



The Story of the Great White Horse

A mini musical for young performers and narrator

Music: Nicholas Keyworth

Words: Philip Jamieson

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ABOUT THE SHOW

This is a mini musical for young people of any age but ideally targeted at ages 6-12. The themes are universal with community, hopes and dreams being central to the story. It is the ideal introduction to musical theatre and involves:

- Learning three unison songs
- Developing simple movements
- Listening and responding to the storyteller
- Making 'horse head' masks which are worn through the show

TIMESCALE

At least one week would be recommended to make the best of the show and the educational benefits it offers. This could be spread over several weeks, or it could through an after school club or weekend activities.

The Story of the Great White Horse can also be the hub of cross-curricula project providing opportunities for collaboration between not only the obvious subject areas of music, drama and dance, but also geography (location of Wiltshire and chalk landscape), history (prehistoric peoples), science (animal behaviour and seasons), English Language (pronunciation and developing vocabulary).

DURATION

About 30 minutes

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. Introduction
2. The Old Oak Forest (*Song*)
3. Horses in the Sky (*Song*)
4. The Great White Horse
5. Snow Dance
6. Head in the Clouds (*Optional solo*)
7. Finale: Horses in the Sky *reprise*

REQUIREMENTS

Voices

- Group of children who sing the songs and act out the movements as if young horses
- Optional Song 6 sung by a tenor voice. He can be an older boy from the school. He makes an appearance towards the end as the 'Young Cart Horse'.

Narrator

The story is told by a narrator who is the 'Old Cart Horse'. This should be an adult - maybe a drama teacher. Apart from the introduction and ending, the story can be read from a book.

Accompanying Music

The music can be provided through one of three ways. Score, parts and backing tracks are provided for rehearsal and performance:

- Small band (piano, flute, trumpet, cello, percussion). This is the preferred option and can be led by a conductor or directed from the piano.
- Piano only. Again this can be conducted or directed from the piano
- Backing tracks.

Movement

This can be very simple and led by the narrator - or some of the musical numbers can be developed into dance routines depending on the skills involved.

Backdrop

This is provided through a series of vibrant projected slides on powerpoint which are supplied as part of the package.

Set

Simple items placed in the middle of the stage such as some wooden pallets and/or bales of straw to sit and stand on as well as circle around.

Lighting

Atmospheric lighting would really enhance the show with a simple lighting plot.

Masks

A mask template with full instructions is provided. This is a great opportunity for the art department to be involved. Young performers should colour in their own masks in their own individual style before cutting out and fitting. The narrator and the optional *Young Cart Horse* also need a mask. These should look the same as each other with one looking much older than the other.

Costumes

- **Children:** All wear black so their colourful horse head masks stand out.
- **Narrator:** Colourful contemporary shirt for the introduction and end, and throw on a big cloak for when they become the **Old Cart Horse**.
- **Young Cart Horse:** A similar colourful contemporary shirt

SYNOPSIS

This fable tells of the creation of the ancient white horses carved in the hills of Wiltshire in England. From time to time, we all see pictures in the clouds. Long ago there was a Great White Horse living in the clouds who was the inspiration and spiritual guide for the communities of horses living in Wiltshire.

A wise old plough horse recalls when he was young and was told in a dream that the Great White Horse was going to make a rare visit to Wiltshire. In the dream the Great White Horse requests each community of horses to carve a giant picture of him in the hills. In return, the community which creates the finest picture will receive a magic gift. All the communities of horses then set about carving huge pictures of the Great White Horse on the hills in the Wiltshire countryside.

Unfortunately, the night before he returns to judge the competition, a thick layer of snow fell across the land and all the pictures were hidden. No one wins the prize. But today the magnificent images of the white horses still remain on the hills... until the Great White Horse returns again.

PERFORMANCES

The Thailand premiere of Story of the Great White Horse took place on Saturday 23 March 2024 at the BACC as part of the Spotlight Performing Arts Festival. The work developed from a series of workshops led by Nicholas Keyworth and Philip Jamieson many, many hoofbeats ago across the South West of England - where the White Horses are!