Peter Pan Programme Notes Lyric Dec 15th 2019

Peter Pan was first written as a novel for grown-ups in 1902 and was adapted into a play in 1904, the script was eventually published in 1928 and in 1929 the rights were donated to Great Ormond Street Hospital Children’s Charity. This version has been written, directed and composed by Paul Boyd.

Although Barrie’s inspiration for the creation of Peter Pan is said to be the Llewelyn Davies boys to whom he was guardian, he could also have been inspired by the god Pan from Greek myth who played beautiful music on his pipes to nymphs and shepherds.

We’ll meet all the beloved characters, Peter Pan, Tinker Bell, The Lost Boys, Wendy, Michael and John Darling, as well as Captain Hook and his motley band of pirates, the Fairies, and of course The Crocodile.

Characters

Peter Pan is a lively, restless character who is always on the move and looking all around him. His appearance is unkempt and grubby. He wears a pointed fur hat over his brown, shoulder-length matted hair. He wears black make-up like a mask around his eyes. A greyish brown holey scarf is knotted round his neck. The sleeves seem to have been ripped off his battered jacket which is belted and trimmed with fur. He wears fingerless gloves which almost reach his elbows. Over greyish brown leggings he has a short skirt made out of strips of fur. His brown boots lace up to his knees and these too are trimmed with fur.

Peter is played by Michael Mahony

Wendy Darling has long blond wavy hair. She wears short-sleeved, pink, frilly, floral pyjamas which button at the collar and are belted at the waist. The bottoms are like bloomers – loose-fitting and elasticated just below the knee. She wears pink satin slippers on her feet.

Wendy is played by Rhiannon Chesterman

Michael and John Darling both have short dark hair. They wear short striped pyjamas. John wears a red tartan dressing gown over his pyjamas. When we first meet them they are dressed up as pirates.

Michael is played by Rea Campbell-Hill and John is played by Christopher Finn

Mr and Mrs Darling are dressed to go out. Mrs Darling is in a gold evening gown, white gloves and a feathered fascinator in her upswept hair. She carries a little handbag. Mr Darling is in tails.

Mrs Darling is played by Colette Lennon Dougal and Mr Darling is played by Alan Richardson

Nanny Cookson is a severe looking woman. She wears a long navy dress whit a white apron and a white cap.

Nanny Cookson is played by Allison Harding

Liza is friendly looking. She has wire-rimmed glasses, a green blouse, a long skirt, an apron and a pink scarf in her hair.

Liza is played by Christina Nelson

Tiger Lilly’s costume is brightly coloured and tie-died. She wears bright blue trousers and an orange tunic. Her long hair is braided with coloured ribbons and she wears a colourful headdress.

Captain Hook is played by the same actor as Nanny Cookson. She has a wide-brimmed feathered hat and a plait over her shoulder. She wears a dark, sleeveless, belted, full coat which comes to fer knees. Her white blouse has puffed sleeves. She has knee-high boots and a hook for a hand!

Miss Smee is played by the same actor as Liza. She wears a pirate hat and a red bandana around her neck. Over a white blouse she wears a dark, belted waistcoat. Her trousers are loose fitting and reach to below her knees.

The Lost Boys are a raggle-taggle bunch of misfits of various shapes and sizes. Their clothes are layered and tied around them – jeans, joggers, sweaters, jumpers, hoodies, jackets, belts, hats, scarves and gloves with pieces of fur attached.

The Mermaids have platinum blond wigs. They wear blue and silver sequinned and chiffon costumes and have blue and silver mermaid tails.

Choreographer – Deborah Maguire

Set Designer – Stuart Marshall

Lighting and AV Designer – Conleth White

Costume Designers – Gillian Lennox and Erin Charteris

SCENERY

The curtains are open when we first enter the theatre where we can see a large neat children’s bedroom containing 3 single beds with cream covers and grey sheets. The pillows on each bed bear the initial of the Christian name of the occupant, and there is a toy basket at the end of each beds with matching letters. Wendy’s cushion and box have a large W, while Michael’s has M, and John’s has a J.

On the right of the stage and at the front is a basket where Nana, the family dog, a Hungarian Hound sleeps. She looks like a pile of floor mops and is fond of jumping all over her owners. Behind this is Wendy’s bed, and against the bedroom wall is a wardrobe with a shelf above, that contains story books. In the middle of the room is a large window with long glass panes that open onto a balcony where Peter Pan and Tinker Bell can enter and exit. Net curtains cover the windows and billow into the room and reflect shadowy figures. Outside we can see a starry night that makes the room seem blue when the lights are turned off.

The wallpaper is flowery and there are some little pictures on either side of the window. Moving round to the left of the bedroom is another matching wardrobe, and there are two more single beds and toy baskets belonging to Wendy’s brothers, Michael and John. The actors can enter and exit either to the right or left of the stage near the children’s beds.

Captain Hook’s pirate ship has a gloomy dark cabin, lit by lanterns. The Captain has a huge carved chair, rather like a fancy throne with a red velvet back and seat. In the hold there is a wooden barrel that the pirates use as a table for playing cards. It has a hole in the middle where a big black and white skull and cross bones flag is mounted.

A large canon sits on the deck of the ship and there is a plank where Hook pushes his prisoners into the water. The prow, is higher than the deck and has a mast with white sails where Hook and Peter Pan have a sword fight. We can watch the action as their shadows reflect behind the sails.

The island where Peter Pan and The Lost Boys live has exotic flowers in bright colours and giant spotted toadstools that are hot to the touch. Hook discovers these are actually the stove pipes, or chimneys of underground dwellings. Later we see the underground houses are simply built with wood. When Wendy comes to visit she will get a little house all to herself, though Peter Pan and The Lost Boys will share a dormitory full of little beds and bedside cabinets. A barrel with pipes coming out of it is stoked up to heat the buildings, and the toadstools take the smoke away above ground.

The Marooner’s Rock is a set of jagged rocks that rise out of the lagoon where the mermaids dwell. They are uncovered at low tide, but Hook ties some of his prisoners to them to drown them as the tide comes in. There is a large silvery moon that shows the lake is deep with shivering blue waves.

Not all the action takes place on the stage. When we first meet the fairy folk of the island the lights swing onto the high balcony on the right of the theatre. The fairies land is colourful and a big banner with a swirling design is draped over the sides of the theatre balcony to draw our attention to that part of the island. Sometimes the actors come into the body of the audience for short periods of time.

There are lots of props such as the hand puppet that is Nana the family dog, and everything is very colourful. Lighting is excellent. We see Tinker Bell as a shooting circle of spinning light that travels round the walls, pausing now and again, but too fast to catch. We know she is in the room as she also makes a tinkling noise when she arrives. We also see swirling pink, green and yellow smoke at different times of the performance.

The children learn to fly with Peter Pan and they are raised up above the stage on a harness. They sing live on stage.

The crocodile is massive and slides onto the stage bearing its huge teeth with its eyes lit up a menacing colour. He makes a ticking sound each time he is about to appear.

Peter Pan is presented by arrangement with Great Ormond Street Hospital Children’s Charity and Samuel French LTD. All music and lyrics are copyright to Paul Boyd Music 2019.