

Bremen Town

Tarragon Theatre

Fact Sheet

This fact sheet has key information about the show and the theatre that you may find useful and that may help you to fully enjoy your time with us.

Key Information

Location:	Tarragon Theatre Mainspace
Address:	30 Bridgman Ave Toronto ON M5R 1X3
Onstage:	Sept 30th - Oct 26th Tues - Sat at 7:30pm and Sat - Sun at 2:00pm
Previews:	Sept 30th - Oct 7th Tues - Sat at 7:30pm and Sun at 2:00pm
Mask Required Performance:	Saturday October 11th at 2:00pm
Preshow Tarragon Talk:	Tuesday October 14th 6:00pm - 7:00pm
Postshow Talk Backs:	Sunday October 12th, Thursday October 16th, Sunday October 19th, Thursday October 23rd
Relaxed Environment:	There are no Relaxed Environment Performances for this show.
Student Matinées:	Wednesday October 15th and 22nd at 1:00pm
Performance Length:	approximately 90 minutes
Intermission:	There is no Intermission for this show.
Quiet Room:	There is no Quiet Room for this show.
Late Entry:	Late entry is not permitted for this show.
Reentry:	Reentry is permitted for this show.

House Program: [click for House Program](#)

Venue Guide: [click for Venue Guide](#)

Audience Resource Guide: [click for Audience Resource Guide](#)

General Things to Know

- The performance will be at Tarragon Theatre in the Mainspace.
- Evening performances start at 7:30pm. Afternoon performances start at 2:00pm. Student Matinées start at 1:00pm.
- Digital tickets are emailed to you when you book them and will be emailed again on the morning of the performance.
- If you arranged to have your ticket printed for pickup, please arrive at 7:00pm to get it from the Box Office.
- The lobby has benches to sit on and make yourself comfortable on.
- The Bar/Concessions is open for all performances except Student Matinées.
- Food cannot be eaten in the Mainspace, but can be eaten in the Lobby. Drinks are allowed in the Mainspace. Hot drinks must have a lid.
- Tarragon Theatre only requires masking for certain performances. However, you are welcome to wear one in and around the venue at any time. Please note that some staff may wear masks, but it is not required for staff to be masked.
- The women's washroom is on the ground floor.
- The men's washroom, all gender washroom, and single-stall accessible washroom are on the second floor.
- The second floor can be reached by stairs or elevator.
- This show has assigned seating.

- You can find your seat assignment on your digital or printed ticket.
- The Mainspace will open 30 minutes before the performances, at this time the ushers will start scanning tickets so people can go in and take their seats.
- An Usher will tell you where to find your seat when they scan your ticket.
- Your mobile phone should be set to silent during the performance.
- The Mainspace is air conditioned and may be cold when you first enter. It will quickly heat up once the show begins.
- When the performance is about to begin a staff member will walk up to the stage. They will welcome you to the performance and share a Land Acknowledgment.
- The lights over the audience will be lowered and it will be dark. Then the performance will start.
- If you need to leave during the performance for any reason, you can. When an usher notices you trying to leave, they will help you exit to the lobby using the doors you entered from.
- If you wish to return to the Mainspace and the performance, please talk to the Box Office staff and they will let you back in at an appropriate moment. They may direct you to a different seat depending on how full the Mainspace is and where your original seat was.

About Bremen Town

The World Premier of a play by Gregory Prest, *Bremen Town* is a rural folk tragicomedy.

After forty-five years of hard work and dedication, Frau Esel, the longest serving housekeeper of Völksehaus, has been fired and sent out to pasture. In a rage, she sets out on a winding journey to Bremen to live with her estranged son.

Content Advisory

- *Bremen Town* deals with, and presents, content which may be difficult for some, including: elder abuse, animal abuse, aging, physical violence, prop weapons (including a prop gun), the death of close family members, selling humans, child abandonment, suicide, misogyny, kidnapping, dementia, sexual assault (groping), and alcohol consumption.
- Characters swear infrequently during the performance.
- Characters give exaggerated and/or humorous descriptions of violence during the show.
- Characters enact staged violence on each other at certain points of the show. These moments are rehearsed and no one is ever in real danger.
- Characters use sarcasm and humour as a tool to communicate and also to deal with their emotions.

Sensory Advisory

- Water-based haze is used throughout the performance.
- There are no strobe lights during the performance.
- Slowly flashing coloured lights are used during parts of the performance.
- The performance has loud sounds. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- The performance has live music played by onstage performers (accordion and vocals).
- A prop gun is fired once in the performance. A tambourine is used to make the sound.

