

THE UGLY DUCKLING



Our show

Based on the classic fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, this Christmas the Nottingham Playhouse presents a heartwarming and fun-filled festive adaptation of The Ugly Duckling, jam packed with fourteen original songs and plenty of giggles. Bump into Gob, the cheeky sheep, and keep an eye on your shiny things in the company of the mischievous Magpie. Don't forget to watch out for a tricky Housecat on the way, and a Swan who is too cool for school. Join Ugly on an unforgettable adventure of self-discovery this Christmas!



Cast

Ethan Cooper as Ugly

Maya Thompson as Mama Duck, Gob, Magpie, Housecat
and Swan

Creatives

Isabella Waldron Writer & Lyrics

Laura Ryder Director

Ben Glasstone Composer, Musical Director & Lyrics

Alexandrea Hopkin-Spratt Designer

Sam Osborne Lighting Designer & Video Programmer

Matt Powell Creative Captions Designer

Emily Howlett Creative Captions Consultant

Ella Barraclough Costume Supervisor

Alex Hatton Props Supervisor

Kimberley Jones Movement Director

Emilie Carter Costume Advisor

Bethan Keen Wardrobe Maintenance

Lucas Anderson Stage Manager (on book)

Bradley Hunt Technician

Jill Robertshaw Production Manager

Callie Barter Lead Producer

Leila Glen Stage One Trainee Producer

Haydn Rhys Cawley Seamster



Re-Inventing The Ugly Duckling: Setting the Stage

Nottingham Playhouse's *The Ugly Duckling* is a brand-new production, complete with a unique take on the storyline and fourteen new songs written specifically for the play. This means a whole host of creative people are responsible for inventing this brand new show and bringing it to life!

At the beginning of this year, a call was sent in search of the perfect director, writer, and composer for the show. Once the director, writer and composer had been chosen, they met up and discussed their creative ideas and visions for the show. Everyone knows Andersen's classic fairy tale, but the team at Nottingham Playhouse wanted to take Ugly on a new and exciting kind of journey. Our amazing writer, Isabella Waldron, then set about creating drafts of the script, while our composer, Ben Glasstone, sat down at his piano and magicked up the music for the show, including fourteen brilliant brand-new songs.

There was also an open casting callout in search of two amazing actors to bring the story to life, and the Nottingham Playhouse received over 250 applications! Our producer and director then had the hard task of

whittling this huge pool of talent down to just two stars. They had to watch the actors do their lines, and also see who had a great singing voice. It was also important to consider which pair of performers would work well together. The final stage of the audition process involved in-person auditions in pairs, to see which double act had the best chemistry, and could really embody the characters. Ethan Cooper, who plays Ugly, says:

"Working with a smaller cast is great as you can really connect with the other actors. You feel like you have a really close bond."

Another fun thing about this show is that it uses a technique called multi-roling. You may have noticed that there are only two actors but six different characters, meaning that while one actor plays Ugly, the other actor has to play five different characters - that's a lot of outfit changes! This means the wonderful Maya also has to create five different voices - one for each character.



Acting Exercise: Tongue Twisters

Before every Ugly Duckling rehearsal, our actors Maya and Ethan do vocal warm ups to prepare for all the talking and singing they will be doing that day. Here are some animal-related tongue twisters you can try, just like Maya and Ethan. Try and say them again and again, as fast as you can!



Sheep should sleep in the shed
A skunk sat on a stump
Six slippery snails slid slowly seaward
**A dog chews on your shoes,
whose shoes does he choose?**

Fun Fact

Varied Voices

Being an actor means you may have to do different voices and accents to become different characters. Voices can be especially useful in showing the personality of the character you are pretending to be.

In *The Ugly Duckling*, Maya is acting as five different characters. She gives each character a different voice. Maya says she uses a round, sinking voice for Housecat which sounds like an 'mmm' sound. For Magpie, Maya describes the voice as nasal, which means it sounds like her nose is blocked when she is speaking.

Team Talk: Interviews with the Actors

Ethan Cooper plays Ugly



What made you want to work on this show, and what are you enjoying about it so far?

I've wanted to work at the Nottingham Playhouse. Since I was a young boy living in Mansfield, it was always my dream theatre to come to. Children's theatre means a lot to me, especially bringing it into schools. The Ugly Duckling is such a well known story but this version seemed like it would be especially fun to act in. Finding the character of Ugly and discovering the journey he goes on from start to finish has been the best bit so far. I also love the Housecat, he is my favourite character in the show.

What was your favourite story as a child?

I had a lovely little book about Chicken Little, it was like a play of Chicken Little inside of the book, it was pretty cool. That was my favourite.

What has been your favourite show to work on, other than this one?

