

A Muirton Nativity

by Dave & Ruth Rankin, 2017

Site specific contemporary take on the nativity seasoned with comedy.

Maria is the stronger more confident character.

Joe is a more comedy character, nervous and anxious but well meaning.

The Narrator leads the crowd through the drama, like a tour guide, offering commentary and quips.

Scene 1

[North Inch Community Campus]

Narrator: Once upon a time...

Crowd 1: Boring!

Narrator: It was the best of times, it was the...

Crowd 2: Pretentious!

Narrator: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree...

Crowd 3: too old

Narrator: *looking irritated* Well If you're looking for something less old fashioned...

In the year Theresa May was holding on to power, by her finger tips. Perth Theatre was finally reopened. And amazingly John Swinney was still MSP for North Perth. An Angel appeared to Maria.

Perthformance Mary & Joseph (mini me's) will appear in trad costumes as their parts read and act out the scene.

Narrator: Maria replied, blessed am I among women that the Lord should honour me with this miracle baby.

An Angel also appeared to Joseph, but he just screamed and hid.

The Angel said: Don't be afraid; if it makes you feel better, your not the father...

Now let's go and meet our young couple. Follow me!

holds up umbrella

Scene 2

[cross Rookery to community flat]

As we gather, a time-lapse video plays against the side of the community flat showing Maria and Joseph in selfies with Maria growing larger

The flat door opens, and a young couple exit into the street

Maria: I'm fine Joe, stop fussing. Yes, I've packed my things. Yes, I've got the baby clothes. And yes, I've updated my Facebook status to 'in labour'!

53 likes and counting!

Now where's the taxi you booked?

Joseph: Arghhh! The taxi, I knew there was something I forgot. It's too late, we'll never get one now, we'll have to take the bus. Arghh! I'm so sorry, I'm so, so, sorry! I'll phone my Dad!

Maria: It's ok, I think we've got time. The contractions are still far apart. And don't call your Dad! You always call your Dad! You're 30! It's time to sort out your own problems.

Joseph: You're right hun. Of course I need to fix this.

I'm going to be Dad myself soon. I'm sorry. I'm so, so ...

Maria: WOULD YOU PLEASE STOP APOLOGISING ALL THE TIME!! Come on!
Or we'll miss the bus and then you will have something to apologise for!

The couple walk off to the bus stop into town

Narrator: Aw, young love!

Let's follow them and see what happens next.

Scene 3

At the bus stop

Joe: Come on, come on, come on! *Looking at his watch and tapping his foot*
Where's that bus?

Maria: Calm down Joe. Don't wind me up, it's bad for the baby. *She looks at her belly lovingly while holding it*

He's bound to come soon.

Joe: He? How do you know the bus is a he?

Mary: It. I meant, it! The bus, dafty!

Have you got money?

Joe: Arghh!! I left my wallet on the table. I'll go back...

Maria: It's ok hun, I'm sure I've got money.

Now calm down.

Why don't you try some of that breathing we learned at antinatal class.

Have you thought anymore about names?

Joe: *looks deep in concentration for a moment* I don't suppose you've changed your mind about Jacob, like his grandad?

Maria: *now seeming a little irritated* Joe you know I'm not going to change my mind. It doesn't matter that it's your Dad's name. I just don't like it. It's too common! Every second boy in the school is called Jake.

Joe: Well I've actually thought of another name! *looks pleased with himself* Joshua! It means God saves.

Maria: Joshua *she smiles thoughtfully*

Narrator: Maria smiles because that's the name the Angel gave her. Joshua, or its Greek form Jesus, to be precise. Maria also smiled because she knew that with enough hints, she had helped Joe believe he'd thought of the name.

Look here comes their bus.

Maria and Joe get on the bus

Narrator: Now come with me to the next part of our story. This is quite a long walk, so lets make this the unofficial interval - But there's no toilets or icecream for that matter.

There might be drinks later, if we make it to the Mallard before last orders.

Leads the crowd across the carpark and down the cycle path

Narrator: *stops* On the right is the North Inch Golf Course. Many people believe that it is the true home of golf, when in the 12th century local children used to hit stones at anglers. It's also one of the only places, in Scotland, that you can play underwater Golf.

Here on the left is the oldest tree in Perthshire. Not many people know that it's even older than the Fortingall Yew. It's the last of ancient forest. Rumour has it, Ben and Holly come here on their holidays.

Narrator leads the crowd towards the bus stop back from town, near the church on Bute Dr.

Scene 4

Maria looks anxious and tired

Joe: I can't believe it!

Can you believe that?

I just can't believe it.

I can't believe they sent us away like that.

I mean...

I mean... I just can't believe that.

It's...

It's

Maria: Unbelievable?

Joe: Exactly! It's unbelievable!

Look at you.

Anyone can see you're fit to burst!

You're enormous! I mean you're huge!!

Maria: Hey!

Joe: *He continues, as if not noticing her response*

You're going to have this baby, any moment! And they sent us away.

"Come back later! When you're in proper labour!

Go for a walk! Or have some curry??"

I'm ragin Maria. Absolutely ragin!!

