The Snail and the Whale

2015 Tour Marketing Pack

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1. SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

'The Snail and the Whale'

Based on the book by
Julia Donaldson
& Axel Scheffler

‘An exquisite piece of theatre... that leaves you smiling’ (The Stage 16/4/12)

Tall Stories (creators of the Gruffalo and Room on the Broom stage shows) are proud to present their latest exciting collaboration with Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.

A tiny snail longs to see the world, so she hitches a lift on the tail of a humpback whale. Together they go on an amazing journey, experiencing sharks and penguins, icebergs and volcanoes. But when the whale gets beached, how will the tiny snail save him?

Tall Stories’ adaptation is inspired by the work of Storybook Soldiers, who help British military personnel abroad to record bedtime story CDs for their children back home. The amazing journey of the tiny snail is seen through the eyes of a very adventurous young girl – who’d love to be going round the world with her seafaring father...

Storytelling, live music and lots of laughs, in a show for everyone aged 4 and up.

'Interactive, moving, fun and captivating... fantastic' (Stockton Evening Gazette 3/4/12)

THE BOOK

- ‘Probably my favourite of all the books I have written for Axel Scheffler to illustrate.’ (Julia Donaldson)
- Winner of the 2004 Early Years award, the 2005 Blue Peter award and the 2007 Giverny award.

THE SHOW

- Created in Tall Stories’ unique style, the show combines storytelling, music and lots of laughs.
- All music and sound effects are created live on stage by an electric viola player with an effects pedal.
- Recommended age group: 4-10 and grown-ups.

THE COMPANY

Tall Stories is a registered charity founded by co-directors Olivia Jacobs and Toby Mitchell in 1997. The company has performed at the National Theatre, at various West End theatres and on Broadway. Tall Stories shows tour to small and large scale venues in the UK, and have performed abroad as far away as Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Poland, Singapore, Taiwan and the US.

More info & hi-resolution images: www.tallstories.org.uk or call 020 8348 0080

LISTINGS INFORMATION [Insert here...]

A Tiny Snail Longs to See the World...
Dear Teacher

We wanted to let you know about Tall Stories’ enchanting adaptation of The Snail and the Whale, coming to ____________________________ from ________________ to ________________.

From the creators of the Gruffalo and Room on the Broom stage shows, Olivier award nominated theatre company Tall Stories are proud to present their latest collaboration with Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.

A tiny snail longs to see the world, so she hitch's a lift on the tail of a huge humpback whale. Together they go on an amazing journey, experiencing sharks and penguins, icebergs and volcanoes... The little snail starts feeling very small in the vastness of the world. Then disaster strikes - the whale becomes beached in a bay. Can the tiny snail save the day? This exciting adventure is seen through the eyes of a very adventurous young girl – who'd love to be going round the world with her seafaring father...

Created in Tall Stories' unique style, The Snail and the Whale combines physical storytelling, live music and lots of laughs. The show is suitable for ages 4+.

The Snail and the Whale won the 2004 Early Years award for the best pre-school book, the 2005 Blue Peter award for Best Book to Read Aloud, and the 2007 Giverny award for Best Science Picture Book.

For information about performance times and schools' booking rates please contact the venue:

We hope to see you there!

See a sneak preview at
www.snailandthewhaielive.com

To use this (with your venue information added) just contact the Tall Stories office.
3. BOX OFFICE BRIEF

- From the creators of The Gruffalo and Room on the Broom on stage.
- The show is for age 4 and upwards and their families.
- Tall Stories use a physical story telling style combined with humour and original music to create a lively theatrical experience that embraces its audience. In this show there are three performers and live music.
- The Snail and the Whale is a tale of bravery and adventure
- The show will be touring the UK in February, March and April 2015.
- The show is also touring to the Australia (Sydney Opera House), Hong Kong and Singapore in January and to Malaysia in March. In October 2014 the show played a sold-out run at the New Victory Theater in New York City.
- Tall Stories’ latest collaboration with Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.
- Babes in arms should be admitted free of charge.

Age Group: 4+

Running Time: 55 minutes, no interval.

