**Beauty and the Beast**

**Programme Notes**

Welcome to the audio-described performance of Beauty and the Beast at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast on Sunday 10th December 2017.

The show will be audio-described by Susie and Cara.

A modern twist on a timeless tale, with a fresh score of original songs…

A sweet-natured singer-songwriter makes a deal with an all-powerful music producer, and now he’s got everything he ever wanted: fame, fortune, stardom… Except he’s turned into a monster. A Beast, actually. When intrepid Belle is forced to become his assistant by her well-meaning but fame-hungry Dad, she finds she’s the only person willing to stand up to the Beast and his ludicrous demands. As our two misfits tussle, Belle soon discovers the curse behind his beastly behavior… What will it take to break the spell? Can Belle save the Beast from his wicked ways?

**The set:**

As the play opens, the stage is quite bare. The floor is black, and in the middle is a large circular part which can be revolved, and is used to bring on a variety of props and characters. Across the stage from left to right is a high curved gold arch, above which sometimes fairy lights twinkle.

At the very back, in the middle, is a large gold circle with the word “beast” on it. This circle is used as a screen during the play, on which different things appear. Sometimes it's circumference is lit with small gold lights.

There is a gold baby grand piano to the left towards the back of the stage.

A number of props appear during the play:

Two ornate sparkling chandeliers appear from the top on the left and right to show the Beasts mansion.

The beast has a large very ornate throne, with a high silver back and velvet seat which appears on the revolving set.

During the second half, in the garden there are two white sparkling trees.

Before the play begins, thin white smoke drifts on from either side of the stage.

**The characters:**

**Bella (Beauty)** is a lively and bubbly young woman who lives at home with her dad. She has looked after him and their house since her mother passed away a few years ago. She is an independent soul who would like to get out and see the world, but her father would rather keep her wrapped up in tissue paper, having promised her mother he would take care of her. She’s a little bit shy when it comes to displaying her musical abilities.

Bella has a pretty round face with big, bright eyes. To begin with she wears her dark curly hair in a side pony-tail with a big bright bow. She dresses like a funky teenager with a loose jacket worn over a blouse, turned-up baggy and torn jeans with multicoloured patches and lace-up hi-top trainers. She also wears brightly coloured plastic, large-hooped earrings, beads and bracelets. Later, she wears a flowery knee-length party dress over white leggings and under a denim jacket. The skirt of the dress has lots of net under it so that it sits out, prettily.

**The Beast** is the reigning King of Pop, the biggest, baddest name in music. He was once an innocent young talent but was swayed by the promise of fortune and glory by his controlling manager, Shazza. He sold his soul to rock and roll – literally, having signed his life away, with no escape. With this came a physical transformation – he now bears no resemblance whatsoever to his younger self. He’s a beast, trapped in a velvet cage of his own creation, hostile and downright obnoxious.

He has 2 large horns sticking out of the top of his head. He has long dark hair, a long dark beard and dark glasses mask his face. He wears a black leather, biker jacket with ‘beast’ spelled out in studs on the back. He wears it zipped up to the collar which is turned up. His legs are not those of a human but rather they are grey, furred, elongated, bent and hooved like those of a large donkey. He clutches a long walking stick in each fist to help him stand and walk.

**THEO** is Bella’s Dad, a would-be singer-songwriter with dreams of making it big. He supports Bella and himself by working every minute of the day in an eclectic array of jobs – one of which soon brings him into The Beast’s orbit. His misses his late wife, but always puts a brave face on things, lavishing affection on his beloved Bella. He might just be the most upbeat person on the planet – no matter how dire the situation, he’ll always find a silver lining. Theo has a narrow face and a moustache, medium sized eyes and a large expressive mouth. He has quite a slim build. His costume changes frequently but is always a variation on a multicoloured peaked cap, patchwork jacket, t-shirt, pale jeans rolled up at the ankle and multi-coloured hi-top trainers.

**SHAZZA** is The Beast’s manager, a music industry mogul who’s always keeping an eye out for the next big thing. When a talented young singer-songwriter walked into her office, she made him an offer he couldn’t refuse, and created the biggest star in the universe – these days, however, she’s finding it increasingly hard to keep The Beast on a tight leash. Shazza is most definitely not to be messed with. Also: she might just be the devil in disguise. Shazza has an extremely slim build. She has sharp, high cheek bones, large eyes and a large mouth. Shazza’s costume also changes frequently, virtually everytime we see her she is wearing something different. Although the colours and style remain the same, the style becomes more and more outlandish as the show progresses. The colours are metallic blue and silver and the style could be described as space-age or futuristic, influenced by 3D shapes – skirts or tops could be in the shape of cones, cylinders, pyramids or cubes. She wears wigs – sometimes dark brunette, sometimes platinum blonde. Later in the show she also wears a headdress of large plastic diamonds.

The show is written by Derek O’Connor and Trevor J. Colgan.

Katie Richardson is the Composer and Musical Director.

The Director is Paul Boyd.

It stars Mark Dugdale, Orla Gormley, Ross Hoey and Charlotte McCurry