



PRESENTS

# THE GREAT LITTLE PANTO SHOW

Directed by Dorothy Bezzina  
Written by Malcolm Galea  
Music by Matteo Depares

AGES: **4+ YEARS**  
VENUE: **TEATRU MANOEL  
STUDIO THEATRE**

**BOV**  
Bank of Valletta

# About TOI TOI

TOI TOI is the learning wing of the National Theatre in Malta, Teatru Manoel, committed to reaching out to audiences at every stage of life, be it through events for children, performing platforms for youth, informative interviews with artists or live music brought directly to our senior community.

TOI TOI is the home of opportunity to so many locally based artists both amateur and professional alike. The programme is wide-reaching, continuing to introduce and explore Classical Music, Creative Plays, Contemporary Dance through thought provoking Theatre.

The Season runs throughout the year and is well-known for its quality and value for money, encouraging an inclusive space for all to feel welcome.

Our long term strategy is based on commissioning new work, bringing together artistic teams who understand our young audience and who deliver high-quality results time after time. We look forward to seeing the children enjoy our unique introduction to pantomime, hopefully leaving the theatre humming their favourite tunes from the show!

TOI TOI to all our Great Little Panto Show family

Kate Fenech Field  
TOI TOI Manager  
Teatru Manoel

# Director's Note

Dear friends,

Welcome to The Great Little Panto Show!

Pantomime is one of our favourite Christmas traditions because it goes beyond the typical theatrical experience. It is a festive extravaganza filled with wit and wonder, making it a magical spectacle for all generations. This year, I'm thrilled to be directing a special addition to the traditional show – a panto crafted especially for our youngest audience members!

For many children, pantomime serves as their first encounter with theatre, so this accessibility aims to spark further interest in the arts among our young spectators. It has even served as a training ground for some of the brightest stars of our generation. Yet, pantomime is not merely a starting point; it stands as a distinct genre, a celebration of the unconventional, and it is so integral to our theatre's cultural tapestry. Designed to be as accessible as possible to children, this production introduces them to the joy of theatre while seamlessly incorporating and highlighting traditional panto elements, including topical jokes and slapstick comedy, the typical characters that make up the show, and opportunities for audience participation. We hope that our performance and accompanying resource pack will further enhance an appreciation for this art and inspire you to share the joy of panto and live theatre with others!

Dorothy Bezzina  
Director

# Synopsis

There is a land where panto characters live during the year – waiting patiently until they can come out and have fun adventures at Christmastime. However, only some of the characters are employed – with the majority of them waiting around for many years until their panto is finally staged.

That's why the Fairy Godmother (Cinderella) decides to stage a mini panto so that the unemployed characters can amuse themselves. She holds auditions and casts Snow White, Jack (from Jack & the Beanstalk), and Widow Twankey (Aladdin) in a story that's narrated by Puss (Puss in Boots).

However, the Big Bad Wolf (Little Red Riding Hood) has other plans. Bitter at missing out on the panto fun for yet another year, he steals the magic book that contain all the panto magic. What was supposed to be a fun, little show to pass the time becomes a race against time to save every panto in the world!

# Characters

**Principal Boy: Jack** - A mischievous adventure-seeker who cannot sit still.

**Principal Girl: Snow White** - An innocent and sweet girl with a decidedly dark undercurrent.

**Dame Widow Twankey** - Loud, stressed, and badly in need of a holiday

**The Big Bad Wolf** - Highly intelligent with low key prima donna vibes

**Fairy Godmother** - Wise but annoyingly patronising

**Puss** - His glory days behind him and would rather laze by the fire than do anything physical

# About The Director - Dorothy Bezzina



Dorothy Bezzina is no stranger to the local creative scene as well as to wearing multiple hats at one go. Her extensive music and theatre credits, her contributions as producer and director for various shows, her roles as music and drama educator, as well as her academic achievements encompassing music, languages, translation, and marketing, make her a multifaceted artist and researcher.

Dorothy holds a Licentiate in Music Performance from Trinity College London and a Diploma in Classical Voice Performance from the Malta School of Music, guided by Soprano Miriam Cauchi. Her vocal flexibility allows her to perform across several genres and she has enjoyed various performing opportunities, both locally and overseas.

