



A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH NEW VIC

Welcome to the New Vic Theatre!

We want all our audiences to feel comfortable at the New Vic Theatre. We know that some audience members prefer to know details about the venue and the production in advance.

We've created this visual information pack with some extra info about what you can expect when you visit the New Vic Theatre. It also contains a story summary and a breakdown of the lights, sounds and dramatic moments you might experience in *A Matter of Life and Death*.

About the Performance

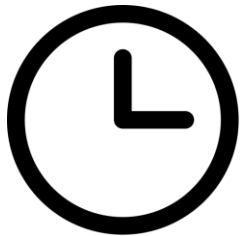
NEW VIC THEATRE



This is a performance at the New Vic Theatre. It is performed in-the-round which means the audience sits in a circle around the actors.

This production is a play. It is an adaptation of the 1946 film *A Matter of Life and Death* directed by Powell and Pressburger. It follows the story of Peter Carter, a young British airman, whose mind has been violently shaped by war.

This production does not have any age restrictions but does contain themes of war and some distressing scenes.



The play is split into two parts called 'Acts'. Act 1 is about 1 hour long. After Act 1 there is a 20-minute break called an interval. This is where you can go to the toilet or get a drink from the café. Act 2 is about 50 minutes long.

About the Performance



There are often lots of people watching the performance. When you arrive at the theatre, it can feel quite busy. There will be members of staff on hand to help you if you need any assistance.



You can spot members of staff because they may be wearing lanyards that look like this.

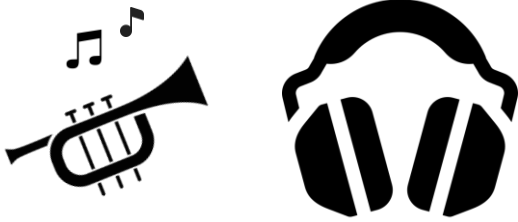


There will be an announcement to tell you when to take your seat inside the theatre. There will be members of staff available to help you find your seat.



This production begins with a pre-show concert, where members of the cast play two songs for the audience. The lights will also turn off you, the audience, and focus on the band on stage. The story begins soon as soon as the second song has finished.

About the Performance



The play includes a fabulous swing band who play lots of swing classics throughout the performance. You can expect to hear lots of brass instruments, piano, drums and bass. You are welcome to wear ear defenders, or bring earplugs, if you are worried. It can get quite loud, but this is essential so the musicians can hear one another.



During the play, there are some loud sound effects. These include air raid sirens, plane engines, explosions and alarm bells ringing, as well as some abstract underscore that sound a little like machinery and clocks.

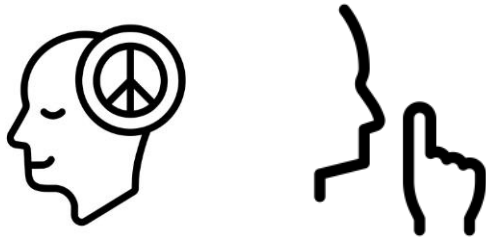


There are lots of different coloured lights used in the production, including some special lights fitted into the floor. They sometimes move in a circular motion to signify a staircase.



We have a revolve on stage as part of the set. A revolve is a circle in the middle of the floor that is powered by machinery to rotate. This means that actors can be carried around in a circle without moving themselves. It can be a little disorientating, but very exciting!

About the Performance



If you need to leave the theatre and find a quiet space, we support you. Members of staff will be available to assist you in exiting the auditorium and finding a suitable space.



When the play finishes, the performers will all return to the stage to take a bow. You will see they are often smiling at you to reassure you that they are no longer in character. They love to hear you have enjoyed the performance! Please do clap and cheer if you enjoyed it.

