

Owl at Home





*"First class theatre... stripped bare of pretension.
If only grown-up theatre were as good "* Western Mail

"Children's theatre doesn't come any better " British Theatre Guide

Theatr Iolo's vision is for a society in which all children can feel empowered and inspired. As one of the leading Welsh children's theatre company, we strive to enrich the lives of children through memorable experiences that challenge the mind and stir the imagination.

Theatr Iolo has been at the forefront of theatre for children for over thirty years, delivering performances and workshops to babies, children, teenagers, parents, pupils and teachers across Wales, the UK and internationally in both Welsh and English languages.

Under the artistic leadership of award-winning director, Lee Lyford we have lots of exciting plans for the next three years and beyond. Check out our website at **theatriolo.com** and join our e-list to keep in touch and find out more about our upcoming projects and productions.



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Theatr Iolo receives an annual revenue grant from the Arts Council of Wales to support our main body of work and National Lottery funding for additional projects. We are a registered charity and we depend on the support of individuals, companies, trusts and foundations and public subsidy to continue to present the best of theatre to children, young people and adults.



Theatr Iolo present

Owl at Home

Based on the illustrated children's book by Arnold Lobel
Adapted for the stage by Rina Vergano + Theatr Iolo

Owl lives alone in a cosy little home in a hollow tree in the woods. With no one to talk to, Owl sings to himself and looks for ways to pass the time. He wonders about things a lot. What will happen if he invites winter into his home? And can he be in two places at once?

As his imagination runs away with him, ordinary objects begin to take on a life of their own and Owl finds an unexpected friend who's willing to follow him to the ends of the earth... whether he likes it or not!

An enchanting tale with music, Owl at Home shows us how friendship can be found in the most unlikely of places.



Maybe Owl once had a mate and lost them, but maybe he didn't. For now, he lives alone and he has done so for quite some time. He's become set in his ways, a creature of habit and likes routine. Owl overthinks things and feels very attached to the familiar objects in his home, as if they are his friends.

Owl finds it hard to get dressed and often spends days in his pyjamas. He seems quite happy pottering about in his house, alone, as long as nothing goes wrong. Sometimes things do go wrong though and Owl struggles to re-establish order and routine.

Owl wonders about things a lot, he is not a great talker, but tends to chant or sing his thoughts aloud. Owl listens to Radio Gwdihw (a popular owl radio station) and likes books. He is a keen bird-watcher and likes to note down the birds he sees and birdcalls he hears.

Cast and Creatives

Actor: George Williams
Director: Lee Lyford
Writer: Rina Vergano
Designer: Anisha Fields
Sound Designer: Dinah Mullen
Songs written by George Williams

Lighting Designer: Ceri James
Production Manager: Nick Allsop
Audio Describer: Michelle Perez
Radio Gwdihw: Lynne Seymour
Props Maker: Charlotte Neville
Set Builders: Dogfish

