises on board ship and Alderman Fitzwarren, realising who he is, threatens to make Dick walk the plank. Fairy Bow Bells turns up and says that Dick didn't steal the money. Percy then admits that he placed the money in Dick's bag. King Rat appears and creates a spell to raise a storm that will destroy the ship.

**Scene five:** The shore of a foreign land. Dick, Sarah and Alderman Fitzwarren have survived the shipwreck. The Alderman tells Dick that he spotted Alice, Tommy and Percy heading for the shore in a lifeboat, although no-one has seen them since. Dick and Alderman Fitzwarren are hungry, so Sarah produces a picnic basket she has rescued from the ship. They start to eat but are attacked by a gorilla who steals their bananas and chases them off, one by one. The gorilla is finally frightened off by Sarah. Tommy appears shortly afterwards and tells Dick that Alice and Percy have been captured by a Warrior Queen who rules the land. The friends are about to leave on a rescue mission when Fairy Bow Bells appears and warns them to make a plan, otherwise they will be captured by the Queen's female warriors. After they have left, King Rat appears and learns that Dick is still alive. He is furious and vows to go after him.

**Scene Six:** Queen Belsheera's Palace. The queen's warriors – including Alice, who has just been made to join the tribe – are dancing. Sarah joins in but gets into trouble because she is not a warrior. Sarah is about to be thrown into prison when Dick and Alderman Fitzwarren turn up, dressed as merchants selling goods. Belsheera becomes angry with them and is about to arrest them when there is a rat attack. Belsheera's people are also plagued by rats and she is delighted when Tommy manages to get rid of the attacking rodents.

The queen offers Dick a fortune to borrow Tommy until her rat problem is under control and Alderman Fitzwarren agrees that Dick can marry Alice, as he is now a rich man. At this point King Rat turns up and challenges Dick to a fight. Dick wins and Fairy Bow Bells turns King Rat into a nice person as punishment for his wrongdoing. The final scene is the marriage between Dick and Alice, who have now returned to London. Fairy Bow Bells announces that in future Dick will be so popular that he will be voted Lord Mayor of London not just once, but three times.



## Q&A with the Director/Writer

### **What is the best recipe for a pantomime?**

A great pantomime has a strong storyline, colourful traditional characters, popular songs with well-practised dance routines, good jokes and plenty of audience interaction.

### **What are your favourite things about directing a pantomime?**

Combining all the different elements that make a great show: music, drama, dance, beautiful sets and costumes. Also knowing that you are putting on a show for a family audience at Christmas, and everyone is there to have a good time.

### **What traditional elements do you include?**

It's usual to have the Dame character played by a man and we're happy to stick to that tradition. We always include a "Behind you" routine so the audience can shout out and warn the actors if there's a scary character - like a ghost or a zombie - behind them. We also have traditional scenes with foam fights and water pistols - very often the audience gets sprayed too! Other traditional elements include bringing the good character on from the left side of the stage and the bad character on from the right (as you see them from your seats). There's also a song-sheet where the audience can sing along. During the song-sheet we also invite several children on stage to sing.

### **Who is your favourite pantomime character?**

The Dame, because she tells many of the jokes and has the biggest and funniest costumes.

### **How do you bring all the different aspects of a pantomime together?**

By being very organised! I draw up a rehearsal schedule so we can make the most of every moment of the short rehearsal time we have. That means that when the actors aren't in script rehearsals, they are either singing songs with the Musical Director, learning dance routines with the choreographer or trying on costumes with the wardrobe mistress.





## Q&A with the Choreographer

**Where do your ideas for the pantomime choreography come from?**

Most of my ideas will come from the music itself. With pantomime you often find that you have a wide range of different types of song, and so each one will suggest a different style of dance, and that is normally where I start.

**What is your favourite thing about choreographing a pantomime?**

That it's fun! You get the chance to create very joyous choreography and there is often a lot of humour to be found in it as well, which I enjoy.

**What are the challenges when working on the choreography?**

You're often up against the clock with getting everything created, taught and cleaned. You also need to make sure that it all fits with the characters and story.

**Do you have a favourite dance move or sequence from previous pantomimes or one you are going to use?**

I don't think I have a favourite move, although I tend to be a fan of lots of turns! But I like to play with shapes and formations so I often find myself returning to some of those that I think are particularly effective.

**How do you work with other members of the Artistic Team?**

I think the most important thing is communication, you have to all be on the same page to make the show work as a whole and that involves keeping each other in the loop as you find ideas you like. It's also important to be flexible and to appreciate the demands of the other departments, try to find a way to make it work for everyone!



**Are there any points where you have to think on your feet or change your plans?**

Definitely during technical rehearsals as that is often where things have to be adapted to fit other elements of the show. But generally you are often creating effects in your imagination, and when you see them executed by a team of dancers sometimes it just doesn't work how you planned and you have to change track quite quickly.



