

THE HERD

# COUNTING SHEEPS

## WHAT TO EXPECT GUIDE

Welcome to Counting Sheeps! This is a guide about what to expect when you come to see the show Counting Sheeps by The Herd Theatre.

We believe theatre should be accessible to everyone. If you still have questions or there's anything we can do to help make our performances more accessible to you or others please let us know.

You can contact Christie at The Herd directly by emailing [christie@theherdtheatre.co.uk](mailto:christie@theherdtheatre.co.uk) or contact the venue you are visiting if you'd rather telephone.

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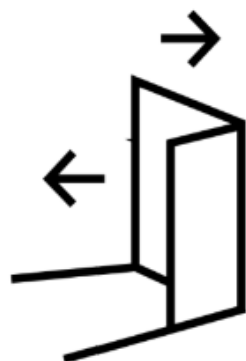
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## KEY INFORMATION



Timings

Counting Sheeps is a 30 minute performance, with 50 minutes of stay-and-play afterwards. The number of people in the audience will be up to 30.



Come and go

You are free to come and go as much as you need during the performance.



Lighting

There are gentle lighting changes in the show. There are no sudden flashes or changes of light. There is light on the audience seating through most of the show (there is a 2min section where the lights are dimmed).



Sound

The show is scored with original music and sound that plays over speakers, accompanied with a live acoustic guitarist. The sound is set at a lower level to be comfortable for all.



Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is welcome in all venues on this tour.

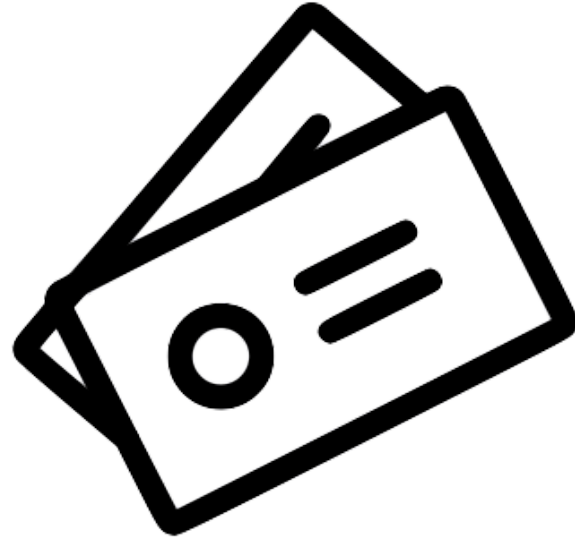


Food and Snacks

Milk or water can be consumed in the performance. We ask that you don't eat any other snacks or drinks in the performance area to protect the set.

# ARRIVING AT THE VENUE

You can book your tickets to the show through Eventbrite, or your local Family Hub, if that is the venue you are visiting. If booking through Eventbrite, you will be sent e-tickets in advance. Physical tickets are not required.



At each of the venues on this tour, you will be greeted by a member of our team who will check your ticket(s) as you approach the performance space.

You may have to wait a short while if the performance space is not yet open for audiences. This normally happens around 10 minutes before the show start.

If waiting is difficult for you, you can leave and come back once the doors are open.

## All Counting Sheeps shows are relaxed

This means that we have a relaxed approach to noise and movement in the space, your child can walk or crawl during the performance, and you are free to enter and exit as you wish.

It also means the sound level isn't too loud and lighting changes are gentle.

Please ask a member of the team on arrival, if you have any specific requirements.

## Toilet and baby changing facilities

All venues have accessible toilets and baby-changing facilities.

Please ask the venue you are visiting for the locations.



## Food and Drink



Some venues have nearby shops and cafes where food, drink and snacks are available to buy.



Not all venues have free tap water to drink, so please bring this from home.

## Use of Phones



We ask you to kindly not use your phone during the performance unless you absolutely have to.

There will be an opportunity to have a photos during the stay and play session afterwards!

# INTRODUCTION TO THE SHOW

The performance space will open at the show start time, to make sure everyone is ready to see the show.

The performance space looks like this. The performers will be on stage from the start. They will be gently singing and playing the guitar as you enter.



