

DOORSTEP DUETS

2026



THE BENCH



Visual Story

INTRODUCTION

This Visual Guide is designed for audiences who want to familiarise themselves with this year's Doorstep Duets production, '*The Bench*' before they watch the performance.

The story is told entirely through dance and music with no speech.

Our guide contains images and information about the characters, story and the production in general. We hope this resource supports your experience of the show.

If you have any comments, please get in touch at office@new-adventures.net



The show lasts around 20 minutes. There is no interval.



This is a relaxed space. You can make noise, stim, tic, move around, leave and come back.



Ask our team in green t-shirts if you need any support.



Certain points may be loud with some sudden noises. As well as music, the show includes: Big Ben chiming, phone notifications buzzing, sounds of air raid sirens and bombing noises.



The audience may clap during the show and at the end of the show. You can join in if you want to. There is some audience participation, but it is completely optional.

THE STORY

Have you ever sat on a park bench and wondered who came before you, who might come after, what they were thinking, and what hopes and fears they were hiding?

The Bench, by choreographer Glenn Graham, and performed by dancers of Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, tells the story of three people whose lives overlap in unexpected ways. It is a poetic and moving exploration of memory, connection, and the quiet moments that shape us.

The park bench brings together characters from vastly different time-periods. As they explore the possessions they carry with them, objects they hold dear, they find new connection and support in this chance encounter.



THE CHARACTERS

The dancers you see in this guide may not be the same as the dancers in the performances. Their costumes are different depending on who is playing the character however the character's stories remain the same in all performances.



BOBBIE

Bobbie is living in the 1940s, their life impacted by World War 2. They gradually build courage to face up to the news of their loved ones on the frontline and learn to embrace their happy memories as a form of comfort and acceptance. Their costume is in earthy, brown and green tones.



JEAN

Effortlessly cool, groovy, and flamboyant, Jean may seem like the life of the party but they hide their struggles from others. Their resilience shines through. Their costume is in bright, pastel and preppy colours.



JUDE

Jude is living in today's modern world. They are obsessed with their phone and glued to social media. Slowly, they realise how much this is impacting their physical and mental health and find freedom through human connection. Their costume is in bold block colours.

SCENE ONE – IN A PARK

Bobbie, Jean and Jude each enter the park in different directions carrying suitcases. They are all from different eras of time and do not see each other.

The chimes of Big Ben draws them to the bench.

They are in their own worlds as they take turns to dance with possessions they hold dear – Bobbie, a letter, Jean, a picture frame and Jude, a smartphone. They return to the bench at the chimes of Big Ben.

SCENE TWO

The three dancers sense that something is changing as they begin to inhabit the same world. They start to notice each other, reacting with amusement or shock at their costumes and possessions.

At the chime of the clock, they return to their suitcases.



SCENE THREE

Bobbie's suitcase holds a letter that they have been too scared to open - news from the frontline of the war, or from their family. Encouraged by Jean and Jude, they open the suitcase and out pours Winston Churchill's voice and the sound of Blitz bombings.

A second time, 1940s dance tunes rise out of the case. Before they can bring themselves to read the letter, a memory of visiting a dance hall takes over and they are transported to happier times. Bobbie teaches Jean and Jude the steps!

Bobbie finally reads the letter and accepts the news, feeling a mixture of acceptance, hope and fondness.

They pick out a soldier's jacket from their suitcase. They dance with it, celebrating the love they had for that person. Bobbie learns to accept their grief without letting go of what mattered to them.

SOUND WARNING: There are sudden noises of bombs dropping and noises associated with World War 2.



SCENE FOUR

The ticking clock begins again as Bobbie and Jude move the bench around like a clock-hand. It's Jean's turn to open their suitcase. They fish out a picture frame, a pair of sunglasses and a radio which plays 1960s music.

Jean seems relaxed and cool as they groove across the stage effortlessly. Their feather boa empowers them on a journey of acceptance, drawing them out of sad memories.

They even encourage the audience to join in and bring an audience member onto the bench to mimic their groovy moves.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: This scene contains some audience participation. You can decide if you'd like to take part.



SCENE FIVE

The bench moves again like clockwork bringing us to the present day. Jude is glued to their phone, even when walking and rushing.

They open their suitcase to find a phone charger and competing sounds erupt: notifications, emails, alerts, messages. They become unbearable so Jude closes the case. Silence.

Unable to resist, Jude opens the case again. They cannot leave their phone. They fail to notice things around them. Curious, Bobbie and Jean try to enter Jude's world, exploring what modern life feels and sounds like, but they're increasingly overwhelmed.

They retreat to the bench, where Jude falls asleep. Bobbie and Jean hide the phone in Jude's suitcase.

But it goes off again and Jude panics. They scramble to get it back, unable to cope without it. But enough is enough, their body can't take the relentless pace. They slow down and finally connect with Bobbie and Jean.

SOUND WARNING: Throughout this scene, there are lots of phone notifications going off. Some notifications are sudden.



SCENE SIX

Bobbie, Jean and Jude all swap their objects and place them into their suitcases.

They dance without them, free of the emotional baggage they have all been carrying. They are rewinding back through previous dances, going back in time.

The three are seated on the bench again, their suitcases are closed in front of them as they hear the bells chime.

One by one they go on with their day, buoyed, connected and having faced up to everything contained in their suitcases.

SOUND WARNING: Towards the end of the scene, there is a car engine noise and a bell sound played.

SOUND WARNING: There are five clock chimes heard towards the end of the scene.



THE END

When the show ends, there may be loud clapping or cheering.

People may stand up as the performers take a bow.

When you leave, you might want to talk about what you've just seen or take some time to quietly think about it on your own. The story might mean something different to you than it does to other people.

If you have any comments about the show or this resource, please get in touch at office@new-adventures.net

We hope you enjoyed the show!

Thank you for coming to see this year's Doorstep Duets!

If you would like to leave any feedback about your experience today, a member of staff in a green t-shirt will be able to give you a postcard to fill out or to receive any of your feedback.

If you'd like to recommend Doorstep Duets to a friend, you can find our remaining Tour Dates in the South-East of England here:

<https://www.new-adventures.net/doorstep-duets#tour-dates>

If you'd like to keep up to date with New Adventures' work you can follow us on Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn @mbnewadventures.

