**TALL STORIES PRESENTS**

A book cover with a cartoon of a child and a moose

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**EXPLORING THE WEST END THIS CHRISTMAS**

**FROM 1 DECEMBER TO 7 JANUARY   
AT THE GARRICK THEATRE**

**★★★★★**

*“Warm, witty and beautifully made… a fantastic family favourite*”

*LondonTheatre1*

**★★★★**

*“Fun, daft and a little scary!”*

*Time Out*

***The Gruffalo said that no Gruffalo should***

***ever set foot in the deep dark wood...***

This festive season the Gruffalo’s Child will be wandering on to the West End, in Tall Stories’ enchanting adaptation of the much-loved picture book by *Julia Donaldson* and *Axel Scheffler*.

With a cast including **Harriet Waters** as the Gruffalo’s Child**, Maxwell Tyler** as the Gruffalo, Snake, Owl and Fox**, Samuel Tracy** as Mouse and understudy **Pip Simpson.**

*One wild and windy night the Gruffalo’s Child ignores her father’s warnings about the Big Bad Mouse and tiptoes out into the deep dark wood. She follows snowy tracks and encounters mysterious creatures – but the Big Bad Mouse doesn’t really exist... does he?*

**Julia Donaldson** said: *“Tall Stories bring their own special magic to their stage productions based on my books. Children will love entering the atmosphere of the deep dark wood and enjoy the catchy songs. The Big Bad Mouse is worth waiting for.”*

**Axel Scheffler** said: *"The snowy deep dark wood based on my illustrations is brought to life by Tall Stories and it almost becomes a character in its own right in their production. A favourite moment for me is when the Gruffalo’s Child sits on the Gruffalo's lap and the book cover image is created on the stage. I think the young audience will enjoy it very much."*

The perfect wintery production for families - let your imagination run wild with songs, laughs and scary fun for everyone aged 3 to 103!

**The Gruffalo’s Child** is adapted from the book by **Julia Donaldson** and **Axel Scheffler** directed by **Olivia Jacobs**, Tall Stories’ co-founder, with **Toby Mitchell** as creative producer.

**About the Show**

When Julia and Axel created The Gruffalo’s Child as a sequel to their first book The Gruffalo, it felt like a natural progression that Tall Stories should develop a second Gruffalo show. Once again, they were faced with lots of challenges and decisions. How could they transform a five-minute book into a one-hour play while staying true to what the author and illustrator created?

The Gruffalo himself has become a bit of an icon since their first association with him how could they live up to the audience’s expectations? How would the fox, the owl and the snake have changed since the first production? Who would speak the lines from the book this time? What kind of music should they write? And then there’s the Big Bad Mouse of course - how would they create him on stage?

Throughout rehearsals, Tall Stories worked with the performers, designers and composers to come up with the production which opened at London’s Polka Theatre in autumn 2005. Since then, the show has continued to develop, with the input of many performers and creative talents. The Gruffalo’s Child has followed in its predecessor’s pawprints - and travelled the length and breadth of the UK as well as to America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

Tall Stories are delighted to be bringing this snowy tale back to the West End for audiences this winter.

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**JULIA DONALDSON** is the author of some of the world's best-loved children's books, including modern classics ‘The Gruffalo’ and ‘The Gruffalo's Child’, which together have sold over 17 million copies worldwide, and the hugely successful ‘What the Ladybird Heard’ adventures. Julia also writes fiction, including the ‘Princess Mirror-Belle’ books illustrated by Lydia Monks, as well as poems, plays and songs – and her brilliant live shows are always in demand. She was Children’s Laureate 2011-13 and has been honoured with a CBE for Services to Literature. Julia and her husband Malcolm divide their time between West Sussex and Edinburgh.

**AXEL SCHEFFLER** is a star illustrator whose instantly recognisable, warm and witty illustrations have achieved worldwide acclaim and numerous awards. Axel is the illustrator of wonderful novelty, gift and poetry books for Macmillan, such as ‘Fish Dream of Trees’ (Two Hoots) and the bestselling ‘The Bedtime Bear’, ‘The Tickle Book’ and ‘Mother Goose’s Nursery Rhymes’ – and of course, he is the illustrator of some of the world’s best-loved picture books, including the modern classic ‘The Gruffalo’, with over 30 million books sold worldwide across the series. Axel’s artwork is exhibited internationally; he has illustrated for many charities and designed the Royal Mail Christmas stamps in 2012. Born in Hamburg, Axel now lives with his family in London.