Devised by: Toby Mitchell, Olivia Jacobs and the Company

INCLUSIVE PERFORMANCES

Tall Stories is committed to providing opportunities for all families to be able to attend the theatre. We frequently hold relaxed performances aimed at children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder or learning disability, signed/audio described performances, pre-show touch tours, and more. If you are interested in or planning on organising a performance of this sort for The Snail and the Whale we would be delighted to work with you on it. We can provide a visual guide to the story for relaxed performances and any other aids that would be useful. Please contact Charlotte at charlotte@tallstories.org.uk to discuss any aspect of this.
4. COMPANY AND CREATIVE TEAM INFORMATION

Tall Stories Theatre Company

Since 1997, when Olivia Jacobs and Toby Mitchell set up the company, Tall Stories shows have performed all over the UK, and as far afield as Poland, America, Canada, China and Taiwan. *Snow White, The Gruffalo* and *The Snail and the Whale* have performed to sell-out audiences on Broadway, and Tall Stories shows have been produced by local companies in Chile, Singapore and Australia. Their production of *The Gruffalo* has been released on DVD by the Really Useful Group, and a picture book has been published based on their show *The Snow Dragon*.

Cast

**Lucy Grace (Snail/Daughter)**
Lucy has previously worked with Tall Stories on 'Twinkle Twonkle' which toured the US, UK and played at the Roundhouse, London. Recent credits include ‘A Tree’ (Lyric Hammersmith/Hit the Ground), ‘Blueprint’ (Write by Numbers/Bikeshed Theatre) and ‘Regeneration’ (Write by Numbers/Rich Mix). She has also written her first solo piece 'Garden' which is being developed with support from Write by Numbers and Tamasha Theatre Company.

**Tim Hibberd (Whale/Dad)**
Tim has worked for Tall Stories previously on 'The Gruffalo', ‘Mr Benn’ and ‘My Brother the Robot’ and was a member of the original devising company for ‘The Snail and the Whale’ in 2011. He has also worked with Polka Theatre on a number of shows and is the former Artistic Director of Rejects Revenge Theatre Company. He is currently to be seen as Mr Fen in CBeebies’ ‘Topsy and Tim’ (together with his own twins Tom and Natalya) and heard as Vincent Van Coconut in Disney’s ‘Art Attack’.

**Charlotte Mafham (Narrator/Musician)**
Charlotte trained at Arts Ed and in puppetry with Blind Summit. Previous theatre credits include: Troilus & Cressida & ‘Coriolanus’ (Tristan Bates); ‘Zero Point Project’ (BAC), ‘Rumpelstiltskin’ (Hiccup Theatre, UK Tour), ‘The Dark Entry’ (Canterbury Festival), ‘The Caucasian Chalk Circle’ (The Space), ‘The Just So Stories’ (The King’s Head Theatre) and ‘Julius Caesar’ (The Scoop). Charlotte also plays the viola for the Whitehall Orchestra, the charity fundraising Amici Orchestra and band The Hidden Tracks.

Creative Team

**Toby Mitchell (Director)**
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 credits include ‘The Snail and the Whale’ (UK/international), ‘Twinkle Twonkle’ (UK/US), ‘The Snow Dragon’ (UK/international), ‘Does a Monster live Next Door?’ (UK tour), ‘Cat and No Mouse’ (UK tour), ‘The Owl and the Pussycat’ (UK tour), ‘The Egg’ (Edinburgh/London) and ‘Alice and Mr Dodgson’ (Edinburgh/London). Recent performing/devising work includes: ‘Monsters Got Talent’, ‘A British Guide to French Pop’, ‘The Island of First Loves’ (Edinburgh) and ‘Pandemonium’ (Edinburgh & London). He has worked with Soho Theatre and the Royal Court and is co-founder and joint artistic director of Tall Stories.