I loved being a part of 'A Boy Who Cried Wolf' last year at Lakeside Arts Theatre. That was a very Christmassy and lovely show, it was very fun.

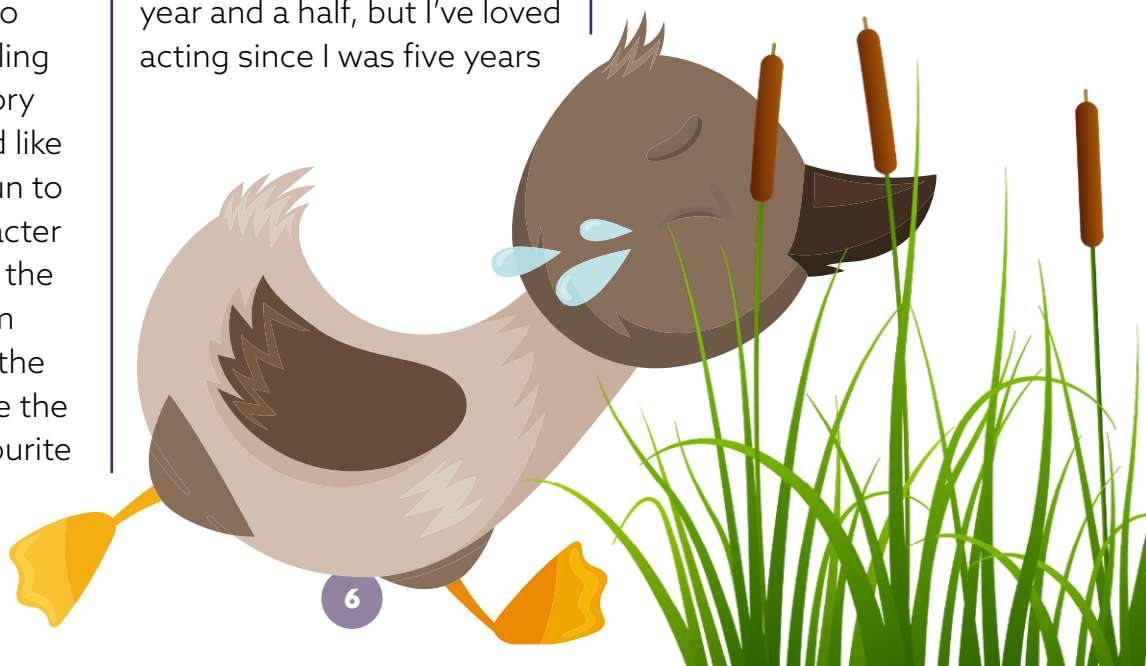
How long have you been acting for, and what type of acting do you enjoy most?

I've been acting professionally for about a year and a half, but I've loved acting since I was five years

old. I haven't stopped acting since I was five. I love improvisation, it was always my favourite part of acting in University. It's very fun and so unpredictable, anything can happen, good or bad, and that is hilarious.

Do you find it easier to make adults laugh or to make children laugh?

I prefer making children laugh, I feel more proud when I can do that.



Team Talk: Interviews with the Actors

Maya Thompson

plays Mama Duck, Gob, Magpie, Housecat and Swan



What made you want to work on this show, and what are you enjoying most about it?

Doing this show, and particularly the tour, will bring theatre to children or adults that possibly won't be able to experience it in a traditional setting. I love to be present in the moments where young children are experiencing

theatre for the first time, it's the most soul-purifying thing ever. I always enjoy the first day of rehearsals where every single creative person involved in the show is present and together for the first time. I think that day is always really cool.

What was your favourite story as a child?

Milly-Molly-Mandy, absolutely. It's a really old children's book series about a little girl in a pink and white striped dress who goes on different adventures, it's really cute.

Since you play five characters, which is your favourite and why?

Gob for sure. She's my

favourite to play because she's so cheeky.

How long have you been acting for, and what type of acting do you enjoy most?

I started acting in early primary school, and then started acting professionally after graduating, which I've been doing for four years now. But I've been acting for a long time, probably about 22-23 years. I love improv comedy, but I am also a huge fan of working from a script. I like the fun of improv comedy but I also really like working with texts.



Team Talk: Interviews with the Creatives

Laura Ryder is the Director



What made you want to work on this show?

I think children's theatre is a real privilege to make. Children are such responsive audience members, and it's a real gift as an artist and director to be able to make shows for them. I love to see people bring their friends, families or carers and share theatre together, I think it's magical.

What do you think makes fairy tales so great?

We've spoken a lot in the room, especially about the character of Housecat. There is something lovely as a child about having that sense of delicious peril. It's where you're allowed in a story to experience something that is

a bit scary in a safe way, like Roald Dahl's *The Witches*. You get to imagine what it would be like to be eaten by a wolf or something like that.