**Cast**

**Harriet Waters – Gruffalo’s Child**

Harriet is originally from Manchester and graduated from Mountview in 2020.

Theatre credits include:*Shewolves (*National Tour/ Southwark Playhouse*)* and *Betty Blue Eyes* (Mountview).

Television credits include: *Scott and Bailey (*ITV)

**Maxwell Tyler – Gruffalo**

MaxwellTrained at Drama Studio London, originally from Essex and studied at the University of York. Max is also a writer and co-founder of the award-winning Faceplant Theatre.

Theatre credits include:*Professor Slug’s House of Bugs* (UK tour); *Doctor Who: Time Fracture* (Immersive Everywhere); *The Bear* (Pins & Needles); *Blade Runner* (Secret Cinema); *Alice’s Adventures Underground* (Les Enfants Terribles); *Marvellous Imaginary Menagerie* (Les Enfants Terribles); *Man & Superman* (National Theatre) and *King Lear* (National Theatre)

Television credits include:*Count Abdulla* (ITVX) and *EastEnders* (BBC)

Other credits include:*Wooden Overcoats* (Audioscribble)

**Samuel Tracy – Mouse**

Samuel graduated from The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art with previous training at The BRIT School.

Other theatre credits include: *The Tempest* (Salisbury Playhouse); *Windrush75* (Southwark Playhouse); *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* (The Unicorn Theatre); *Half-Empty Glasses, A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain, The Ultimate Pickle* (Paines Plough Roundabout Season); *WILD* (The Unicorn Theatre); *Romeo & Juliet* (Southwark Playhouse); *Dr. Jekyll & Mr Hyde* (Rose Theatre Kingston/National Tour); *Sticky* (Southwark Playhouse); *Zigger Zagger* (Wilton’s Music Hall); *Orfeo* (Royal Opera House / Roundhouse) and *Because of You* (Hampton Hill Theatre)

Television credits include:*Woke Overnight* (BBC)

Film credits include:*Venus Fly Trap* and *HAMLET NW5* (RADA)

**Pip Simpson – Assistant Stage Manager & Understudy**

Pip recently graduated from East 15 Acting School, from the Acting and Physical Theatre course. At age seven, Pip performed as a munchkin in *The Wizard of Oz* at The Royal Festival Hall, and since then knew that the stage was where she wanted to be. Pip is passionate about making theatre more accessible and is training to be a BSL interpreter for the stage. This is Pip’s professional debut.

Theatre credits whilst training include: *The Gilded Splinter* (David Glass Ensemble); *This Is Rigged* (Jacksons Lane) and *Let The Right One In* (Gary Sefton)

**Creative Team**

**Olivia Jacobs – Director**

Olivia trained at Central School of Speech and Drama and obtained a degree from the University of London before studying Japanese Children’s Theatre in Tokyo. She worked with Soho Theatre, Besht Tellers and Black Theatre Co-operative (now Nitro) before becoming Artistic Director of Camden People’s Theatre. Her directing credits include: ‘Canterville Ghost’ (London, Edinburgh), ‘Wilde Creatures’ (West End/Edinburgh), ‘Emily Brown and the Thing’ (UK/Sydney Opera House/USA tour), ‘The Gruffalo’ (UK, US including Broadway, Australia including Sydney Opera House, international), ‘The Gruffalo’s Child’ (UK, US, Asia and international), ‘Snow White’ (UK/US tours including Broadway), ‘Room on the Broom’ (UK, US, Australia including Sydney Opera House, international), ‘The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr Benn’ (UK, international), ‘How the Giraffe got its Neck’ (UK tour), ‘William’s Monsters’ (UK, international), ‘Mum and the Monster’ (UK tour), ‘Something Else’ (UK tour), ‘The Happy Prince’ (UK tour), ‘Rumpelstiltskin’ (UK tour) and ‘Latke Who Couldn't Stop Screaming’ (UK tour). Olivia is co-founder and former co-artistic director of Tall Stories.