One of Dorothy's most recent endeavours is the co-creation of Revamp MT, a performing arts collective, for which she has directed and produced music events as well as self-penned commissioned works tailored for different age groups. These include *Your Song: Celebrating the Music of Elton John* (National Library, 2019), *Some Enchanted Evening* (Robert Samut Hall, 2020), *Down Memory Lane* (Teatru Manoel, 2018), *Best of Foo* (St Aloysius College Theatre, 2022), *Il-Hrafa tas-Soppa tal-Ġebel*, an original children's musical (Teatru Manoel, 2020), and *The Band's Visit* (Teatru Manoel, 2023), which was nominated as Production of the Year in the Music and Multidisciplinary category for the 6th edition of Premju għall-Arti.

Aside from her artistic achievements, Dorothy specialises in languages and translation, having graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Maltese and English, a Postgraduate Diploma in Interpreting, and a PGCE from the University of Malta. She has also completed her Masters in English through the University of Nottingham on a scholarship, a second Masters in Popular Music within the Department of Maltese at the University of Malta, and is currently pursuing an MSc in Marketing through Glasgow University.

# About The Playwright - Malcolm Galea

Malcolm Galea has been creating plays for children and childish grown-ups ever since he himself was a child. He has written eleven Christmas pantomimes but this is his first ever mini panto – which is why it's so special! Other plays for children that he's written include 'The Complete History of Malta (More or Less)', 'Holly and the Dream Catcher', 'The Beginner's Guide to Opera', 'Trouser Girl', 'Id-Dlam taħt it-Teatru' and many more. He also absolutely loves panto and especially enjoys playing panto dame whenever they let him!

The Great Little Panto Show is about six characters who didn't get the opportunity to do what they love to do - but they did it anyway!

# Cast

## Alex Portelli: Fairy Godmother

Alex Portelli started her career at the age of three when she started doing ballet. At the age of four, she started singing lessons and Musical Theatre became her passion. She has achieved her Grade 7 Trinity College exam with distinction. Alex won the Musical theatre category of the Maltese Islands Festival and achieved first place with her drama group. Eventually she joined the Malta School of Music where she started learning how to play the piano, and is currently at a Grade 5 level whilst also studying contemporary singing. In 2019 she performed at Her Majesty's Theatre in London, and in April 2023 she took part in the TOI TOI Annual Easter Concert at Teatru Manoel. Most recently, Alex was chosen as a finalist for the Songcraft project for 2023.



## Brendon Thearle: Dame Widow Twankey

Brendon entered the world of theatre at the age of five and since then has performed in various productions such as; MADC's traditional Shakespeare classics; *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (2022) as Frank Ford, as Mr. Scruples in Manoel Theatre's opera for 2019's *ŽiguŽajg* in *The Impresario* (2019), as Gary in MADC's *A Kick in the Baubles* (2022), and as Jeremy in Hassle Mejjiet Theatre Collective's *Popolazzjoni: 4* (2023), among many others. He has also delved into the directorial seat with such projects as *Pandora* (2019), *L-Aħħar Siġra* (2021), *The Fourth Wall* (2022) for MADC's One Act Play Festival and most recently; *Nostrum* (2023). He is also currently studying for a Bachelor in Theatre (Honours) degree at the School of Performing Arts within the University of Malta.

## Clara Sciberras : Puss in Boots

Clara Sciberras is the real-life Elle Woods-although she has just become a lawyer, she likes to wear one too many hats. While she likes to dip her toe in different fields, such as television production and journalism, her heart belongs on stage. Clara has been training in the performing arts for several years and has embarked on many theatrical journeys, including Teatru Astra's 'Jesus Christ Superstar' and 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat'. Her most recent undertakings were 'Eliza Doolittle' in 'My Fair Lady', Liesl in 'Sound of Music', Hunyak in 'Chicago' and Truly Scrumptious in 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'.