What are you enjoying most about working on this show?

I've loved discovering the characters and finding all the play that we've had in the room. Obviously you read the script and that's brilliant but I've loved finding the characters and bringing them to life in the space, whether that's through physicality or through voice. It's been a really lovely thing to bring into the room.

What has been your favourite show to work on, other than this one?

I worked on a production of *Little Red Riding Hood* last year, that was fantastic. It also toured around schools and community settings and it was really magical and fun at Christmas.

What does a director do?

I worked with the writer and the composer to develop

the script before going into rehearsals. We had a meeting and we spoke about what we thought the story was about and what we wanted it to be, and worked with other creatives and a dramaturg to develop the script and the story across about three drafts. My job is to hold the creative vision in my head and then work with the creative team to make that happen. This means bringing in sound, script, character, music, lighting, and always keeping the bigger picture in mind.

What happens if something goes wrong onstage?

I actually love when things go wrong in theatre, I think part of the joy is that you are all there and it's live and anything can happen. There is a unique relationship between the performer and the audience, and mistakes allow you to see the fun in that. We've been talking a lot in rehearsals about how the joy is in the mistakes – sometimes that's where you find the golden moments.

Team Talk: Interviews with the Creatives

Lucas Anderson is the Stage Manager

What made you want to work on this show?

After being in the rehearsal room and meeting everyone for the first time, everyone seemed so excited, and I could tell it was going to be a great team to work with. I'm really happy to be here!

What was your favourite fairytale as a child?

I liked the Baba Yaga. She is a Russian witch who lives in a house built on chicken legs and flies around in a pestle and mortar. She's great!

What does a Stage Manager do?

I keep rehearsals on track, and keep note of everything that happens in rehearsal for future reference. I'm the first port of call if something goes wrong or if something needs to be sorted out.

What type of training might you need to be a Stage Manager?

I think you can just hop into it with work experience, but personally I went to University and studied Stage Management. They gave me a really good basis of knowledge which allowed me to go straight into doing it.

Bradley Hunt is the Creative Captions Operator

What made you want to work on this show?

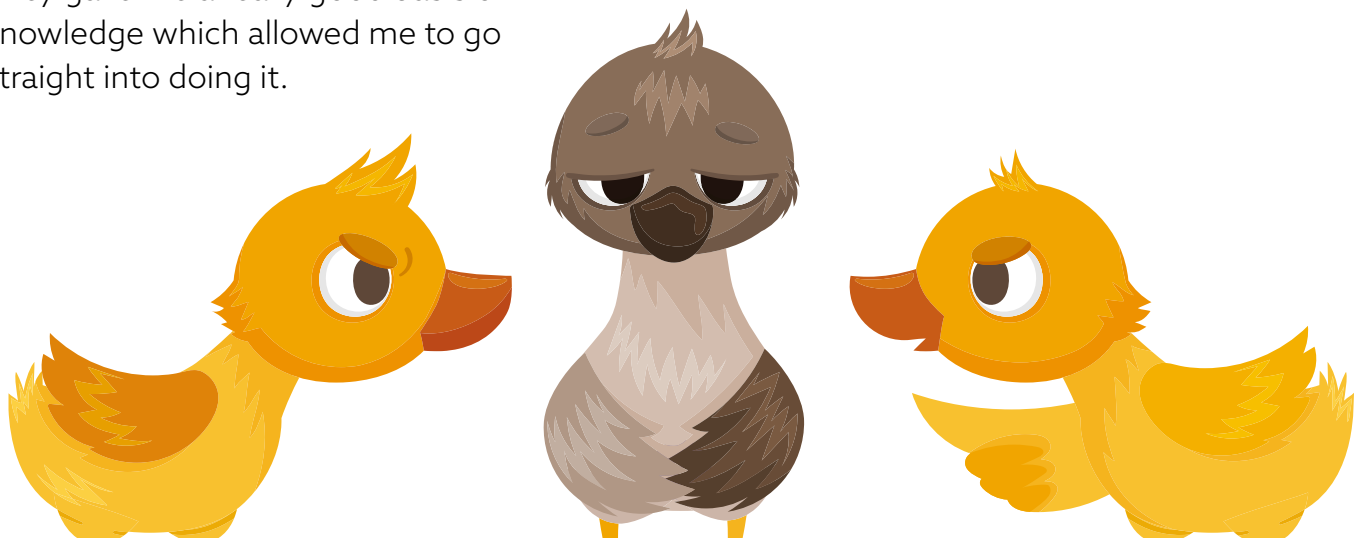
It is so fun and rewarding to work on shows like this and get children watching, interacting and having fun with the show.