Special thanks to Theatre Orchard, Chapter and Jenny Foster

Rehearsal Photos



Photos by Kirsten McTernan

Production Photos

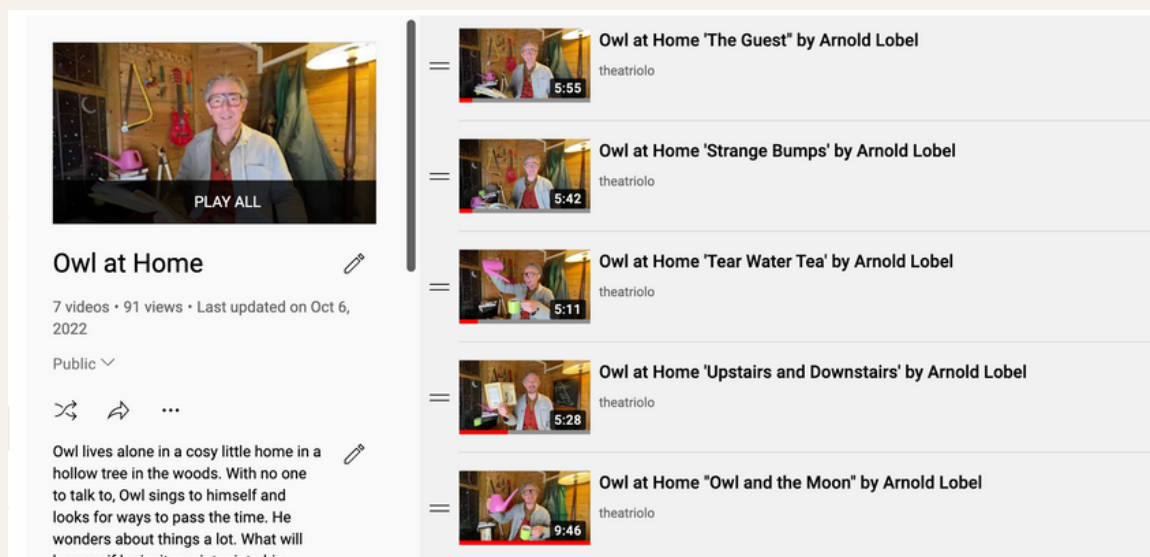


Audio Described Introduction



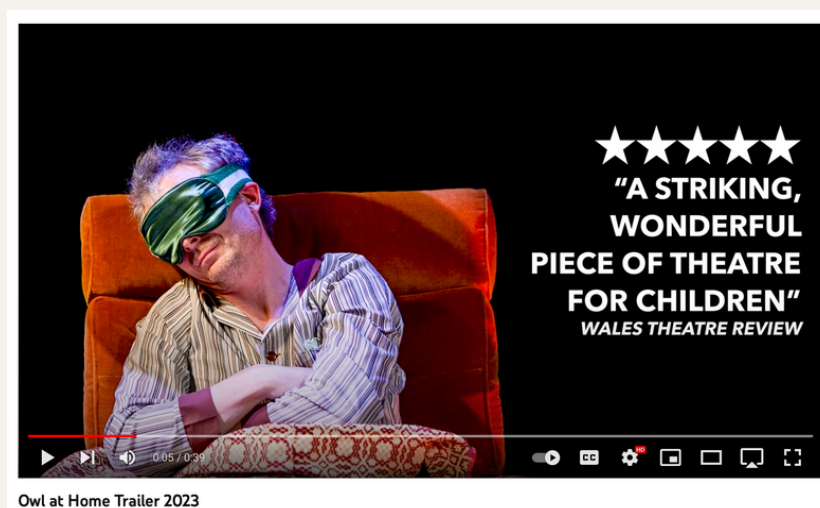
<https://soundcloud.com/speakaudio/owl-at-home-audio-description>

Owl at Home Bedtime Stories Series



<https://youtu.be/YYo9Gr3ftjA>

Owl at Home Trailer



<https://youtu.be/sq4RodxaIw?si=Y1ZOiMQdbmmODox2>



Director's Notes

I am always drawn to stories which explore what it is to be human and asks big questions such as: Why are we here? Who am I? And how do I relate to the world? Questions that children often ask in one way or another.

I didn't know of the book Owl at Home until Rina and George brought it to me around the time I took over the Artistic Directorship of Theatr Iolo. I was struck by how profound it was and yet so simple. Often great children's literature gets to the heart of the matter in a few lines that can take endless chapters in "adult" books. I felt there were many similarities between myself and Owl; I can often become obsessed with tiny details, I resist leaving my home and I cry at the drop of a hat! I wasn't a particularly outdoorsy child, I was happy dancing around the house, reading a book or organising my room. It was only later in life that I realised the joy of the outdoors and connecting with nature. So, I instantly felt that if I had found this book when I was a child it would have served me very well indeed.

We have had great fun staging the physical and philosophical endeavours Owl gets preoccupied by in the show. Much of our rehearsal process has been taken up with developing a physical/ visual language to represent these stories using as little language as possible.

Rina has done a lovely job of bringing the individual Owl tales together to make one whole story and we have tried to underpin everything with the layers of meaning in Arnold Lobel's gorgeous book.

