

chichester festival theatre

11 November 2024

HEY! CHRISTMAS TREE

For ages 3 – 7

Press performance: Wednesday 11 December at 1.30pm

Minerva Theatre, 7 – 29 December

Morning and matinee performances



Hey! Christmas Tree, an enchanting, funny and heart-warming festive story about the importance of finding friendship and somewhere to call home, has been created especially for Chichester Festival Theatre by **Michael Morpurgo**.

Inspired by Morpurgo's book of poems *My Heart Was a Tree*, and written for the stage by **Vicki Berwick**, with music and lyrics by **Eamonn O'Dwyer**, *Hey! Christmas Tree* runs at Chichester's Minerva Theatre from 7 – 29 December (press performance: Wednesday 11 December at 1.30pm). **Dale Rooks**, whose Chichester productions include *The Butterfly Lion*, *Running Wild* and *The Wind in the Willows*, directs.

Tree is rescued from the forest at Christmas time by Mavis, the motorbiking park ranger, who lives with her cheeky cat Winston and 9-year-old Yulia, who doesn't want to talk and is a long way from home. Tree has never had Christmas before and isn't sure about all the decorations he has to wear. But he meets Father Christmas and the Snow Woman, and with Yulia to care for him, he starts to dance. The seasons come and go, Tree grows taller, and soon Christmas comes around once again. And alongside the gifts in their stockings is the best present of all.

The cast is: **Olivia Arnold** (*Sleeping Beauty*, *Peter Pan*) as Yulia; **Callum Balmforth** (RSC's *The Box of Delights*, TV's *Doctors*, *Queen Cleopatra*) as Winston; **Samantha Bingley** (*Beauty and the Beast* West End) as Susan the Snow Woman/Father Christmas; **Amanda Gordon** (*Jerusalem* West End, *EastEnders*) as Mavis; and **Nick Howard-Brown** (*Hamlet* Theatre Royal Windsor, TV's *D-Day: The Unheard Tapes*) as Tree.

The designer is **Lily Arnold**, with lighting design by **James Whiteside**, sound design by **Andy Graham**, movement direction by **Georgina Lamb** and video design by **Dan Hill**.

Recommended for ages 3 – 7. There will be a **Relaxed & BSL Performance** on 29 December at 10.30am.

Box Office **01243 781312**; online **cft.org.uk**

Tickets from £10; family tickets available (half-price for under 16s on top two price bands with every full price paying adult)

Images can be downloaded from www.cft.org.uk/pressimages

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