

The Mad Hatter's Tea Party – Visual Story

The show you are coming to see is being performed at the Roundhouse. This is what the Roundhouse looks like from the outside:



You will enter the building through the large glass doors.



When you come in you will see the Box Office where you might need to pick up your tickets.

Sometimes there is a small queue of people here also collecting their tickets or asking the staff questions.

There may also be music playing in this area and people walking to get to where they need to be.

If you need help at any point, you can ask a member of staff. They might be wearing a t-shirt that says 'Roundhouse' on it – or a Roundhouse ID round their neck.

The Mad Hatter's Tea Party will be performed in the Main Space which is the biggest room in the building. To get there, you will need to go to either Level 1 or Level 2 depending what your tickets say. When you are ready, go past the Box Office towards the stairs.



You will go past our Cloakroom.

There might be a queue of people leaving their things there. If there's anything that you would like to put in the cloakroom, you can do so.

The cloakroom costs £1 per item – the staff will give you a ticket you can use to pick up your things later.

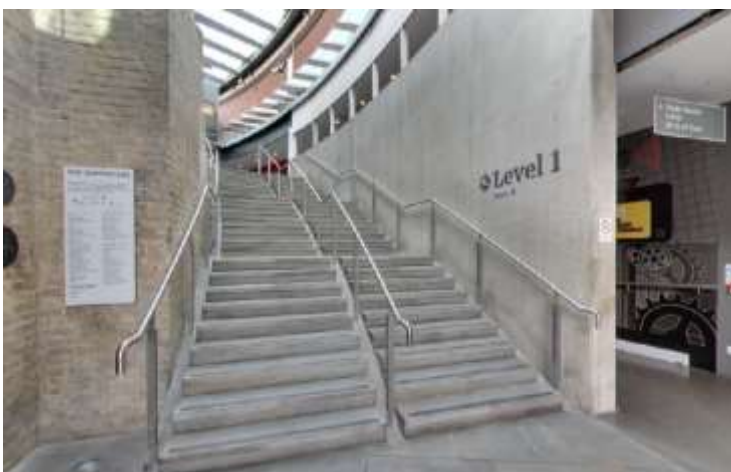
You will also go past our café which is called MADE.

It has quite bright lights and plays music.

There are lots of different people who work behind the bar, making drinks and food for people who come to visit. If you would like a drink or something to eat, feel free to go in.



When you are ready, go to the stairs. If you would prefer to use the lift, make your way down the ramp between the stairs and the café. You will find the lift down there next to the toilets.



Members of our security team will be conducting bag searches at the bottom of the stairs. Here you may be asked to open your bag to show the contents.

There might be other people going up the stairs when you get there.

If your tickets say 'Stalls', stop when you get to Level 1 – your seats are on this level.

If your tickets say 'Circle', you need to carry on up to Level 2. The stairs are through this door.

There are toilets and bars on both levels.

When you get upstairs, you might see lots of other people who are going to see the show and Roundhouse Staff directing audience members.



You will see Roundhouse staff wearing red t-shirts standing by the doors to the Main Space.

Once you're ready to go in, go to one of these members of staff. They will check your ticket and maybe scan it with a machine.

It will be a bit darker inside the Main Space. You might be able to see the back of the seating blocks.

It will also be quite warm in the Main Space. The dancers need it to be warm so they can move freely.

Look for another member of staff wearing a red t-shirt - they will direct you to your seat. You might need to go up some steps to get there.





Once you're in the Main Space, you'll be able to look around the and see all the other seats.

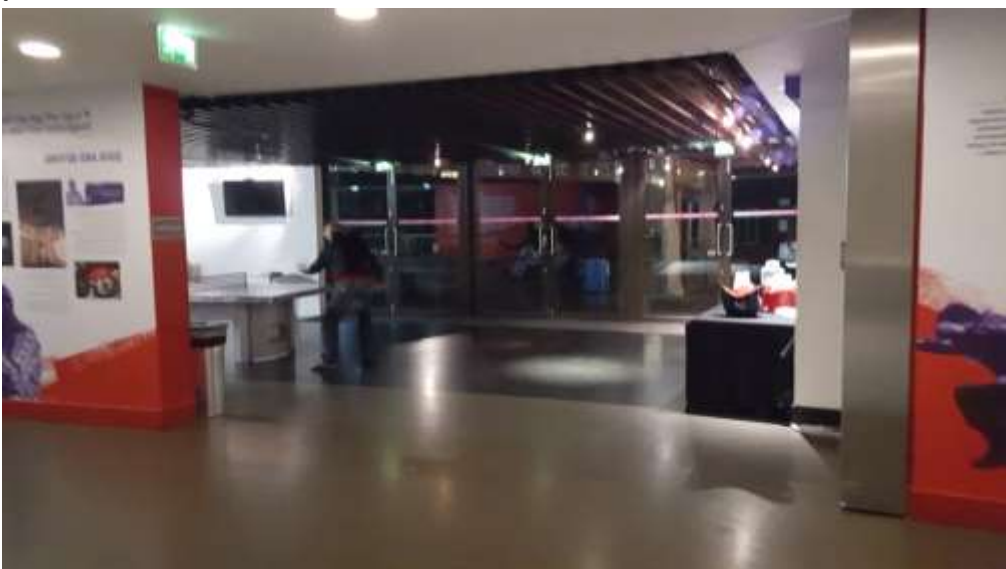
The stage is in the middle of the space and has a black and white checked floor.