Maria: I'm not feeling to great about it myself Joe. But all this stress isn't helping. Just calm down will you! Anyone would think you're having this baby.

Joe: Well it's not easy for Dads, Maria. Everyone fusses about how you're doing. No one ever wants to know how I feel. No one gives me a seat on the bus or offers me extra pudding cos I'm eating for two!

Maria: Joe! Stop making a scene, there's people watching!

Give me a moment. I'm sore all over. I feel sick. I'm tired. My feet hurt, and my back, and my hips. I just need some quiet.

Maria looks like she might cry, but holds back tears

And I'm really really craving a gherkin dipped in nutella right now!

Narrator: Other forms of chocolate spread are available!

Maria: I just need a hug!

Joe: Oh Maria, you're right. I'm so, so so...

Maria: Not that again! JUST STOP TALKING!!!

Maria leans against a lamp post, she holds her back in pain

Maria: Joe. I don't think I can walk another step. In fact. I... Ahhh! What was that.

Maria looks down

Joe: Eh, you should have said you need the toilet!

Maria: Joe!... My waters have gone!

Joe he's coming! The baby's coming.

Joe: What!! What!! But the baby can't come yet! We're not even near the hospital! You can't have this baby.

Not now. Not here. Not on Bute Drive!!

Come on!

He tries to push Maria along

Maria: Joe, stop it! He's coming now. The baby is coming right now!

Joe: Ahh! What do I do? What do I do?

He tries his phone. But it has no battery. He runs to a nearby door, and knocks.

Joe: Help! help! My fiancé is about to have a baby.

The door opens, someone looks out but then slams the door. Joe is defeated and holds his head in his hands.

Maria: Joe! Joe, come on let's go to the shops someone there is bound to help us.

The two walk up to the shops in the centre of North Muirton.

Scene 5

At the shops, Joe rushes around the crowd shouting for help. But to no avail

Narrator: It seems that no-one will help Maria and Joe. That's the trouble with society today. There's no community. There's no trust. People live in their own wee selfish bubble without caring for their neighbour.

Maria: *to the narrator* Excuse me, excuse me! Please help, we need to get to hospital and we've got no phone.

Narrator: *Looking disgusted* That's not my problem is it! Do you mind! I'm working!

Joe: Maria, let's try the pub.

Maria: Ahh. Wait, I'm having another one. Hold my hand. *Joe takes Maria's hand and she leans her head against his chest. She breathes hard through it*

Ok Joe, go on, but be quick. Don't leave me here on my own.

Joe runs to the pub door, and bangs on it. The landlord comes out.

Joe: Mate, you've got to help me. My wife's about to have a baby. And we need to get to the Hospital. Can I use your pay phone?

Landlord shakes his head and walks off.

Narrator: *sarcastically* No room at the inn then?

Maria: *shouts* Joe! It's another one, come here!

Joe rushes over, and grabs her hand again. She leans against him again.

Joe looks around, while hugging Maria, then he sees an abandoned bike

Joe: Mary get on.

Joe helps Mary to sit side saddle on the bike

Narrator: Quick lets go!

Scene 6

The crowd follow the narrator down towards the church. Maria and Joe have gone a different direction. But come running towards the crowd

Maria: Joe. Look Joe. The church. The lights are on. We can try there.

Joe: Oh Maria, they're weird in that church. They won't help us.

Maria: Joe! Let's just try. I'm desperate.

Joe knocks on the church door. A woman arrives to open it

Joe: Thank goodness! We really need your help...

Church woman: Shhhhhh! *She raises her finger to cover her mouth*

We're in the middle of a service.

We're just reflecting about how God loves us so much,

and how he announces good news for the poor and the destitute.

Isn't that great!

Joe: Oh yes that is great... but we really need your help!

Church woman: Shhhhhh!

stage whisper They might be praying now.

Probably praying for people less fortunate than us.

People with problems, who need to know that God cares.

Joe: Well it's funny you should mention that...

Church woman: Shhhh!

Anyway, its Christmas Eve, don't you guys have somewhere better to be?

She shuts the door, smiling and waving and giving a thumbs up sign

Narrator: Well that's not good! The church people are too busy to help this couple in need.

But don't lose heart Maria & Joe. There may be some space round the back.

Scene 7

We follow Maria and Joe around the back to the church car park

Joe: Maria, there, let's shelter in the doorway. Sit down darling.

Joe helps Maria to the ground

Sorry, Maria. This is not how I hoped it would happen.

Maria groans in labour pain

Maria: Me neither Joe. I wish I'd read the small print. When the Angel told me I was going to deliver God's Saviour, I thought he'd come with at least an epidural.

Joe: You'll be ok love. Just squeeze my hand.

Lights down

Narrator: We've spared you the details, it's a family show. But let's go back to the beginning.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. Everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph went up to North Muirton, sorry, Bethlehem to register with Mary, his fiancé who was expecting a child. The time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger.

To the side of the church Mini Mary and Joseph appear, holding their baby.

The rest of perthformance slowly join them while singing [What a strange way to save the world]

End