Plot Summary Act 1

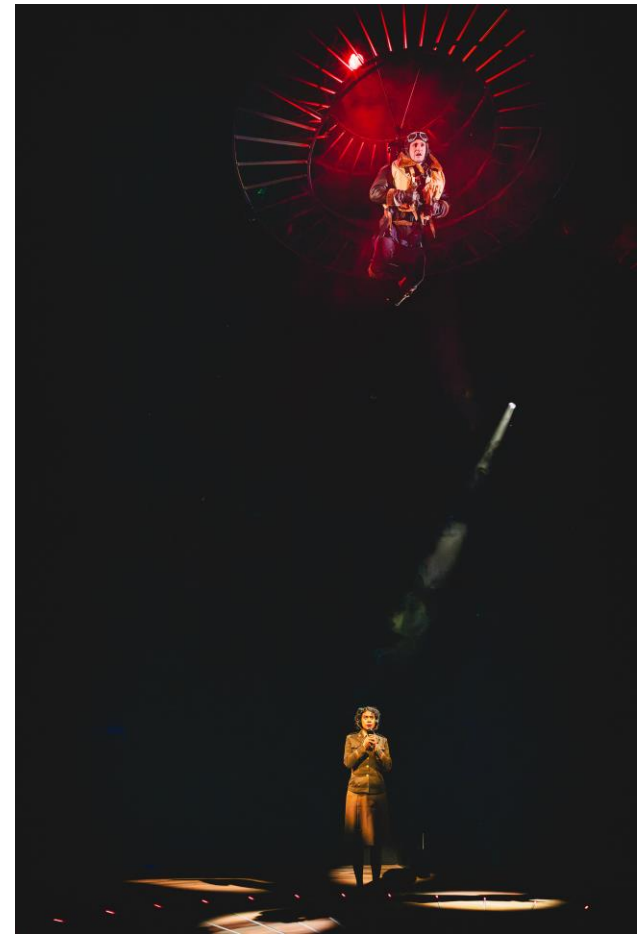
Peter is returning from a bombing raid of Berlin on the 2nd May 1945. His plane has been hit by German flak and the engine is on fire. All his crew have bailed out, except his radio operator, Bob, who is dead. Peter speaks over the radio to June, a member of the US Women's Army Corps, who tries to help him land. But Peter knows his plane is going to crash and he doesn't have a parachute. He and June become very close over their conversation. Peter ends the call as he jumps from his plane.

Meanwhile, Bob has arrived at the Receiving Hall of the Other World. In the Other World, people arrive on an escalator in white versions of the clothes that they have died in. We see several airmen arriving and checking in for wings fittings. Bob is there waiting for Peter to join him. He tries to explain to the heavenly Clerks that there must have been an error as Peter couldn't have survived the plane crash. Eventually the alarm bells ring to indicate that Bob is right.

On Earth, Peter wakes and finds himself on a beach. He believes he is dead, until he spots June on her bicycle. He realises he has somehow managed to survive. He approaches June, and the two fall in love instantly.

In the Other World, we meet Conductor 71 whose job it was to collect Peter and bring him to the Other World. Conductor 71 was executed in the French Revolution, and his clothing is of that period. Conductor 71 is reprimanded and sent to Earth to retrieve Peter who has now been alive for an extra 20 hours.

Peter is in a rose garden with June. Conductor 71 appears and freezes time so he can talk with Peter. His clothing is now coloured. Peter refuses to go with the Conductor to the Other World as his circumstances have now changed – due to the error made, Peter has now fallen in love and has new responsibilities to June. Peter lodges an appeal to remain on Earth, and the Conductor leaves explaining that he will get further instructions from above.



Plot Summary Act 1 continues...

As Conductor 71 goes, he restarts time once more. June unfreezes and finds Peter in a confused and agitated state, talking about another world. Peter suffers a sudden pain in the head and momentarily loses his sight.

In the next scene we meet Doc Reeves who is travelling through the village on her motorbike. June cycles into view and tries to convince Doc Reeves to examine Peter. Doc is reluctant as Peter is an RAF case, and she is a village Doctor, but eventually agrees to visit at teatime.

At Lee Wood House, the US air force barracks, the airmen and women are relaxing and preparing for a variety performance. They dance a lindy hop to *In the Mood* and play *Sing Sing Sing!* Doc enters and examines Peter, who explains about his appeal in the Other World. Doc encourages Peter to keep fighting his case, and June shows her out. As Doc and June discuss the consultation, Conductor 71 turns up once more and freezes time.

Conductor 71 explains to Peter that he has been allowed to appeal his case, but that the Department of Records has appointed Abraham Farlan to be the prosecuting council. Farlan was the first American to be shot by a British bullet in the War for Independence. He hates the British, and especially the idea of a love affair between a British man and a Boston born woman. Peter has three days to find his own defending council.

As Conductor 71 exits, he restarts time and June and Doc unfreeze. Peter is extremely agitated. Doc calms him down and further examines him. Doc invites Peter and June to come and stay at her house so she can keep an eye on Peter. At the end of the act, Peter realises that the Conductor has stolen the chess book he was reading.



Plot Summary Act 2

Act 2 begins in Doc's garden. We hear a radio announcement that Germany has surrendered. Doc tells June that she suspects Peter is suffering from a subacute haematoma, caused by a bang to the head, which is resulting in hallucinations. These hallucinations hinge on Peter's court case in the Other World, and whether he wins or loses his appeal. His imperative to stay alive is June.

