

War Horse Production Timeline

1982

Michael Morpurgo is inspired to write his fifth book *War Horse* by a painting given to his wife by his father-in-law. The painting depicts a horse cavalry charging up a hill.

2004

National Theatre Associate Director Tom Morris, in searching for new projects to develop in collaboration with South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, has *War Horse* suggested to him by his mother.

2005

January: The *War Horse* project begins with a week-long workshop at the NT Studio. Tom Morris, along with Handspring artists Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones, work with a small group of actors to explore the dramatic potential of the novel and to experiment with simple puppetry.

In the months following the workshop, they continue to develop their ideas and new members join the team:

- Marianne Elliott becomes co-director with Tom Morris.
- Nick Stafford is commissioned to write the stage adaptation of the novel.
- Rae Smith becomes the production designer. She develops the overall design concept and designs the sets and costumes.

2006

November: The project returns to the NT Studio for a second workshop with Stafford's draft script and a horse puppet prototype built by Kohler. Led by Elliott and Morris, the actors explore the script and Stafford revises it. Watching the actors, Smith develops ways to sustain dramatic visual images through the story.

2007

March: The third workshop at the NT Studio involves staging the newest draft and further development of the production elements as the team move towards a full production.

August: The creative team, a cast of thirty actors, puppeteers and musicians and a full technical crew begin seven weeks of rehearsals.

October: *War Horse* opens at the NT's Olivier Theatre.

2009

March: *War Horse* begins an open-ended run at the New London Theatre in London's West End.

2011

February: The one-millionth patron to see the production in London meets with Michael Morpurgo and the puppets of Joey and Topthorn.

April: *War Horse* opens in New York at the Vivian Beaumont Theater at the Lincoln Center.

2012

January: Stephen Spielberg's film premieres after the director was inspired to create it by his visit to see the production in London.

February: *War Horse* opens at Princess of Wales Theatre, Toronto.

June: USA tour of *War Horse* begins in Los Angeles.

December: An Australasian production opens at Melbourne Arts Centre State Theatre and goes on to play Sydney, Brisbane and Auckland.

2013

April: Over 3 million patrons have seen the production worldwide.

September: UK tour starts in Plymouth and visits Birmingham, Salford, Edinburgh, Southampton, Dublin, Sunderland, Bradford and Cardiff.

October: A German language version of the production opens at Theater des Westens in Berlin.