What has been your favourite show to work on, other than this one?

I worked on Goldilocks and the Three Bears a couple of years ago. Everyone in the cast and backstage got on so well. We toured around schools for two months, and it was great to watch the children's reactions to the show.

What does a Creative Captions Operator do?

While the actors are rehearsing onstage I'm following along on the script and putting up the correlating captions. In the early stages there might still be issues with them, so I need to note them down and speak to Laura our Director to highlight anything that needs changing or improving to make the creative captions as clear and accessible as possible.



Andersen's Classic

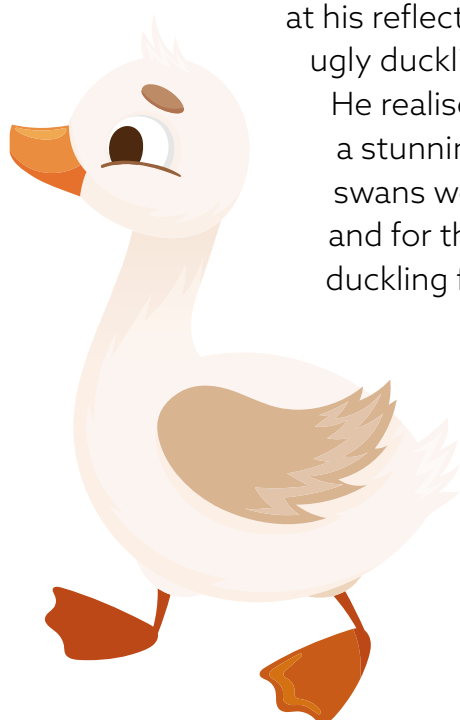
Hans Christian Andersen was a Danish poet and author, who wrote the original fairy tale of the Ugly Duckling nearly 200 years ago, in 1843. The story went something like this...

Once upon a time on a peaceful farmyard, Mother Duck sat patiently on her nest of eggs, waiting for them to hatch. When they finally did, out came all the fluffy little yellow ducklings - except for one big, grey duckling. The other ducklings and farmyard animals teased him and called him 'ugly', which made him very sad.

Feeling lonely and rejected, the ugly duckling decided to leave the farm in search of a place where he belonged. He travelled through fields, rivers and forests, meeting a bunch of different animals including a cat, a hen and some wild ducks, but none of them wanted to be his friend.

As winter came, the ugly duckling struggled to stay warm and safe, but he carried on going, in the hope that things would get better for him. When spring arrived, he discovered a beautiful lake and saw a group of graceful swans. Suddenly, when he looked down

at his reflection in the water, the ugly duckling got a big surprise! He realised he had turned into a stunning swan! The other swans welcomed him warmly, and for the first time, the ugly duckling felt happy and loved.



If you could turn into any animal, which one would you choose and why?

What skills does your chosen animal have?



Fit for a Fairy Tale?

Fairy tale stories are not always about magical creatures with wings and pretty wands. They can also be about talking animals like the Ugly Duckling, or even human characters. Fairytale stories are always fun, but they can also teach us important lessons about how to treat one another in real life. Fairy tales often have five key features:

1. Good and bad characters
2. Magic
3. A moral lesson
4. Obstacles or tasks
5. Happily ever after

After reading this description of the original Ugly Duckling story, can you spot any of these five key features? You can also do this when watching the show. Who treats Ugly badly? And what obstacles does Ugly face on his adventure?

Fun Fact

Hans Christian Andersen did not just write the original Ugly Duckling story, he actually wrote 156 fairy tales in total! His fairytales have inspired many different plays, ballets and animated films. Some of Andersen's most famous fairytales you may have heard of include:

The Emperor's New Clothes

The Princess And The Pea

The Nightingale

Thumbelina

The Steadfast Tin Soldier

The Little Mermaid

The Little Match Girl



Character Breakdown

Ugly

Ugly is the central character of the play. With a funny quack and a wobbly waddle, this big grey duckling doesn't quite fit in with his fluffy yellow siblings. Join this ambitious little bird on his big adventure, as he leaves the nest in search of something bigger.

Mama Duck

Mama Duck is the busy mother of Ugly and his lively family of brothers and sisters. Despite her hectic routine, she always finds the time to bake her famous pies. But with so much on her plate, perhaps Mama Duck is too busy to keep a proper eye on Ugly.

Gob

Often found frolicking through the meadows, Gob is an excitable young sheep who loves flowers and sweet treats. Determined to impress her flock, Gob's passions often lead her to cheeky antics. Will she and Ugly be able to get along?