In the next scene, we see Peter and Conductor 71 travelling on the staircase and discussing who should be Peter's council. Conductor 71 warns Peter that he only has a few hours left to decide. Peter realises that Conductor 71 is tricking him into travelling up to the Other World. He runs down the staircase, which merges into Doc's house where Peter is having another hallucination.

Doc assesses Peter and advises June to call the hospital and tell them to prep for surgery – it's now a matter of life and death. June can't telephone the hospital because there is a storm, so Doc decided to go on her motorbike. On her journey, Doc crashes and dies. We see Peter and June at the hospital, with Peter being taken through to surgery.

In the Other World, Peter's case is brought to court. A Judge enters and begins proceedings by inviting the prosecuting council to take their place. Abraham Farlan enters the stage – he is dressed in 18th century clothes, but in white. The Judge invites council for the defence to enter, and Doc Reeves appears in a white version of their motorbike clothing. Conductor 71 greets Doc and lets her know she is here to represent Peter as defence council.

Abraham Farlan is invited to make his case. He suggests to the court that Peter's appeal rests on three issues – who was to blame for Peter's survival, whether we believe that Peter is really in love with June, and whether we believe that June really is in love with him. Farlan suggests that the latter are impossible, based on the fact that Peter is an Englishman and June an American woman. He is concerned with June being trapped in a dull, English existence.



Plot Summary Act 2 continued...

Doc accuses Farlan of trying to prejudice the jury, but Farlan reminds her that any jury would already be prejudiced against England given their colonial history and arrogance.

Doc is invited to make her case, and she suggests that the only way to determine whether Peter and June are in love, and therefore that Peter should be allowed to stay on Earth, is to ask them. The Judge adjourns the court to Earth.

The court arrives in the operating theatre where Peter is in surgery. Conductor 71 freezes time. Peter is summoned before Farlan but is unconvincing in making his case. Peter asks whether he might kiss June, who is frozen, just in case he never sees her again. As he does, Conductor 71 notices that despite being frozen, June is crying. He collects her tears in a rose from the rose garden.

Farlan asks for June to be brought before the court, and she is unfrozen and introduced to the Other World. Doc uses the tears in the rose to make her case – that in this awful post-war period, Peter and June represent the better world that must be built, that their love and unity deserves to be given a chance.

Farlan asks June to prove her love by taking Peter's place in the Other World. As June travels up the staircase, the alarm bells start ringing and the escalator jolts to a stop. The power of love has halted it. The Judge announces that Peter has won his case. The court is dismissed, and June and Peter bid farewell to Bob, Conductor 71 and Doc.

We see Dr. Liza crossing the stage having successfully operated on Peter. The play ends with Peter and June dancing to *All the Time in the World*.



Cast



Alexander Bean plays Judge. In the band, he plays drums and vocals.



Morgan Burgess plays Abraham Farlan. In the band, he plays guitar and vocals.



Kaylah Copeland plays June.

Cast



Thomas Dennis plays Peter.



Howard Gray is the show's Musical Director. He plays piano.



Jack Heydon plays Dog Walker. In the band, he plays the Trumpet.

Cast



Michael Hugo plays Conductor 71.



Jessica Jolleys plays Chief Recorder. In the band, she plays the saxophone and vocals.



Polly Lister plays Doc Reeves. In the band, she is vocals.

Cast



Sufia Manya plays Dr. Liza. In the band she plays the saxophone and clarinet.



Jenny Murphy plays Section Officer. In the band, she plays saxophone and vocals.



Elliot Parchment-Morrison plays Bob Trubshawe. In the band, he plays trombone and vocals.

Cast



Luke Thornton plays The Universe. In the band, he plays double bass.



Lucy Wells plays Shirley. In the band, she plays the saxophone.

What to Expect at the Theatre



The entrance to the theatre car park looks like this.



There are accessible parking spaces in the car park. You can pre-book these in advance by calling Box Office.



This is the main entrance into the theatre building.



You can collect your tickets from box office. It looks like this!



This is the gift shop where you can buy cards and Christmas treats!

What to Expect at the Theatre



These are the stairs that take you up to the theatre bar and café.



There is also a lift to the left of the stairs.



This is the café area where people gather before the show.



This is the lounge where you can sit if you need to leave the performance.



At the interval, you can buy snacks from this snack station.

For More Information contact us at Box Office:



01782 717962



10:00am – 6:00pm
Monday – Saturday



tickets@newvictheatre.org.uk

Accessible performances:

Audio Described Performances

2.15pm Saturday 19th April

Captioned Performances

7.30pm Tuesday 15th April

For more information visit:

<https://www.newvictheatre.org.uk/your-visit/access/>