## Kyle Demicoli: Jack

Kyle is a 20-year-old student at the University of Malta. Apart from being in love with books and literatures, Kyle has a passion for being on stage. Growing up he found his happy place in the world of theatre and is ready to dive into this new performance. Whether he is hitting the books or hitting his marks on stage, he is all about embracing the magic of storytelling. Join him in creating memories and laughter – let's make this panto one to remember!



## Kyra Lautier: Snow White

Kyra has been a part of the professional theatre scene since the age of sixteen after playing Mary Macgregor in MADC's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (2016). She made several appearances in other productions including Teatru Astra's *Sister Act* (2022), Teatru Manoel's *The Crucible* (2018) in which she played Betty Parris, Mediterranean Conference Centre's *Caravaggio the Musical* (2022), the titular role of Agnes in *Agnes of God* (2020) and, most recently, she played Julia in Revamp MT's *The Band's Visit* (2023). Kyra graduated with a B.A. (Hons) in Performing Arts from MCAST and had trained with Studio 18 where she formed part of their Musical Theatre, Acting and Play-Writing programmes.

## Patrick Mahoney: The Wolf

Patrick began his journey in the performing arts in 2010. In the past 13 years, he has been a part of Stagecoach, its Further Stages, as well as being a member of Studio 18 for the past 5 years. He also furthers his vocal training and techniques with Ms Cathy Lawlor. Throughout these years, he has taken part in FM Theatre's *My Fair Lady*, performed three times in the charity event Mumentis, sang alongside the barbershop quartet Barbetti, performed a dance recital at Her Majesty's Theatre in the West End, London, and most recently, *The Band's Visit* by Revamp MT. Patrick passed the Trinity College Grade 8 Examination in Musical Theatre in 2019.



# Interview with The Dame - Brendon Thearle

## What's best about playing the Dame?

Having the opportunity to watch pantomimes in the past and see how the Dame played a part in the story and now having the chance to be one, it's all about having fun, pushing out of your comfort zone and acting as flamboyant as you want without any judgement whatsoever and, of course, being a little bit of a diva.

## Why is the role so important?

The Dame has always been a traditional character in pantomime and I think the role of a Dame is incredibly important for numerous reasons: it adds additional humor to the already funny story, the Dame is almost always a larger-than-life character - very different from the rest, and often interacts with the audience, making pantomimes in general a more engaging and entertaining experience for audiences of all ages. The Dame manages to contribute to the festive and hilarious comedic atmosphere of pantomime, enhancing the overall experience for children and adults alike.

## What special skills do you require to play Dame?

The role of the Dame isn't easy as one may think. You need to have a knack for comedy - physically, verbally and especially improvisational. That's what makes the role of a Dame so fun to play, having the floor to do whatever you think is funny to make both children and adults laugh their hearts out. The Dame as well needs to understand the importance of comedic timing and reading the audience's reactions - knowing when to throw a quick joke or improvise on the spot is what makes pantomime so special and incredibly hilarious to watch and perform in.

## What makes panto so entertaining?

The essence of what makes pantomime great lies in its combination of colourful characters, heightened acting, audience interaction, and a blend of humor that appeals to both children and adults - incorporating slapstick humour, clever use of text, and modern-day references, creating a lighthearted and festive atmosphere, making it an engaging, fun and interactive experience for all ages.

## If you had to be the best Dame at something, what would it be?

Well, I may not be the prettiest, or the funniest or the hairiest Dame (might be factually incorrect on that one) - especially as there are other Dames out there who seem to be better at everything I'm good and bad at, but, I can be the one that is most fair. And remember, being fair also means... be nice to each other!

# Panto Activities and Crafts

These are a few activities and crafts to do with your students either before or after they have seen the performance.

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- **Interactive Theatre Journal**

Provide a journal where children can jot down their thoughts and reactions to the panto. Include prompts like "My favorite character," "Funniest moment," or "If I were in the panto..." Apart from the above prompts they can also draw pictures about the panto that they have just seen.

- **Character Charades:**

Organise a game of charades where they have to act out the characters from the panto. This is a fun interactive activity that will help them embody the characters and understand the roles and characters that they have seen throughout the performance better. Tell them that they can also add their own spin on the characters.