Magpie

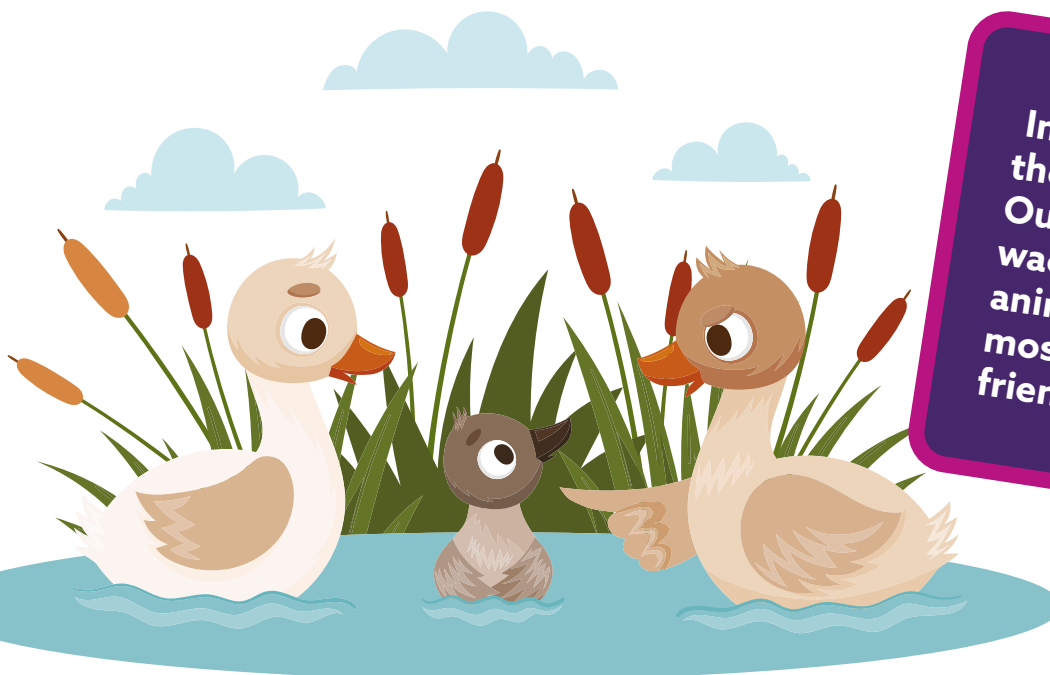
Always on the lookout for new treasures to add to her collection, Magpie is a lively feathered friend with a knack for spotting shiny objects that catch the light just right. She sees great potential in Ugly, but will Ugly be able to make her dreams come true?

Housecat

Housecat loves to snuggle down in his cottage in the woods. But don't let this fluffy feline's purr fool you. Despite his best intentions, Housecat is a foodie at heart, and the temptation of new feathered friends might be too strong. Make sure to warn Ugly if this cat gets too close!

Swan

With his perfect white feathers and his fancy sunglasses, Swan is undoubtedly too cool for school. Gliding through life like he owns the lake, he leaves the rest of the birds in awe. But is he cool enough to take Ugly under his wing?



Imagine you are the Ugly Duckling. Out of all of this wacky wildlife, which animal would you most like to make friends with?



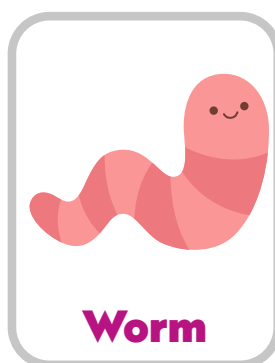
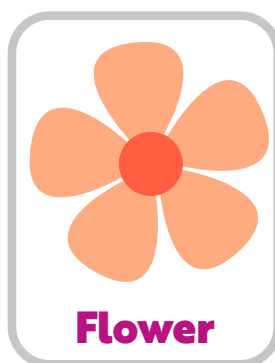
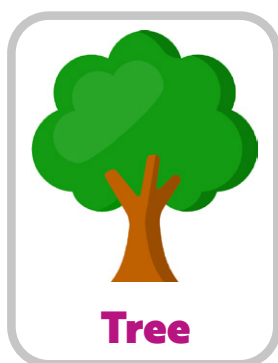
Practical Games

Duck, Duck, Swan!

Gather round in a circle, facing inwards, and take a seat. Select someone to be Mama Duck. Mama Duck must walk around the edge of the circle, tapping each person's head as she walks by and saying 'Duck'. At any point in the circle, Mama Duck can choose to tap on someone's head and shout 'Swan!' instead of Duck. The chosen Swan must then chase Mama Duck around the circle, and try and catch her before she makes it back to her seat in order to avoid becoming the next picker.

Scavenger Hunt

Go to the field and be the first one to find all the things in the list!



Classroom Games

Ducky Dinner Dos and Don'ts!