**Toby Mitchell – Creative Producer**

Toby studied at Cambridge University and Central School of Speech and Drama. He has been a French and drama teacher, an editor at Macmillan Children’s Books and designer of Total Theatre Magazine. Recent directing and co-directing credits include ‘The Smeds and The Smoos’ (UK tour & West End), ‘The Canterville Ghost’ (UK tour), ‘Wilde Creatures’ (Edinburgh, West End, US), ‘The Snail and the Whale’ (UK, international), ‘Alfie White: Space Explorer’ (UK tour), ‘My Brother the Robot’ (UK tour), ‘Twinkle Twonkle’ (UK, US), ‘The Snow Dragon’ (UK, international), ‘Does a Monster live Next Door?’ (UK tour), ‘Cat and No Mouse’ (Edinburgh/London), ‘The Owl and the Pussycat’ (UK tour), ‘The Egg’ (Edinburgh/London) and ‘Alice and Mr Dodgson’ (Edinburgh/London). Performing/devising work at the Edinburgh Fringe includes: ‘Alice and the Little Prince’, ‘Future Perfect’, ‘Monsters Got Talent’, ‘A British Guide to French Pop’, ‘The Island of First Loves’ and ‘Pandemonium’. He has worked with Soho Theatre and the Royal Court and is co-founder and artistic director of Tall Stories.

**Tall Stories**

Tall Stories brings great stories to life for audiences of all ages. The company is a registered charity which tours the UK and the world with its exciting blend of storytelling theatre, original music and lots of laughs. Tall Stories shows have played in the West End, on Broadway and at the Sydney Opera House – as well as in all sorts of venues and countries in between.

Last year Tall Stories proudly celebrated 25 years of bringing great stories to life for audiences of all ages. Founded in 1997 by Toby Mitchell and Olivia Jacobs, the company first found success with two shows at the Edinburgh Fringe – ‘The Happy Prince’ and ‘Alice and Mr Dodgson’. Originally intended for adult audiences, the productions also proved popular with family audiences – and Tall Stories was born.

Over the last quarter of a century, Tall Stories’ unpretentious approach has engaged countless audience members and brought the magic of physical storytelling to the stage through 31 productions, in 6 languages, in 15 countries, over 6 continents. The company’s most noted and popular productions include ‘The Gruffalo’, ‘Room on The Broom’, ‘Emily Brown and the Thing’, ‘The Snow Dragon’ and ‘Wilde Creatures’.

In October 2020 the Tall Stories Studio was opened – an exciting, accessible space located in Central Library on Holloway Road in London, five minutes’ walk from Highbury and Islington station. The Studio has already hosted many free performances for local families and has been provided at no cost to several emerging companies for workshop weeks. It is also available for organisations to hire for rehearsals, workshops and events. This beautiful newly renovated space restores the original front portion of the 1906 library building and features high ceilings, a semi-sprung floor, large windows and lots of natural light.

*‘Tall Stories sets the benchmark for children’s theatre’* (Sunday Times)

[www.tallstories.org.uk](http://www.tallstories.org.uk)

**LISTINGS**

***THE GRUFFALO’S CHILD***

**GARRICK THEATRE**

1 DECEMBER 2023 TO 7 JANUARY 2024

Book by **Julia Donaldson** and **Axel Scheffler**Directed by **Olivia Jacobs**

**Ticket Price:** From £10

**Press Performances:** Sunday 3 December, 11am and 2pm

**Performance Schedule:** Wed – Saturday, 10.30am

Sunday, 11am, 2pm and 4.30pm

**Except on:** Friday 22 December, 10.30am and 1pm   
 Friday 29 December, 11am and 2pm  
 Monday 1 January, 11am, 2pm and 4.30pm

Wednesday 3 January, 11am and 2pm  
 Friday 5 January, 11am and 2pm

**\*Relaxed Performances -** Saturday 16 December, 10.30am

Thursday 21 December, 10.30am

Wednesday 3 January, 2pm

**\*Audio Described Performances -** Sunday 24 December, 11am

**\*British Sign Language -** Friday 29 December, 2pm

**Age Recommendation**: Recommended for ages 3+.

**Address:** Garrick Theatre, 2 Charring Cross Road, London WC2H 0HH

**Box Office:** 0330 3334811

**Website:** [www.nimaxtheatres.com](http://www.nimaxtheatres.com)

**Running Time:** 1 hour (no interval)

**Social Media:**

**Instagram:** @tallstories

**Twitter/X:** @TallStoriesLive

**Facebook:** Tall Stories

**PRODUCTION ASSETS**

**Production Images:** Available to download [**HERE**](https://we.tl/t-CfT6z0SkAZ)

*Please credit @charles\_flint\_photography*

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