We hope that you enjoy the show.

Writer's Notes



My three children grew up with the Arnold Lobel's stories; *Frog & Toad*, *Mousetales* and *Owl at Home*. They're designed for early readers, so although the language is simple some of the concepts are complicated. *Owl at Home* is a deceptively simple philosophical work for the thinking child. All children are junior philosophers who wonder about things and ask big existential questions to make sense of the world around them: what am I doing here? why does this happen this way? why can't I be in two places at once? why do I have all these feelings? Why is the moon so bright when it's dark? Is that a spooky shadow in my bedroom or just my dressing gown?

I suppose I'm drawn to *Owl*, because of my love and respect for the way children think. In the classroom children are often stuffed full of information, when in fact they are already full of ideas, imagination and concepts. Children are great abstract thinkers, and these little stories really acknowledge that fact, and directly seek to engage those parts of their minds. And actually, their souls: these are very soulful stories! Many books for early readers have very little real content or substance that could make you think or ponder, so for me *Owl at Home* is a triumphant blend of simplicity and depth. I've taken the five little stories from the book and glued them into one continual flow, so that we're watching a whole lunar month in the life of *Owl*.

What I love about our production of *Owl at Home*, is that the set, lighting and sound design are extremely beautiful and done in such a way as to create a sense of wonder. I love work for children (and adults actually!) that causes a sharp intake of breath, with some wow! moments. Sometimes children experience something in the theatre – a song, a moment, and idea, an image – that they remember all their lives. It's a show which has a lot of mystery, beauty and magical realism, and which will hopefully transport the audience to *Owl's* strange eccentric little world. It has its own peculiar logic, but also its surreal moments. As a writer and translator, I've been lucky enough to work with companies and writers all over Europe, and so I hope that this show and its making has a very European flavour. I feel lucky to have this show produced by Theatr Iolo who totally understood that vision from the word go.

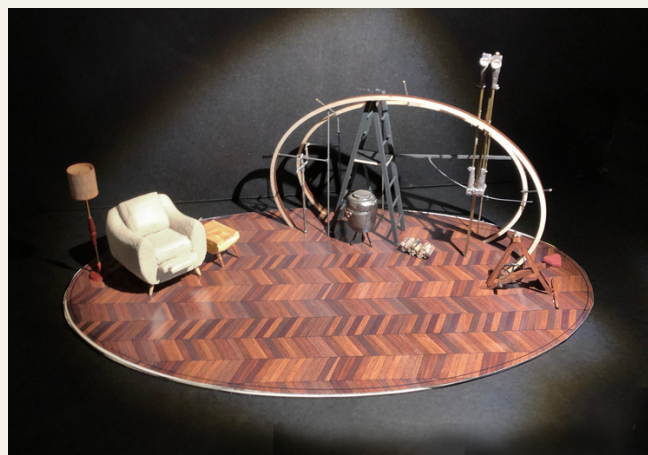
Designer's Notes



Owl is a character for whom home is his entire world. He is wary of the outside. As the years have rolled by, this cosy, lonely burrow, deep inside the hollow of the tree, has become his sanctuary.

Our design started here. Both functional and cosy, we wanted to create a space that was equal parts shed, bedroom, kitchen and toolbox - old but perfectly kept. A space gradually engineered from salvaged woodland junk, so perfectly arranged by him, he has no need to venture into the chaotic world outside.

But despite having all he needs, we were curious as to what his final exchange with winter, and then the moon, meant to this perfectly preserved order. Although seemingly content in his home, there is an itchiness to Owl that we only see resolved once these characters visit, despite their accompanying chaos. Echoed circular shapes allude not only to the rings of the old tree in which he lives in, but the absence of his oldest friend; the moon.



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e.g. IOLO 5 to donate £5

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Texts cost £5 (or the amount you chose) plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS.

If you'd like to give money but do not wish to receive communications, text IOLONOINFO 5 (or your chosen amount) to 70085.



We'd love to hear what you thought of **Owl at Home!** Leave us a review on Facebook or fill in one of our comments cards as you are leaving.

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