**Olivia Jacobs (Creative Producer)**
Olivia studied at the University of London and Central School of Speech and Drama. She has worked as artistic director of Camden People’s Theatre, as general manager of Besht Tellers and Black Theatre Cooperative and as festival programmer/co-ordinator for Soho Theatre. She was awarded a Japanese Government grant to study Japanese Children’s Theatre in Tokyo. Her directing credits include: ‘Emily Brown

**Isla Shaw (Designer)**

**James Whiteside (Lighting Designer)**

**Richard Heacock (Composer)**
Richard’s first theatre music was for an adaptation of ‘Winnie the Pooh’ by writer/director Nick Ward in 1984. He has composed scores for ‘Apart from George’ (National Theatre), ‘The Relapse’ (Birmingham Rep), ‘Hardie and Baird’ (Traverse, Edinburgh), ‘Tess’ (West Yorkshire Playhouse) and ‘Kindertransport’ (Soho Theatre). Richard also composes for TV, including ‘The 1900 House’, ‘Gamesmaster’, ‘Warlords’ and ‘The Worst Jobs in History’.

**Charlie Young (Company Stage Manager)**
5. TOUR CONTACTS

Tall Stories
Jacksons Lane
269a Archway Road
London N6 5AA

Tel: 020 8348 0080

www.tallstories.org.uk
info@tallstories.org.uk

Producer: Lucy Wood lucy@tallstories.org.uk

Projects Manager: Charlotte Lund charlotte@tallstories.org.uk

6. PHOTOGRAPHS AND LOGO

High resolution photographs are available on our website on the Snail and the Whale show page, where our logo can also be downloaded.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA

Tall Stories have an active presence across a variety of social media:

Facebook: /tallstoriestheatre
Twitter: @tallstoriesnews
Instagram: tallstories
Pinterest: /tall_stories

We will follow you back and retweet/share/etc. your posts whenever we can. Please do tag/link to us wherever possible and we will do the same for you.
7. TOUR SCHEDULE

(Dates are subject to change)

UK TOUR SPRING 2015

February 2015
5-8 The Haymarket, Basingstoke
13-14 The Gala Theatre, Durham
15-16 MAC, Birmingham
17-18 The Corn Exchange, Newbury
20-21 The Curve, Leicester
26-27 Hall for Cornwall, Truro

March 2015
1-2 The Oakengates Theatre, Telford
3-4 The Grand Theatre, Lancaster
5-31 International Touring

April 2015
1-2 The Radlett Centre, London
3-4 Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham
7-8 The Wyvern Theatre, Swindon
9-10 The Gatehouse, Stafford
11-12 The Octagon, Yeovil
14-15 The Berry Theatre, Hedge End
18-19 The Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon
20-21 The Courtyard Theatre, Hereford
23-24 The Corn Exchange, Kings Lynn
25-26 Jacksons Lane, London
8. BROCHURE COPY

Tall Stories presents

THE SNAIL AND THE WHALE

‘An exquisite piece of theatre’ (The Stage)

Tall Stories (creators of the Gruffalo and Room on the Broom stage shows) are proud to present their latest exciting collaboration with Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.

A tiny snail longs to see the world, so she hitchs a lift on the tail of a humpback whale. But when the whale gets beached, how will the tiny snail save him? Follow the tiny snail’s amazing journey, as seen through the eyes of a very adventurous young girl, who’d love to be going round the world with her seafaring father...

Storytelling, live music and lots of laughs, in a show for everyone aged 4 and up.

‘Faultless family fare... One of the best examples of children’s theatre’

Whatsonstage.com *****

Other Reviews

‘A small but ingenious pleasure’ The Guardian

‘An imaginative and heartfelt adaptation’ The List ****

‘Captivating, inventive storytelling along with beautiful live music and songs’ Hairline ****

‘Expect to leave the theatre happy and smiling.’ Fest Magazine ****

‘Adventures abound in this touching adaptation’ TheArtsJournal.co.uk ****

‘The company did a wonderful job with the story' One4Review.com ****

‘Charming and well-produced' Fringe Guru ****

‘Interactive, moving, fun and captivating... fantastic' Stockton Evening Gazette

‘Accompanied by some wonderful violin pieces and sound effects, the script stays just close enough to the original to keep the young audience happy while interpreting the story in a fresh and amusing way' Primary Times
MARKETING SUGGESTIONS

Speedy around the world

To tie in with the theme of an adventurous snail that wants to see the world, the New Victory Theater in New York ran a competition in the week leading up to the show. Each day they released a picture of Speedy the Snail in a different location, published on their Facebook and Twitter pages, and people guessed the location to win tickets to the show and a copy of the book.