The sheep may look at you and make gentle eye contact with a baa or a smile, but they will not come into physical contact with you. They will be responsive to the audience, and not impose themselves if a child is unsure.



Find a comfy place to sit on the floor mats and cushions.

There are 4 performers in the show. They look like this:



This is One, a sheep



This is Two a sheep



This is a musician



This is a puppeteer

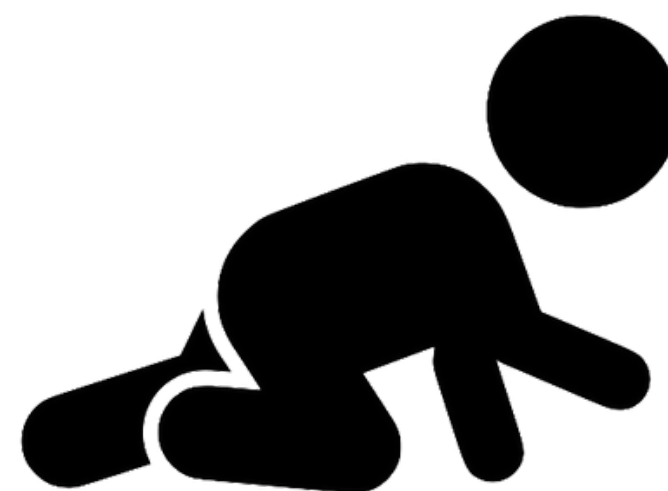
They all talk in minimal, simple language without using too many words  
The sheep talk in baa sounds.

The sheep look to the audience and share what is happening throughout. You can speak to them if you like but there is no expectation to do so.



You can make noise, laugh, comment whilst watching the show, even talk along with your child if you like.

If you have a child who like to wriggle, crawl or walk during the performance, this is welcome. The performers will work around the child and they will be safe,



The full story of the show is on the next page - be warned it does contain spoilers!

# THE STORY

Overview - Two sheep are struggling to fall asleep. A leaflet blows in their field on the wind with a step-by-step guide, but it doesn't work. The story tells of the struggles parents and carers have in getting young children to sleep.

## Plot Points

1. Two small sheep make their way over the green hills, onto the stage. As the sun sets, the sheep appear and start to make themselves comfortable for sleep. They start to count and the sheep fall asleep on top of each other.



2. A firefly puppet (a small light and wings puppet) appears, moves around and hovers over the sleeping sheep, waking one, who then wakes the other. The firefly hovers over the audience. You can reach out for it, if you like.



3. The sheep try to sleep again, one falling to sleep quickly. The other wriggles around, not able to get comfy. One sheep is sad and tired, whilst the other is wide awake, interested in the guitar.



4. A leaflet blows in on the wind. The sheep take a look at it, showing it to the audience. It opens to a book full of pages, with pictures. They read through the numbered steps on how to get to sleep.





5. Number 1 is bath. The bath is full of bubbles. They rub their faces in the bubbles and gently blow them into the audience. You can catch and touch them, if you like. They clean each other down with a bath mitt.



6. Number 2 is Pyjamas. They pull a thread of wool from one of their coats. They knit and make a long piece of wool that is given to the audience, to feel and share.



7. One of the sheep sneezes and finds more wool in their coat. They continue to pull more wool from their coats, in different colours. They make pyjamas from the wool and wear them.



8. The lighting changes and they settle down with a book together  
Number 3 in the guide. A story is told about a duck, through a song, along  
with shadow puppetry on the moon. This is the only bit of speech  
unaccompanied by text or visual vinacular in the show. Please find the  
text of the story below.



9. The story finishes, but the sheep are still awake. They've followed all the steps in the leaflet, but it hasn't worked. Sheep Two is disappointed.



10. One sheep, starts to sing the Baa Baa song to make Two feel better. We've heard this song a few times in the show. One encourages everyone to join in with the baa song. The musician, puppeteer and audience sing.



11. Lots of fireflies fly above their heads as everyone sings the simple song. The fireflies move over the audience, bouncing around over heads and coming down low in front. The fireflies go back over the hill and both sheep fall to sleep.

The show ends.