If you look up, you'll see the big round ceiling. There will be lots of lights and speakers hanging from chains up there.

The show will feature some loud music and sound effects including a buzzer and the lights will move around the stage.



If you need a quieter space during the show, you can head to Torquil's Bar. Just ask one of our staff to direct you. This space is available throughout the performance.



Some of the cast and band will be in the auditorium before the show to say hello to you. They will introduce themselves and to talk a bit about their characters.

THE STORY

The Mad Hatter's Tea Party is a take on the characters of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, but it is a different story. It is told through hip hop dance, but there is also a narrator and some dialogue.

The first half of the show is set in the Institution for Extremely Normal Behaviour where the patients are based on the characters of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Their new doctor, Ernest, interrupts their never-ending tea party to insist on a 'T for Therapy' party – but slowly Ernest becomes more and more like his patients.

In the second half of the show the patients take Ernest to Wonderland where everyone is accepted for who they are and most of their problems are solved.

The show explores perceptions of mental illness which may not be fully understood by younger audiences and may require some parental/guardian guidance. Below are some links to help you prepare.

- A background to the show in [Royal Opera House's Dance Essentials](#)
- [Click here](#) for the trailer for the show – it will give you an idea of what the dancers will look like and some of the moves they might do.
- Kate Prince, Founder and Creative Director of ZooNation talks on [BBC Radio 4's Front Row](#)
- Your Reaction: [What did you think of The Mad Hatter's Tea Party?](#)

WHAT THE SHOW WILL BE LIKE – FIRST HALF

Once everyone's in their seats, the lights will go down and people will stop talking. A man called Bertie, wearing a coat and hat and eating a lollipop, will come on stage and talk to the audience. He will be your narrator for the rest of the performance.

A model building will be on stage from the beginning. A Giraffe will pop his head out of the model building; he's just a puppet. The model building will then be taken off in parts by some people dressed in black.

The characters will dance for the first time in audience. They may be quite close to you, but they will have enough space to dance on the floor.

A band will play music from above the stage. They will be playing instruments and singing throughout the performance.

The first character to come on stage is Ernest.
He looks like this:

Ernest will meet three doctors in white lab coats.



After this the other characters from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* will enter in the following order.

First, Alice who wears a blue dress.



Then Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum. They make quite loud sounds. This is their way of communicating.



Then the Queen of Hearts will enter. She is angry and shouts a lot. She will shout 'off with their heads,' but she won't hurt anyone.



Next the Mad Hatter

and

the March Hare.



Then the White Rabbit:



Much later on the Cheshire Cat will be brought on in wheelchair. He's not as ill as he seems, so don't be surprised when he jumps up and dances.



There is lots of dancing throughout the show. The dancing will reflect the music. Sometimes the dancers will run around doing lots of jumping and they may look like they are throwing each other, but don't worry they are highly trained and they know how to stop themselves getting hurt.

Sometimes the characters will shout a bit and fight with each other, but their problems will be resolved by another character.

INTERVAL

When all the characters leave through the door at the back of the stage, this is the interval. You can get up from your seat during the interval, which will last 20-30 minutes.

SECOND HALF

The second half will open with a very big table on the stage. There will be oversized tea cups and tea pots on the table, ready for a tea party.

The dancers will dance on the table, but they are very skilled and will not fall off.

A singing mouse will pop out of one of the teapots. Don't worry when they put the lid back on - he's just a puppet.

At one point the characters will fall to the ground, but they are OK and they will get up again.

At the end of the show, the lights will come back on. Lots of people might clap their hands and cheer – some people might choose to stand up to do this. You can join in if you want to.

You can leave the theatre by the door you came in through. Ask a member of staff if you need any help.

If you would like a chance to come into the Main Space to look around before everyone else, please email visitorservices@roundhouse.org.uk, or call us on 0300 6789 222. We will try our best to accommodate you.

We hope you enjoy the show!

[Click here](#) to take the virtual tour of the Roundhouse.

If there's anything you would like to say about this Visual Story, or any comments you might like to make about what you did or didn't like, please email feedback@roundhouse.org.uk.