

Theatre production of *Do Not Enter the Monster Zoo* tours to 41 venues across North of England

A new theatre production for children under 7 and their families is touring the North of England this autumn and will visit 41 libraries, community centres and schools in towns and villages across the region, often in areas where there is no permanent theatre venue.

Do Not Enter the Monster Zoo is a theatre adaptation of the picture book written by Amy Sparkes and illustrated by Sara Ogilvie. Produced by New Writing North for Durham Book Festival, the production promises a playful tale that little monsters everywhere are sure to fall in love with.

Our hero Joey receives an invitation in the post to run a zoo for the day. But, when Joey arrives it's unlike any zoo ever encountered. The zoo is a mess, the creatures are all misbehaving and the zookeeper can't wait to get out of there! This is a Monster Zoo!

Will the mischievous beasts ever learn to mind their manners? Will Joey ever manage to stand up to them? Luckily the children will be on hand to help out with this exciting adventure as they sing and dance along to the live music of the monster band.

Director Ruth Johnson has worked on New Writing North's annual children's theatre production for the past five years. Ruth said: "I am thrilled and beyond excited to be taking our monsters out on the road. Amy Sparkes and Sara Ogilvie's book is so full of fun and chaos and we have a brilliant team to bring this to life."

Anna Disley, Executive Director (Programme & Impact) at New Writing North, is producing *Do Not Enter the Monster Zoo*. Anna said: "It is with great excitement that we can announce a brand new production for under 7s and their families this autumn. We absolutely loved Amy Sparkes and Sara Ogilvie's picture book, so it's a real honour to be able to create a theatre production inspired by this story."

"This is our fifth year of touring theatre productions for young children and we're exciting to be returning to many of the same community centres and libraries that we've visited previously, as well as introducing new venues to our tour. It's going to be great fun and we hope everybody is ready to enter the monster zoo with us!"

Do Not Enter the Monster Zoo tours the North of England from Saturday 23 September to Sunday 29 October 2017.

For all tour dates, see www.monsterzootour.com

Ends

For all media enquiries including images and interviews, please contact Laura Fraine at New Writing North on 0191 204 8854 or laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com

NOTES TO EDITOR

Do Not Enter the Monster Zoo is a Durham Book Festival commission, produced by New Writing North with funding from Arts Council England's Strategic touring fund.

New Writing North is the writing development agency for northern England, and opened in 1996. In 2012, New Writing North joined Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations. New Writing North works with writers to develop career opportunities, new commissions, projects, residencies, publications and live events. It works in partnership with a broad range of organisations, universities, local authorities, regional development agencies, sponsors and media producers to develop opportunities for writers in our region.

Durham Book Festival takes place in October 2017 at venues across County Durham with events for all ages. Durham Book Festival is a Durham County Council festival produced by New Writing North, which is made possible by support from partners Durham University and Arts Council England.

Cast and Crew

Cast: Calum Howard
Joe Johnston
Rachel Gay
Zoe Lambert

Adaptor: Stacey Sampson
Director: Ruth Johnson
Designer: Andy Stephenson
Production Manager: Paul Aziz
Stage Manager: Nicola Morris
Stage Manager: Rachel Glover
Musical Director: Joe Johnston
Producer: Anna Disley
Associate Producer: Sarah Churlish