## After the Show – Stay and Play

The performers will bow, and the audience will clap to mark the end of the show.

Then the audience are invited to stay in the performance space and explore the set and props. More open ended props, or toys to explore are brought into the space. The session lasts for 50 minutes.



## Audience Interaction

There are several moments in the show where the performers come close to the audience.

1. Fireflies puppet moves above and in front of the audience at various points, as described in the storyline.
2. Sharing bubbles with the audience
3. The wool that is given out they will drape it over the laps and shoulders of the audience.

The performers are very good at judging the audiences needs, and body language. They will not engage if a child is uncomfortable.



## TEXT OF THE DUCK SONG

This is the words in the Duck Story, in Counting Sheep's . It is the only moment in the show unaccompanied by text and/or visual vernacular.

On one side of a lake there lived a duck  
A duck who was in a bit of a rut  
Her side of the lake was muddy and grey  
And the far side looked bright and sunny all day

But whenever she swam towards that far side  
She never quite got there as hard as she tried  
She put her head down, she paddled, she swam  
But the water and wind had a quite different plan

The water would push her body and limb  
The wind was so strong she could hardly swim  
She'd push, she'd paddle, she'd quack, she'd roar  
But she never quite got to that green, sunny shore

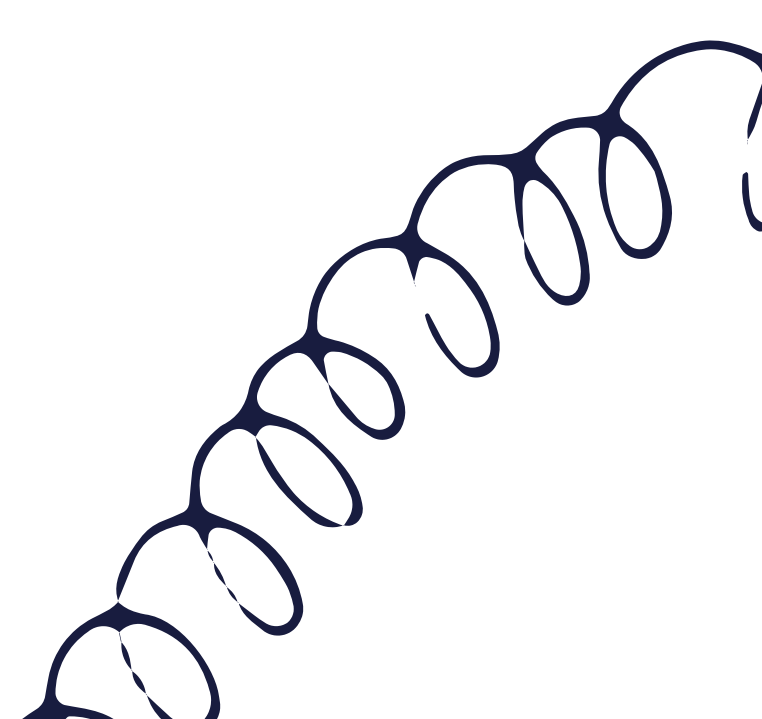

Then one day she was kicking as hard as she could  
When she decided this kicking was doing no good  
So instead of fighting the wind and the lake  
She relaxed her legs, she took off the brakes

She let the lake carry her, she let the wind blow  
She went with the gusts, she went with the flow  
She thought she'd just end up back on her side  
As the wind and the water became her guide

But the wind and the water carried her away  
Over the water and across the bay  
Not to the side with the grass that was green  
But a side of the lake she'd not ever seen

A spot that was dappled in warm summer light  
With a shore full of flowers, yellow and white  
The sound of a stream, soothing and sweet  
Stones and pebbles made comfortable seats

The duck sat herself on a smooth grey stone  
And quacked with delight at her brand new home



# COUNTING SHEEPS

## **WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

You can find out about The Herd and what we do by going to our website

[www.theherdtheatre.co.uk](http://www.theherdtheatre.co.uk)

Or follow us on social media

[@theherduk](https://www.instagram.com/theherduk)

Or get in touch at [hello@theherdtheatre.co.uk](mailto:hello@theherdtheatre.co.uk)