Ducks like to eat lots of different foods. Have a go at sorting out which foods a duck would love and which ones a duck would hate:

Pond weeds

Seeds

Cereal

Rice

Crayfish

Oats

Nuts

Apples

Bread

Crackers

Fish

Frogs

Chips

Chocolate

Insects

Popcorn

Ducky Dinner!

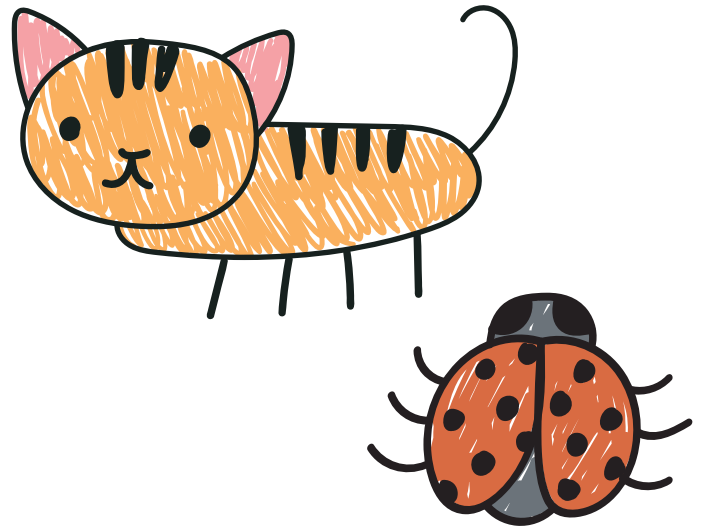


Ducky Dustbin



Animal Pictionary

Split the class into two teams down the middle. Each team has to nominate one person from their team to be the artist. Each artist has one minute to think of an animal and draw it on the whiteboard, while the rest of their team try to guess what type of animal it is. When the team guesses correctly, the artist can move onto the next animal. Whichever artist is able to draw the most animals in their minute provides their team with the win!



20 Questions

Nominate one person from the class to be the Master. Choose a category or topic together as a class. The Master chooses something from that category and the class has 20 questions to guess it. The questions can only be 'yes or no' questions. Some good ones related to the Ugly Duckling might be:



