The Nativity: What the Donkey Saw

**The Set:**

On the left hand side of the stage is a sheepfold in which sits the musician with music stand and light, drum kit and key board. The enclosure is decorated with Christmas lights. To the right of this and slightly behind it is a rough shelter or stable, with walls made from rough wooden planks. The front of this shelter is open to the elements, but it can also be closed by drawing a screen of wooden slats across the front. A ladder leads up from the left of the shelter to the rooftop which is surrounded by a fence and has grass and shrubs growing on it as well as an almost bare tree, with just a few withered leaves. On the right hand side of the stage, half way back is a huge barn with closed doors at the front and walls also constructed from slatted planks of wood. The planks of the roof are only loosely in place with gaps between them. In front of the barn is a box with a lid, which slides on castors. In certain scenes the large doors at the front of the barn open to reveal a bar behind, whose interior walls are also constructed of planks of wood. It’s complete with drinks and small round tables and even packets of snacks hanging from the walls. Behind the bar is another door which opens to let actors in and out and which supposedly leads to a busier bar beyond. In the second Act of the play a large number of bales of hay are added to the set, making the shelter on the left look more like a stable. After the birth the bar is decorated with gold tinsel.

The Cast:

**The Voice of God and the Narrator** is played by Pamela Ballantyne. She never makes a physical appearance and her voice is disembodied as it echoes through the auditorium

**The Musician** wears a white long-sleeved shirt with a waistcoat over and a small white hat on his head. Although not strictly a member of the cast, but the provider of all the show’s music, the musician, played by Peter J. McCauley interacts with the cast on various occasions.

A great deal of the humour in this play derives form the unexpectedness of the costumes and the speed with which the actors change from one character to the next.

**Mary:** Mary wears her long dark hair, streaked with purple, in a high ponytail. She has a thin face with large eyes and heavy make-up and large hoop earrings adorn her ears. She wears grey track-suit bottoms when we first see her with an overall on top of her grey tunic. Later she wears a more conventional blue tunic trimmed with gold with a glittery head-dress. Later a dark blue, thigh length waistcoat tops the tunic. She also appears in turquoise pyjamas with a robe trimmed with silver and large Ugg style slippers. The part of Mary is taken by Kerri Quinn.

Terry Keeley plays a number of different parts. He has brown hair cut short and is slender and of medium height. He plays **Joseph** in a small hat with a red and white tartan shirt with a beige jacket over it and beige trousers with brown shoes. On top of all is a leather workman’s apron. His wedding out fit is an ornate embroidered blue tunic and later he travels in a long maroon waistcoat with shorter waistcoat on top and a blue tunic beneath. He wears a knitted maroon and cream hat on his head. Terry Keeley also plays the part of the angel which appears to the shepherds. As this angel, he wears layers of white floaty loose robes and has an enormous pair of feathered wings strapped to his back.

**Alan Mckee** is a tall well-built man with a square face, plays a huge number of parts. **As a workman** he wears an orange high visibility jacket and a yellow hard hat. As a workman he wears a yellow high visibility jacket and a yellow hard hat. **The Centurion** is dressed as one would expect with a short cloak and Roman tunic and a Roman helmet with a red crest. However, under the tunic he wears baggy trousers caught in at the ankles and his striped socks and soft leather slippers are a little unusual. He carries a stick under his arm. As a wedding guest he wears a striped shirt and baggy trousers and a small round brown hat. He is also a Roman soldier in tunic and helmet. He carries a spear. As the Innkeeper he wears a tartan cap and a waistcoat with large blue and beige checks over a beige shirt with small checks. Round his neck is an extremely loud tie in maroon and white with a huge pattern.His baggy trousers are worn beneath. As Shepherd 2 he has a brown wig with a flat tweed cap, sheepskins and black leather boots. **As Balthazar**, one of the three kings, he sports a huge gold turban, a long, brocade, cream tunic with a long blue waistcoat over and he carries a shoulder bag.

**Conor Grimes** alsoplays many parts. **Conor** is small and slightly plump with a round face and spectacles. As the **Angel Gabriel** he is dressed in a beige tattered tunic and a soft cap. His blue trousers are tucked into striped socks and wears glasses. When he plays **a Rabbi** he acquires ringlets and a prayer shawl over an embellished robe. He is the second of the two Roman soldiers dressed in a tunic and with a Roman helmet. He also carries a dangerous-looking spear. As Vinty he has a diamond patterned waistcoat with decorative tassles over loose blue trousers and a rust tunic. He wears a small round beige and brown plaid hat with a tassle. As shepherd one he is dressed in sheepskins with baggy trousers under, a red wig and a flat tweed cap on his head. Under his sheepskin jacket his chest and belly are bare. As a King he wears a crown on his head, and a broad embroidered sash over a rust tunic

**Tara Lynne O’Neil** has fair hair and a fair complexion**.** As Davy she sports a moustache and large spectacles andwears a soft cap with a pencil tucked behind each ear. She has loose beige trousers and a long cream silk tunic with a long orange waistcoat over. An orange tool belt is fastened round her waist. As Cletus her face is obscured by an animal-like snout attachment. She wears loose beige trousers with a pale beige camouflage jacket over with lots of fabric tatters hanging from it. As the vendor she has dark hair and is dressed in a very ostentatious long tunic waistcoat of bright colours over a shorter tapestry waistcoat with a wide belt and with a turban style hat. As Spit she retains the tapestry waistcoat over a cream apron. She has a little brown cap on her head and a narrow moustache flicked up at each end. As Shepherd 3 she wears sheepskins a shaggy blonde wig with a tweed cap on top and long black boots. As one of the kings she wears a blue baseball jacket over black trousers striped with silver and a baseball cap with a crown on it. Her trainers are spectacular, they flash in changing coloured lights when she moves.

**The Animals**

The street vendor’s donkey is curiously foreshortened with a beautiful donkey head and long floppy ears. But as he is played by only one man bent over, holding false legs at the front, his back is very short but big enough to be decorated by an ornate saddle and scrolls are fastened on either side of the saddle. Nijinsky, the other donkey, played in the same way by a bent over person, is very plain, with just a hairy donkey hide but the same appealing donkey face and ears.

There are two life-sized soft-toy sheepdogs which lie flopped down on the stage. One is black and white and one is brown and white.

**The Babe** The babe is very obviously a doll.