Activities in the theatre

- Colouring in snails to stick onto a giant whale
- A book-reading corner in the foyer where copies of the book of ‘The Snail and the Whale’ as well as other books are available for families to read.

Underwater collage competition

For our Christmas run at the St James Theatre in 2013, schools attending performances asked to create underwater collage scenes and send them in. The winning school had a meet and greet with the cast after the show.

Storybook Soldiers

Storybook Soldiers are the charity that inspired our retelling of the story, with their scheme where parents in the armed forces can record themselves reading a bedtime story to be sent home to their children. This idea gave us the framework of a production, in which a father in the Navy records The Snail and the Whale for his young daughter. Their website is [http://www.drumbeat.org.uk/7591.html](http://www.drumbeat.org.uk/7591.html) and if there is any TV, radio or editorial interest in the link between Storybook Soldiers and the show, the Tall Stories office can put you in touch with them.

If there are any army bases or barracks near to your venue this link is an excellent way to reach out to them, as we have done in the past.

The Tall Stories office is more than happy to help out with competitions and marketing projects and can provide photos, arrange prizes of merchandise or signed books, meet the cast etc.
Interview with Toby Mitchell, director

Without giving away too much of what makes the show so special, can you describe what the challenges were of telling a story within a story?

At Tall Stories we've loved Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's fantastic story about the snail and the whale for years. The original challenge was thinking about how to put that story on stage – with those two very different characters. Reading an article about Storybook Soldiers gave us the idea of telling the story with a young daughter (representing the snail) who desperately wants to go round the world with her Royal Navy father (the whale). Then, it was a question of fitting the two stories together seamlessly and clearly, so the audience knows where they are within each one.

How were you challenged or invigorated by the idea of adapting such a beloved story? How were the authors of the book involved in your process, if at all?

This is the fourth Donaldson/Scheffler book we have adapted and we're always invigorated by their brilliant stories. When we first had the idea for how to adapt the book, we spoke to Julia about it, and while she wasn’t sure how the two stories would fit together, she trusted us to work it out. She also came up with the idea of using live music. Meanwhile Axel's fantastic pictures inspired many scenes in the show – like the ninja crabs and the penguins. Both Julia and Axel have seen the show – and enjoyed it. Phew!

I know The Snail and the Whale has played in a lot of different places. What's the process like of moving a show around like that? How does it change in each city? Or, is there a point where the whole thing is really set in stone?

The show has played around the UK, in Poland, Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Bermuda, Canada and around the US, including on Broadway. And it's off to Sydney Opera House in January! It's broadly the same in each place, but it's never "set in stone." As with any truly live show – and especially live shows for family audiences – it changes each time, depending on how the audience reacts.

Can you tell us which character is a favourite, or what you love about all of them?

My favourite is the chief penguin (one of many characters played by the very imaginative dad), because he's so grumpy, but he loves it when the audience gets his song right. And then the snail herself is so brave, so resourceful, so excited by life, that you just have to love her. Meanwhile, the narrator (the daughter as a grown-up) is our friendly guide through both stories, with her fantastic electric viola, creating all the music and sound effects herself.

If a kid or young person told you they want to be a theatre director when they grow up, what advice would you have for them?

Watch a lot of theatre! Read books and scripts. Think about how you would make characters and scenes come alive visually on stage. And – above all – remember that theatre is different from film and television. You can tell stories brilliantly in both those media, but theatre is different. Theatre is live. Think about what that means. All of us – actors and audience – are in a room together experiencing a story. How does that affect the way you would tell it?

What, would you say, is the core message to take away from the show? How do you hope kids and families leave feeling?

The core message of Julia's story is that small things can achieve big things. The message of the show is to love stories and use your imagination. As the dad says, a good story can take you all round the world, without even leaving your room. We hope kids and families will leave feeling energized – and ready to go home to make dens, tell stories and sing songs!

(Thank you to the New Victory Theater for conducting the interview)