Performer and Character Information

Performer: Nancy Palk

Character: Frau Esel

Character Info: Dorothea Esel is a woman in her mid 60s. She was the housekeeper at Völkseuhause for the last 45 years. Her son lives in the town of Bremen.



Performer: Oliver Dennis

Character: Herr Hund

Character Info: Caspar Hund is a man in his 70s. He is an optimistic street magician and entertainer.



Performer: William Webster

Character: Herr Katze

Character Info: Nicolas Katze is a man in his 80s. He grew up in the village of Elche Fluss but left there as a young adult.



Performer: Sheila McCarthy

Character: Frau Henne

Character Info: Sophia Henne is a woman in her 80s. She is mistreated and abused by her children. She is Herr Katze's sister.



Performer: Tatjana Cornij
Character: Vogel
Character Info: Vogel is a mysterious musician who narrates the story. She can talk directly to the audience. Sometimes Frau Esel can see and hear her.



Performer: Farhang Ghajar
Character: Young Actor 3
Character Info: The Young Actors play dozens of people the other characters meet along their journey.



Performer: Veronica Hortigüela
Character: Young Actor 2
Character Info: The Young Actors play dozens of people the other characters meet along their journey.



Performer: Dan Mousseau
Character: Young Actor 1
Character Info: The Young Actors play dozens of people the other characters meet along their journey.



Production Photos by Jae Yang

Set Description and Photos

The Mainspace stage is painted black. The back wall and sides are also black. On the stage are several large, colourful carpets. The carpets overlap each other to make a large rectangle.

Framing the front of the stage at the top and sides are several panels which look like paper cutting artwork. The background of the panels can light up in different colours.



Set Design by Nancy Perrin

About the Performance

Here are some things about this show you may find interesting or helpful as an audience member:

- *Bremen Town* has been in creation for over ten (10) years. Previous versions of it have been performed as readings or workshops and dozens of artists have helped shape it in that time. This is the first full scale production of the show.
- The show takes place in Germany. Many of the places named in the show are real places, including Bremen.
- The titles Herr and Frau which the characters use are the German equivalent of the English titles Mr. and Mrs. respectively.
- The performers walk through the audience at certain points of the performance. An usher will inform the people sitting close to where the actors will walk before the performance starts.

Plot Summary

Please note that this section contains spoilers.

Leaving Völksen:

- Vogel comes onstage. She plays the accordion and sings before talking.
- Use of word “shit”
- Frau Esel comes onstage.
- Several townsfolk arrive to talk to Frau Esel and then leave.
- Frau Esel explains that she has been fired from her job of 45 years and plans to travel to Bremen to live with her son.
- Use of phrase “piece of shit”
- A townsfolk mentions rumors of bandits. She describes humourously exaggerated graphic violence.
- A townsfolk disparages the elderly. Use of phrase “just end it” in reference to suicide.
- Use of ‘middle finger’ gesture.

In Hanover:

- Herr Hund comes onstage. He performs some magic tricks for an audience of children.
- Herr Hund tries to make a child disappear but the magic trick goes wrong and he ends up hitting the child with his magic wand making her cry. The violence is staged and no one is actually harmed.
- Frau Esel comes onstage.
- Herr Hund explains that the trains have stopped running, so Frau Esel will have to walk to her destination.
- Herr Hund tries to do a magic trick for Frau Esel, but she thinks he is trying to grope her chest.
- Two men enter and threaten then attack Herr Hund. The violence is staged and no one is actually harmed.
- Herr Hund tricks the two men into leaving.
- Herr Hund lays down and expresses a desire to die.
- Frau Esel hires Herr Hund as a travel guide to Bremen.
- Several townsfolk chase Herr Hund and Frau Esel out of town carrying prop weapons (knives and hammer).
- Use of phrase “son of a bitch”.

On the Road to Bremen:

- Frau Esel and Herr Hund talk as they travel.
- Frau Esel and Herr Hund meet a traveller along the road carrying a cage with a monkey inside.
- The traveller speaks to Frau Esel in a demeaning and misogynistic manner.
- Frau Esel says that the traveller’s mother should have beaten him as a child to instill respect in him.
- Herr Hund buys the caged monkey from the traveller as he leaves, but soon discovers that the monkey is dead.
- Vogel summarizes the monkey’s life as Herr Hund and Frau Esel bury him.