- **Pantomime Freeze Frame**

Choose key scenes from the panto and have the children create frozen tableaux, or "freeze frames," depicting those scenes. Ask students to recreate some of the scenes using their own interpretations. Maybe a part of the story that they would change. This activity encourages creativity and understanding of the plot and characters.

- **Design Your Own Panto Poster**

Provide materials for the children to create their own panto posters. They will need an A3 sheet of paper. They can draw the characters, write a catchy tagline, and decorate it with vibrant colors, and other accessories.

## • Storybook Collage

To Prepare: A3 Paper, Coloured paper, Magazines, Tape, Glue, Scissors, any other accessories (Ex: Glitter, markers, stickers, pom poms.)

- Give each student a large piece of A3 paper.
- Tell them to find pictures from magazines, use coloured paper, and any other accessories or decorations that they would like that reminds them of the panto performance that they have just seen.
- Tell students to compile all of the pictures and decorations on their piece of A3 paper.

## • Hero And Villain Handprints

To Prepare: Coloured A4 Paper or Kartoncin, Markers, Colours, Scissors, Glitter, any other accessories (Ex: Stikers, pom poms etc.)

- Help the children to trace their hands on a piece of coloured paper or kartoncin. There should be 2 hands. One to represent the hero and the other the villain.
- Once the hands have been traced, cut around them.
- Let the children decorate each hand as if one were a hero and the other the villain.

## • Paper Plate Wolf

To Prepare: Paper plate, Tissue paper (brown or gray – depending on the type of wolf!), Black cardstock, white cardstock, and either brown or gray cardstock, Glue, Scissors, Stapler

- Cut the tissue paper into small squares
- Cover the paper plate with glue and then place the tissue paper pieces on the plate until it is covered.
- Cut the cardstock to make the nose, ears, eyes, etc. (you can use the photo for inspiration, but feel free to get creative and change up the shapes too!)
- Glue the eyes and nose onto the plate.
- Staple the ears onto the plate. You may also want to staple the nose to reinforce it.

# Great Little Panto Team

Dorothy Bezzina - Director

Malcolm Galea - Writer

Kate Fenech Field - Creative Producer

Matteo Depares - Composer

Stefania Grech Vella - Costume Design

Talitha Dimech - Makeup Design

Guy Galea - Wig Design

Daniel Farrugia - Set Construction

Adrian Mamo - Set Painter

Sarah Grech - Stage Manager

Nicole Sciberras - ASM

Nathaniel Mangion - Lighting Technician

Dorothy Ebejer Castillo - Wardrobe Mistress

Graziella Sammut - Props

Special thanks to MADC for props and BOV for sponsorship of the TOI TOI Programme.

# Teatru Manoel Team

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Senior Manager Operations: Vanessa Mangion

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TOI TOI Learning & Participation Programme Manager: Kate Fenech Field

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Senior Executive Officer Maintenance: Emanuel Agius

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Tradesman (Wardrobe): Anthony Grima

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Officer (Stage Crew): James Tabone, Melvin Seychell, Nathaniel Mangion & Trevor Desira

Officer Maintenance: Christian Agius

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TOI TOI Creative Associate: Nicole Sciberras

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Marketing Coordinator: Roberta Micallef

Stage Artist: Jake Edward Attard

Administration & Archiving: Rachel Farrugia-Hardie

IT Apprentice: Luca Gatt

Costume Apprentice: Clement Gauci Peresso, Shanaia Zammit

Booking Office: Rambert Attard & Annabelle Schembri

Ushers – Duty Manager: Ruth Fenech

Ushers: Brian Darmanin, Graziella Sammut, Luki Vassallo, Luana Bugeja, Kaya Spagnol, Doris Borg, Rita Demicoli, Kevin Apap, Annabelle Schembri & Rambert Attard.

Reception: Andrew Gauci, Stephania Mallia & Sandra Busuttil

Security: Redeemer Gatt, Katerina Ilich & Marvic Vella



PRESENTS

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This resource pack was created by Nicole Sciberras