



A guide to the sensory-friendly performance of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™

Estimated Running time: 1 hour 5 minutes

About the Show

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™ is a live theatrical production performed for an audience. The audience includes boys and girls, moms and dads, and other adults like grandparents, teachers, family, and friends. All of them have come for the same reason—to enjoy the show!

Based on the enduring 1964 holiday TV special, this live version of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™ is told using puppets. The puppets are made to move and vocalize by specially trained actors called puppeteers. The six puppeteers for this show each perform many puppets. They will introduce themselves before the play starts and show you how the puppets work. For this puppet play, you won't see the puppeteers during the show as they will be hidden behind the stage and set.



The Story

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™ is the story of misfits, self-acceptance, and being true to who you are. Rudolph is a reindeer who from birth is unlike any other reindeer in Santa's realm at the North Pole. With a nose that lights up a bright red, he is rejected by his family and community for being different.

Eventually, Rudolph decides to leave the North Pole, where he then meets an elf named Hermey. Hermey has also been rejected in Christmas Town because of his lack of interest in toy making and his desire to become a dentist, which makes him different than the other elves.

The same as in the TV special, the North Pole is stalked by a venison- and pork-loving creature, the Abominable Snow Monster. A roaring, huge, white-furred beast with sharp claws and fangs, the Abominable Snow Monster is always in search of a snack, with bright colors always attracting his need for a treat. Due to this, he is particularly attracted to Rudolph's prominent, shiny nose. As Rudolph journeys further from home and gathers more misfits, he comes to realize he's endangering his new friends. Rudolph also becomes aware that he can't run from who he is and learns to accept his bright red nose. He returns home where his bravery and uniqueness find a previously unknown appreciation and acceptance.

The Production

A live theatre performance typically has special lighting, sound effects, music, sets, costumes, and props that help tell the story. Here are a few examples of stagecraft you might want to note in advance:

- *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™* uses puppets that are performed live, as well as projected moving images.
- There is plenty of music, with most of it being familiar and popular holiday songs.
- During some scene transitions, the stage will be completely dark, but only for a few moments until the next scene begins.



Other Things to Note

There are scenes where the Abominable Snow Monster threatens Rudolph, his family, and his friends. Though he eventually becomes tame, before his transformation, he roars and gives chase several times during the show. Characters in the show include a talking and singing snowman narrator, lonely toys who sing and dance, and a wise lion king that can fly. Simulated events in the show include a severe storm, a rock avalanche, and a brief scene where a beloved character falls off of a cliff. There is also a sometimes-grumpy Santa, a whistle-blowing reindeer coach, elves, and one notable dental procedure. [With this performance being a stage adaptation of the original TV special, watching the original production beforehand as a reference is recommended.](#)

The Experience

For this theater experience, the audience will typically sit quietly in the dark, sometimes right next to someone, as they usually stay seated. While the audience may clap or laugh, they usually do not talk during the show, except while whispering. Whispering is recommended because it doesn't interfere with the other audience members or the performers. For this performance, you will have some extra sitting space for wiggle room, and if you want to make sounds, get up and walk around, or would like to go to a quiet place outside the theater, you certainly can. Fidget toys, headphones, and sunglasses are also available if you'd like to use them during the performance. Also, the house lights won't dim completely, to ensure that the audience space won't be in complete darkness during the performance. Additionally, and only for this specific performance, you can eat a snack quietly if you've brought one with you. If you need anything else to make your time in the theater more comfortable, please ask a staff member wearing a Center for Puppetry Arts badge for help and they would be happy to assist you.