In Elche Fluss:

- Herr Katze comes onstage.
- Frau Esel and Herr Hund meet Herr Katze standing in an empty field.
- Herr Katze explains that he just buried his wife and child and is trying to return to the village he was born in.
- It is revealed that this field used to be the village Herr Katze was born in and that everyone he knew is probably dead.
- Herr Hund convinces Frau Esel to let Herr Katze travel with them.
- A bear suddenly comes onstage. Everyone is scared and screams. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- A man arrives onstage and attaches a rope to the bear. He is the bear's owner. The man has a prop gun.
- The man explains that the bear is named Honig. She is tamed and trained by him to dance.
- Honig the bear and her owner leave.

Back on the Road to Bremen:

- Performers walk through the audience stairs and walkway on the left side of the theatre.
- Frau Henne is pulled onstage with a rope tying her hands together by a man and woman who are arguing.
- It is revealed that the man and woman are Frau Henne's adult children, and the arguing gets louder. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- The man and woman decide to sell Frau Henne at market.
- Frau Esel, Herr Hund, and Herr Katze come onstage.
- Frau Henne explains that she is Herr Katze's sister.
- The man and woman threaten to burn Frau Henne if they can't sell her.

- Frau Esel tricks the man and woman into selling Frau Henne to her in exchange for only a button because Frau Henne is old and frail.
- As they travel, Frau Henne tells Herr Katze that she is the only member of their family left alive.

In the Forest:

- It starts to get dark as the day ends.
- The four (4) travellers stop to rest in the forest.
- Herr Hund, Herr Katze, and Frau Henne imagine drinking alcohol. No actual alcohol is used onstage and the performers mime drinking.
- They then try to sing a folk song while Herr Hund plays an accordion. The singing and playing are bad. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- Frau Esel gets frustrated with her companions for always pretending that everything is fine and she leaves them.
- Frau Esel finds a woman tied up in a sack and lets her out.
- The woman was travelling to start a new job when she was kidnapped. She is Frau Esel's replacement.
- Frau Esel gives the woman directions, but tricks her into telling her old employer that Frau Esel died a heroic but gruesome death.
- Frau Henne, Herr Katze, and Herr Hund find Frau Esel.
- Wolves howl in the distance as they all prepare to sleep in the forest. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- Frau Esel has a nightmare which reveals that she sold her newborn son to a talking bird in exchange for the promise of a good life.
- Frau Esel wakes up and finds Herr Hund, Frau Henne, and Herr Katze flying kites.
- They all resume travelling to Bremen.
- Frau Henne starts showing signs of dementia.

The Kite Festival:

- Everyone visits the Kite Festival.
- Slow flashing coloured lights are used while the characters are at the Kite Festival.
- Frau Esel sees Honig the bear and her owner.
- Honig the bear is forced to dance by her owner.
- Live music is played by the performers while Honig dances. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- Honig's owner beats her every time she messes up the dance. The violence is staged and no one is actually harmed.
- Honig's owner shoots her with a prop gun. Honig the bear dies.
- The gunshot sound is made with a tambourine by an onstage performer. No realistic gunshot sound effect is used. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- Frau Esel tells Herr Hund, Herr Katze, and Frau Henne that they must leave the Kite Festival.
- Herr Katze implies that he and Frau Henne will die soon, and so will not leave the festival.
- Frau Esel and Herr Hund argue and she leaves on her own.

In Bremen:

- Frau Esel arrives in Bremen.
- Frau Esel tries to find her son, who is named Arno, but no one knows where he is.
- Frau Esel discovers that Arno lives in the run down part of town.
- An unfamiliar man comes onstage. He is a performer playing Arno.
- Arno agrees to let Frau Esel live with him and shows her to a room.
- A bird guides Frau Esel outside to a kite.
- Frau Esel flies the kite.
- Vogel talks to the audience as the kite lifts Frau Esel into the air.

THE END

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this Fact Sheet or planning a visit to Tarragon Theatre please reach out.

We love feedback on our accessible programming, if there is anything you would like to share please send us an email or give us a call.

Heather Caplap

Education and Community Access Manager

Email: education@tarragontheatre.com

Phone: 416-536-5018 x 249

Natasha Parsons

Director of Patron Services

Email: patronservices@tarragontheatre.com

Phone: 416-531-1827 x 221

Address

[30 Bridgman Avenue](#)

[Toronto, Ontario, M5R 1X3](#)