



## PERFORMANCE

# The little sweep

*Benjamin Britten*

## Synopsis

---

The first performance of Benjamin Britten's *The Little Sweep* was in 1949, with a clearly didactic intent. It was aimed at a young audience and created to be performed by children. In the original opera, the audience also took part in the chorus of some of the songs. This participatory aspect is what makes this opera so attractive for Per Poc. *The Little Sweep* is also a tribute to all the children who, for centuries, have worked in terrible conditions cleaning chimneys. In fact, Britten was inspired to compose the opera after reading two very dark poems by William Blake. In the opera, the main character, Sam, escapes an ending that in real life is often too tragic: choking to death from the soot in the chimney. In Britten's opera, Sammy, who was sold by his father to the dark figures of Black Bob and Clem, has to climb up for the first time to clean the chimneys of the Brook family home. In the children's playroom, Sam has become stuck in the chimney and is rescued by the children of the family, together with their cousins, who are visiting. When they see the state of Sam, they decide to help him to escape his terrible destiny. In order to save Sam, they must hide him from the dark pair and from Miss Baggot, but they have the nursery-maid, Rowan on their side. Finally, Sam escapes hidden in a chest, thanks to the effort of a group of children who believe he deserves a better future. The stage setting proposed by Per Poc for the work by Britten wanted to highlight the difference between the adult world and childhood. This is why the adult characters are puppets. They wear a mask that contrasts with the transparency and naiveté of the children. Only Rowan, who is the link between the adult world and the children, sometimes acts as a puppet and sometimes without this mask. In terms of stagecraft, we wanted to fantasize with the idea of the story being told. Thus, all the characters and scenery are made of paper. Even the chimney suffers for all the children who have cleaned it and cries over the misfortune of the chimney sweeps. We hope everyone enjoys this opera as much as we have enjoyed it and learned from it.

«The chimney suffers for all the children who have cleaned it and cries over the misfortune of the chimney sweeps»

## Credits

---

Direcció d'escena: Santi Arnal

Ajudant de direcció: Anna Fernández

Creació plàstica: Aitana Bernabé

Vestuari, titelles i escenografia: Santi Arnal, Aitana Bernabé i Anna Fernández

Construcció llibre: Xarli

Disseny il.luminació: Raimon Rius

Producció: Anna Fernández

## Performance photos

---





**Per Poc · Puppet company · Barcelona**

Web: [perpoc.com](http://perpoc.com) · Email: [info@perpoc.com](mailto:info@perpoc.com)