BUXTON OPERA HOUSE  
& PAVILION ARTS CENTRE

Education Pack

## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Dick Whittington Education Pack 2018**





**If you were going on an adventure of discovery like Dick Whittington, what things would you take with you in your backpack to help you? Draw pictures or make a list:**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a student to draw pictures or make a list of items to take on an adventure.



## Hey Mr Producer!

When producing any show, a large team of creative work together to develop the final product. There is usually a separate person responsible for designing the stage set, the costumes, writing the script, directing the production and choreographing the dances. The next few activities encourage you to form your own production team, taking inspiration from our previous pantomimes to think about key design elements such as set and costume.

### Costume Design

Costume can suggest a lot about a character's personality, their job, their status and the community which they belong to. Have a look at some of our costume designs on the following page and see if you can tell what character they are, have a think about what their costume says about them and what aspects of the design you like in particular.

### Set Design

The stage set has several purposes. Its first purpose is to tell the audience the location of where the action is taking place. This could be a village square, a castle hall, a kitchen or a gloomy wood. Some locations might need to create a particular mood such as an enchanted forest or a dark and gloomy dungeon. For pantomime, most stage sets create these location and mood using a particular cartoon like style. Have a look at some of our previous stage sets and then pick a scene from the synopsis provided in this pack to design your own stage set. You can do this by drawing your design or, using a cardboard box to represent your stage, you could create a 3D model of your stage set design.



## Costume Designs

Can you guess what characters these are and from which pantomime by just looking at their costume? What does the design tell you about their character?




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## Set Designs



Widow Twankey's Laundry



The Cave of Wonders



The Village Square



The Giant's Castle



The Beanstalk



The Circus



## Ideas for Literacy

- **Write a review!** – Once you have seen our production why not put your journalist skills to practice. As a theatre, we rely on production reviews to help sell our show to potential audiences. A review is often the opinions of the individual reviewer, but there are some elements of the review that appear as standard. Have a think about the following when writing your review:
  - What is the title of the production? Where did you see it? When did you see it? Who produced it?
  - It's good practice to mention the cast and key creative such as the director, musical director, and writer and so on. You may begin to describe your experience of the pantomime and your thoughts on the production, passing comment on performances from the cast if any particularly stood out.
  - Remember someone who's read your review might want to go and see the show themselves, so it's always good to end with details of how and where they can see it.
  - Reviews should always be constructive.
- **Dick Whittington comic strip** – imagine you are Dick Whittington off on his adventure from Buxton to London. Write and draw a short comic strip about some of the funny things and people he might have encountered on his way.
- **Captured!** – Alice and Percy have been captured by the Warrior Queen! Design a 'reward' poster to report their capture and offer a reward for their safe return to the rest of their friends on the island.





## Dick Whittington Word Search

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q | A | S | W | E | D | S | R | T | G | F | Y | H | U | E |
| I | H | A | S | Q | F | G | A | G | D | K | T | B | G | C |
| U | E | D | D | W | S | N | W | T | R | A | V | E | L | Y |
| Y | S | G | I | E | H | I | P | I | R | S | T | C | K | L |
| G | U | J | R | R | C | W | Q | E | D | T | A | V | B | K |
| F | O | J | E | K | I | N | G | R | A | T | V | U | O | R |
| E | M | B | C | Y | T | T | A | C | E | C | N | I | W | P |
| Y | A | K | T | U | F | K | P | D | M | O | S | D | B | Y |
| N | N | P | O | I | R | S | T | A | G | E | U | Y | E | D |
| F | U | E | R | O | A | C | A | N | E | T | R | S | L | K |
| W | H | I | T | T | I | N | G | T | O | N | W | D | L | B |
| A | F | E | M | A | D | B | G | S | H | Y | U | Y | S | P |
| A | D | V | E | N | T | U | R | E | L | F | W | Q | D | E |
| T | G | G | I | E | C | U | R | T | A | I | N | H | M | W |
| H | A | E | B | K | Q | A | U | M | P | D | Y | W | M | L |

Can you find the following words?

Whittington

Bow Bells

Adventure

Cat

Mouse

Travel

King Rat

Dame

Stage

Curtain

Director

Wings





## Ideas for Drama

**Copy Cat** – Ask students to get into pairs and stand facing each other. One person is labelled 'A' and the other 'B'. Taking it in turns to lead and follow, 'A' begins to move (on the spot) and 'B' has to copy exactly what 'A' is doing. This is a great exercise to engage students' creativity and also develop their movement, spatial awareness, balance and co-ordination. Using music to create different moods can help students begin to think about character and how movement can begin to tell a story.

**Role Play** – There are several moments in the story which you could role play in the classroom. Use the synopsis enclosed in this pack to act out the different characters and scenarios.

**Create your own Pantomime** – Using another fairy-tale, identify what characters would be in relation to the stock characters of pantomime. Divide the story into separate scenes sticking in all the classic pantomime routines including audience participation, slapstick, song and dance, slosh scene and the ghost in the gloomy wood gag. Then prepare for performance in front of the class.

We hope you have lots of fun using this Education Pack and more importantly let your imagination run wild! Enjoy the pantomime and have a great Festive Season.