

Live theatre at its best on the big screen



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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Just when you thought you'd seen the ultimate in live theatre, along comes the National Theatre in London's ingenious realisation of Mark Haddon's international best-selling novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in Night-Time*, adapted for the stage by Simon Stephens and directed by Marianne Elliott.



Fortunately you don't have to travel to the West End to see this masterful production, but simply visit Cinema Nouveau, where a filmed live performance of the play will be screened exclusively on October 13, 14, 17 and 18 only.

There is theatre we watch and theatre we experience. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in Night-Time* is a play that we fully immerse ourselves into, heart and soul.

Startling opening to miraculous conclusion

From its startling opening, featuring 15-year-old Christopher, an autistic boy who is found standing beside Mrs Shears' dead dog, which has been speared with a garden fork, to its miraculous conclusion, this is what the art of adaptation and theatre craft are all about. Staged

in theatre-in-the-round, with splendid stage design by Bunny Christie, the performance area reveals a giant mathematical square that visually brings the world as experienced by an autistic child to life.

Without any sets and only imaginative design, exceptional direction and out-of-this-world performances, the play totally overwhelms the senses.

The playmakers skilfully place the audience in Christopher's shoes; we experience his emotions, angst and bewilderment as he tries to unravel the mystery of the dead dog. There is so much intricate detail that it fully deserves a second, and even third, viewing that will properly do it the justice that it rightfully deserves.

Insightful and masterful direction

Elliott's insightful and masterful direction is well supported by movement directors Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett for Frantic Assembly, and fight director Kate Waters.

This unique team turns the play into an explosion of performance and movement, perfectly unified through the stunning imagery by video designer Finn Ross and lighting design by Paule Constable. The visual impact of the production is further amplified by provocative sound design by Ian Dickinson and evocative music by Adrian Sutton that underscore the emotional journey.

Luke Treadaway is superb in the demanding role of Christopher; his meticulous and skilful performance is captivating, well supported by a talented ensemble that plays various characters in Christopher's life, as well as strangers he comes in contact with during his journey.

What makes the play unique is that it allows us to take a closer look at who we are and examine our relationship with the people who enter our lives; it explores the fragile dynamics of people who are physically or mentally challenged and shows how easy it is to be compassionate and embrace the differences that divide.



A definitive live theatre experience

The benefit of watching the play in HD cinema, is that it is filmed from above, as well as from the sides, giving us a

definitive live theatre experience on the big screen. There's also the added bonus of a short documentary that precedes the screening and gives insight into the creation, adaptation, conception and rehearsals, featuring interviews with the storytellers and story makers.

Note: See this remarkable play without knowing too much about the story and when Christopher receives an unexpected gift, you will be crying with joy.

It is strongly advised that you book seats for the first screening as you will most definitely want to experience it again. There are only four screenings and it will be your only chance to see this production as it will not be available on DVD.

It is screened on 13, 17 and 18 October at 7.30pm and at 2.30 on 14 October. The running time is approximately three hours, which includes an intermission of 20 minutes.

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Behind the scenes

Mark Haddon's novel was Whitbread Book of the Year in 2003, and has now sold over 2 million copies around the world. Marianne Elliott co-directed the globally successful stage production of War Horse for the National, for which she won a Tony Award in 2011. Simon Stephens, twice Best Foreign Playwright of the Year, is the author of many original plays and adaptations, including Harper Regan and On the Shore of the Wide World, both directed by Marianne Elliott at the National Theatre.

Read more about the NT Live Season at www.writingstudio.co.za/page17.html

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za
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