Animals, as there are lots of animals involved in the play

Plants

Celebrities

Food, as there is a lot of mention of pies in the play

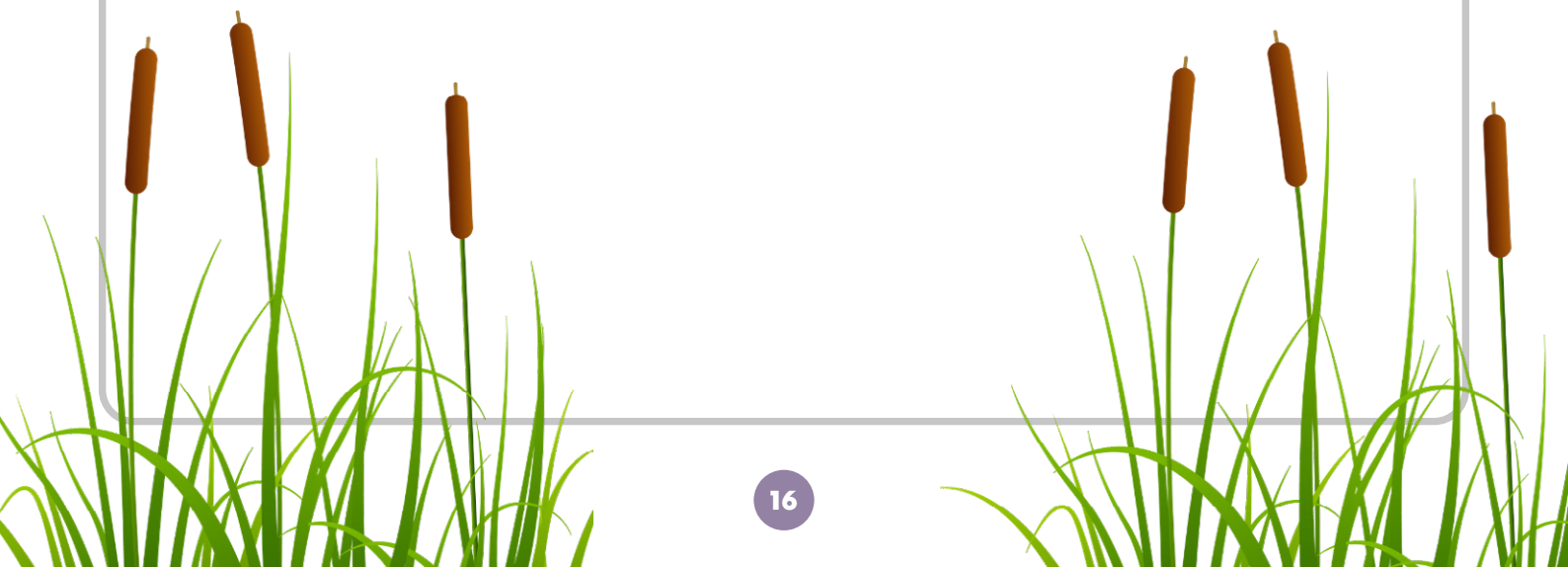
Objects

Music, as there are 14 wonderful songs in the play

Ugly's Adventure

In The Ugly Duckling, Ugly decides to pack his bag and go on an adventure. Imagine you are going on an adventure with them. What kind of things would you take with you?

Draw them in the box below:



Wordsearch

Can you find the words hidden in the puzzle?

T J L I T B S H E E P Z Q K U
U T P U H D S T N A F W F H T
F Y F Z V D C F H U U F S O C
L B G H T A U J V S K L X U E
O S R U F A L C L M U O K S U
W M R L G A J R K M Y C N E O
E L D A F L R G O L A K I C K
R S B K D T Y M U M I G X A E
O W A E M B V V Y L E N P T K
X A V R E D J D N A D O G I Q
L N X O A F B L T Q R Z E R E
D Y P F D U G G U E V D U L U
V D G W O N N D W S L K S K D
O D R S W G D F V W V Q E J Y
W R Q U A C K I N G L X F S N

DUCKLING

MEADOW

MAGPIE

FLOCK

FARMYARD

HOUSECAT

SHEEP

LAKE

QUACKING

FLOWER

UGLY

SWAN



Songs

One of the great things about this play is that it contains 14 original songs, written specifically for the show.

Here are the lyrics and music for the actors' favourite song so you can practise before you watch the show!

Fun Fact

Both of the actors' favourite song in the show is:

Can This Be Me?

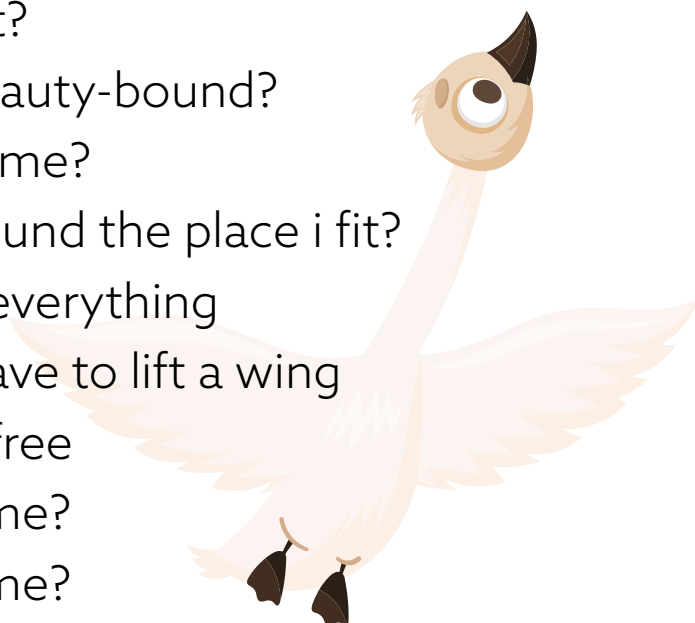


[Click here to listen](#)

CAN THIS BE ME?

Can it be true?
With these feathers snowy white
Am I ready to take flight
Into the blue?
To be a fine and splendid swan
Who'll glide by and everyone
Will turn to see

Can this be it?
Am I truly beauty-bound?
Is this my home?
Can I have found the place i fit?
To be given everything
And never have to lift a wing
So cool and free
Can this be me?
Can this be me?



Another great song in the show is Flock Song. When you watch the show, listen out for this song. It might come in handy to know the lyrics and join in... there might even be a dance routine you can get involved in!



FLOCK SONG

When you've been searching high and low for your other sock
Who's gonna help?

Your flock!

When you're trying to turn the key in a slightly sticky lock

Who you gonna call?

Your flock!

When you touch a burning wok – ow!

And get a nasty shock – ooh!

Who can kiss it better? (Or maybe call the doc?!)

