



Audio Description Pre-Show Notes: The Twits

The Venue

Welcome to 'The Twits!' Prepare to be whisked away to Roald Dahl's gruesome world of twisted tales and curious circus performers in The Playhouse at the Sydney Opera House.

The Playhouse is the smallest of the theatres within the Sydney Opera House. You enter through the Western Foyer, which is shared between the Playhouse, Studio, and Drama Theatre.

The Foyer has many glass windows and doors which lead outside to the water's edge and paved Forecourt.

The Western Foyer has a Bar/Cafe for drinks and snacks, but be warned, Mrs Twit might have added some of her wriggly, slimy worms to the menu!

There is also a Box Office for ticketing questions and to pick up any tickets, and a Cloak Room to put any coats or bags for the duration of the performance. There are toilets at either end of the Foyer, including an accessible option at both locations.

The Playhouse Theatre can hold up to 398 people. You enter halfway down the 17 rows of sloped seating, which start with Row B at the front and go up to Row T for Twits at the very back.

The Playhouse Theatre has a small, simple stage with a three-sided edge sticking out at the front. There is no hidden wing space to either side of the stage (which is normally where extra sets and props would be kept when they are not being used).

The stage and walls are painted black. The walls in the auditorium are also covered with light, tan-coloured timber panelling. The seats match this timber panelling and have brown cushions.

The Set

As you walk into the Playhouse, the first thing you will notice is that the stage has been transformed to look like an old circus tent. It has a circular roof like a big top and a decorated arched theatre front in the centre, with accents and colours to make it look old-fashioned. Behind the arched front are black curtains to hide the magic and mystery of what goes on behind the scenes.

In the centre of the stage, underneath the big top, is a circular section of floor that rotates like a carousel, with a purple eight-pointed star painted on it. The floor moves around during the show, carrying props, actors, set pieces, and more from behind the curtains to in front of them.

Some of the things that move around on the rotating floor are oversized letters that spell out 'TWITS'. These letters are so big that the actors can sit on them! They also have lightbulbs built in so they can light up and pulse.

Fairy lights are strung up from the ceiling above the stage and stretch out into the theatre and over the audience. They pulse and change colour when the lights on stage change colour.

On the left-hand side of the stage is an outhouse toilet made of corrugated iron, with a wooden door that opens toward the centre of the stage. The side wall of the outhouse facing the audience is see-through when you shine a light onto it, so you can see what is going on inside.

Also on the left side of the stage, between the outhouse and the archway, are two long pieces of metal scaffolding placed one in front of the other, holding the tent in place. The shorter piece of scaffolding in front can rotate from upright to horizontal, so that both pieces of scaffolding look like a lower-case letter 't' when the shorter piece is in the horizontal position. On the end of the short piece is a white sandbag hanging from a rope.

On the right-hand side of the stage and the circus tent is a 'Strength Tester' carnival game. It is a tall rectangle with light bulbs going all the way up each side to a star at the top. A large hammer is used to whack the bottom of the game. A strong hit will make all of the light bulbs and the star light up, but a weak whack will only make a few bulbs at the bottom light up.

Also on the right-hand side of the stage are three tall metal grates that make a cage. They are hinged like an accordion so they can move in and out, and can be folded away when they aren't being used.

The Cast and Characters

5 actors play all of the characters in this show.

There are 3 Circus Performers who act as our Narrators, telling us the story of The Twits. These performers are Rex the Strong Man, Claudette the Contortionist, and Maverick the Magician. The Circus Performers put on different hats to become different characters in the story. Rex, Claudette and Maverick have similar colourings on their costumes - lots of purples and oranges and other bright colours that clash with each other.

And how could we forget about Mr and Mrs Twit - that is, after all, who everyone wants to see! Their costumes are dirty, with lots of brown, yellow or faded colours.

Rex the Strong Man

Rex is an average height, muscly man with short, mousy brown hair. He wears tiger print shorts and a singlet with orange cuffs to show off his muscles. He wears soft-toed, calf-length black boots.

Claudette the Contortionist

Claudette is a petite woman with brown hair tied up in a bun. She wears a pale purple knee-length leotard with a red corset around her waist and an orange fluffy tutu, with matching orange cuffs on her arms and legs. She is wearing knee-high black heeled boots.

Claudette also plays the Roly-Poly Bird towards the end of the show. The Roly-Poly Bird rides a bright orange tricycle and wears a headpiece full of bright orange and purple feathers with an orange pointy beak. There is a flowy material attached to the tricycle that looks like giant, flowing feathers that billow as she rides around the stage.

Maverick the Magician

Maverick is an average height, slim built man with short, light brown hair. He wears long black pants and black shoes, and an orangey red and black waistcoat with a white elbow-length top underneath. He also has a pale purple top hat.

Mr Twit

Mr Twit is a short, stocky man with long, matted curly grey hair and a shaggy, grubby beard.

He has out of control bushy eyebrows, heavy wrinkles, and a bright red nose. Mr Twit never washes, so he is dirty! Thank goodness that you won't be able to smell him from your seats! (Or maybe you will if you're in the front row!)

He wears a yellowing $\frac{3}{4}$ length shirt and calf-length yellow pants with a triangular purple pattern. He also wears brown soft-toed boots.

Mrs Twit

Mrs Twit is a short, stocky woman, similar to Mr Twit in size and stature. She has similar brown frizzy hair to Mr Twit in a shaggy, matted mullet, with a bushy unibrow and a large, dark mole on her right cheek.

She wears a frumpy-looking short sleeve dress with patches on the skirt. She wears black ankle boots with grotty white socks that poke out the top.