A flock will always love you

A flock will comb your hair

And if they hear you crying

Your flock will be right there

A flock will put a sweetie upon your pillowcase

And tell you – in a kind way – if you have ketchup on your face

Everybody rock, rock, rock

With your flock, flock, flock

Everybody rock, rock, rock

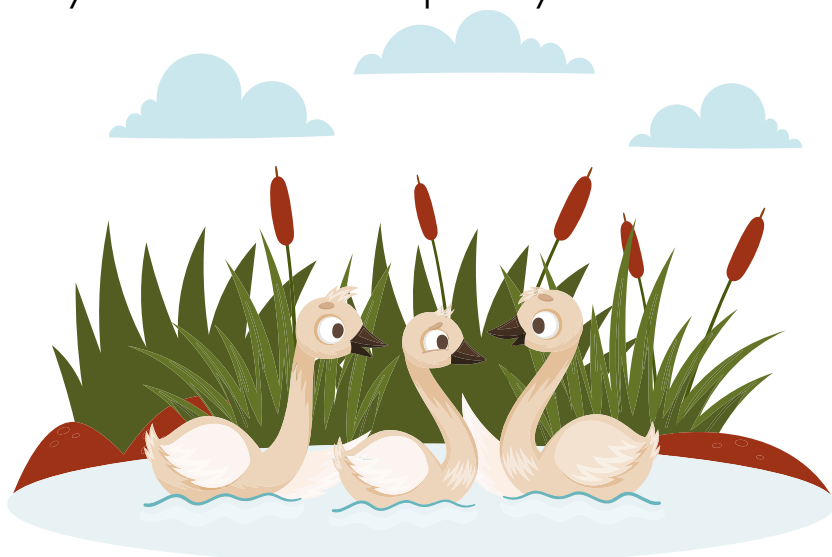
With your flock, flock, flock

Everybody rock, rock, rock

With your flock, flock, flock

Everybody rock, rock, rock

With your flock, flock, flock



Duck Jokes

Here are some ducky jokes to tell your friends later...



Who stole the soap from the bathroom?
The Robber Ducky.

What time does a duck wake up?
At the quack of dawn.

What's a duck's favourite ballet?
The Nut-quacker.

Why don't ducks ever make plans?
They prefer to wing it.

What do spiders and ducks have in common?
Webbed feet.



Animal Trivia



Duck

- Ducks have waterproof feathers that keep them dry even when they dive underwater
- Ducks are omnivores, which means they eat a variety of foods, including plants, insects, fish and crustaceans
- Ducks are sociable animals that feel most comfortable in groups
- Ducks make a quacking noise to communicate



Sheep

- Sheep have thick woolly coats, which make them look big and fluffy
- Sheep are herbivores, which means they have a completely plant based diet. They are vegetarians!



Can you think of some types of food that might be suitable for a sheep?



Can you think of any animals that might be a predator to a duck?

- Female sheep are called ewes and male sheep are called rams
- A baby sheep is called a lamb. Ewes form strong bonds with their lambs, and can recognise them by their call when they wander too far away
- Sheep make a bleating noise to communicate



Magpie

- Magpies are large black and white birds, which are part of the crow family
- Magpies mainly eat insects, seeds and plants
- Magpies are clever birds, and are known for liking and collecting bright, shiny items



Can you make a list of some items you think a magpie would love to steal?



Cat

- Cats are good at jumping, and they can jump up to 6 times their height
- Cats are very lazy animals, which means they sleep for about 70% of their life
- When cats purr, it means they are happy
- When cats hiss, it means they are angry or scared
- Cats are mainly carnivorous, however some cats will eat just about anything! Being carnivorous means only eating a meat based diet.





Swan

- Swans are large white birds which live on water
- Swans like to eat insects, plants and algae
- Swans can sleep on land or while floating in the water
- Swans are among the largest flying birds in the UK

Answer Sheet

T J L I T B **S H E E P** Z Q K U
 U T P U H D S T N A F W F H T
F Y F Z V **D** C F H U U **F** S O C
 L B G H T A U J V S K L X U E
 O S R **U** F A L C L M U O K S U
 W M R **L** G A J R K M Y C N E O
 E L D A F L R G O L A K I C K
R S B K D T Y M U M I G X A E
 O W A **E** M B V V Y L E N P T K
 X A V R E D J D N A D O G I Q
 L N X O A F B L T Q R Z E R E
 D Y P F D U G G U E V D U L U
 V D G W O N N D W S L K S K D
 O D R S W G D F V W V Q E J Y
 W R **Q U A C K I N G** L X F S N

<p>Ducky Dinner!</p> 	<p>Ducky Dustbin</p> 
<p>Pond weeds</p> <p>Seeds</p> <p>Insects</p> <p>Fish</p> <p>Frogs</p> <p>Crayfish</p> <p>Oats</p> <p>Nuts</p> <p>Apples</p> <p>Peas</p>	<p>Bread</p> <p>Crackers</p> <p>Chips</p> <p>Chocolate</p> <p>Popcorn</p> <p>Cereal</p> <p>Rice</p>