

# Teachers' Resource Pack for Puppet Making Workshop ROD PUPPETS

## ROD PUPPETS IN THE MAKING Background Notes

Also of interest the teachers' notes from our other puppet shows

[http://www.schoolperformancetours.com.au/teachers\\_notes/tnpdfs/keepitclean.pdf](http://www.schoolperformancetours.com.au/teachers_notes/tnpdfs/keepitclean.pdf)

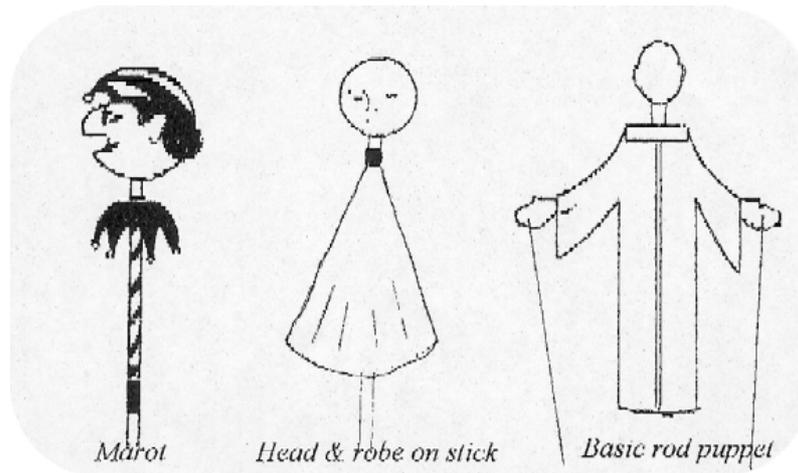
[http://www.schoolperformancetours.com.au/teachers\\_notes/tnpdfs/PuppetMaking.pdf](http://www.schoolperformancetours.com.au/teachers_notes/tnpdfs/PuppetMaking.pdf)

[http://www.schoolperformancetours.com.au/teachers\\_notes/tnpdfs/BelieveYouCan.pdf](http://www.schoolperformancetours.com.au/teachers_notes/tnpdfs/BelieveYouCan.pdf)

The rod puppet which will be covered in more detail later on, is as the name implies, operated by a rod either from below, behind or occasionally from the top. The marionette, or string puppet, is a puppet suspended from a control by strings. The puppet is then manipulated by the many move parts controlled by a multitude of strings to a very simple figure operated by just a few strings. Hand puppets or glove puppets are used as the term implies on the hand is inserted into the head. Shadow puppets are flat cut-out figures held against an illuminated screen by a wire or rod.

Rod puppets offer a wonderful potential for creativity and imagination in both presentation and design. They are suitable for small, intricate puppets and for large dramatic processional puppets. The rod puppet is manipulated with wooden or wire rods. The rods give a great deal of control and offer a large range of subtle and swift movements. The complexity of the puppet determines how many rods are to be used and thus how many operators it is to have.

It is used when a puppet is to be well in front or above the operators, when it is to be used by several people, when it is to be a large puppet, or when performers motor skills are limited a performance is required.



At its most simple a rod puppet is just a “marot” (the ‘Fools Stick’ carried by a jester in medieval times). Basically a head upon a stick or a head and a robe without arms or legs. However it is common practise to have a form of body under the clothing and arms attached with at least one arm operated by rod.

Their use is not limited to one style or country of origin and are quite often combined with a hand puppet style to produce for example, Miss Piggy or Kermit the Frog from the Muppets. Professor Richard Teeschner of Austria considerably influenced the development of rod puppetry on Europe from 1925 to 1948. His puppets had a very complicated system of control strings within the supporting rod and were inspired by the Javanese Wayang Golek figures. In Germany a puppet Theatre was founded in Cologne in 1802 which used and still uses a very distinct style of rod puppet. The rod puppet is supported by an iron rod which stands on the floor, one arm is controlled by a wire and the other hangs loose.

In Asia one of the most famous types of rod Puppet is “Wayang Golek”, the rod puppets of the Island of Java, Indonesia. "Wayang" is a general term meaning theatrical performance and is qualified by a further word defining the particular type of puppet. "Wayang Golek" means wooden rod puppets. Probably coming from Bengal with the spread of Hinduism.

Rod Puppets as stated earlier on can be as large or as small as imagination and requirements dictate. They can be human in form, animal or of nothing known on this earth. They can be as simple or as complicated as skills and materials allow.

Further Reading The puppetry Handbook by Anita Sinclair. An invaluable resource for all sorts of puppet building. (Richard Lee Publishing, PO Box

828, Castlemaine, Vic, 3450 ISBN No 0-909431-04-3)

The Complete Book of Puppet Theatre by David Currell. A comprehensive guide to puppetry. (A & C Black publishers Ltd, ISBN No 0-7136-2429-9)

The Art of the Puppet by Bill Baird. A history puppetry by master puppeteer. (Ridge Press Inc)

The Australian Puppeteer. A quarterly publication of UNIMA Australia, Australia's leading puppetry organisation. For information contact: Australian Puppeteer, PO Box 208, Elsernewick, Vic, 3184

## **ROD PUPPETS IN THE MAKING**

### **Objectives**

To look at the history, principles, construction and manipulation of rod puppets and therefor encourage the development of imagination, communication, self expression and creative skills of the participants

### **Requirements:**

Pencils, erasers, two empty cardboard tubes such as toilet rolls, foil or cling wrap tubes, scissors. If the school has thin coloured cardboard, clear sticky tape, staplers, it will help otherwise they can be provided. All other materials and tools will be provided. A room where a mess (ie cardboard off cuts etc.) can be made and easily cleaned up. A classroom is fine.

### **Curriculum areas covered by “Rod Puppets in the making”**

Creative Arts. Through the actual creation and manipulation of the rod puppet

Literacy. Through the learning of new words associated with puppetry in general and rod puppetry in particular. Communications through the enactment of a scenario.

### **Suggested Preparation:**

1. Discussion with students about the rod puppets, what they are, how they operate (See background notes). Research on the Internet or in encyclopaedias. Look for examples of well known rod puppets such as some of the Muppets or the Ferals. Watch a video of one of these programs paying attention to the puppets and how they might be operated.

2. Wordbanks to do with puppetry can be built up

Areas to consider may be:

Puppetry - Strings puppets Rod Puppets Theatre Mask Mime

Rod Puppet - Head Arms Torso Control rods Kermit the frog

Construction -[Joints String Cardboard

Movement - Manipulate Action Charters Entry Exit Stillness

## **Workshop Outline**

An exciting hands on puppetry workshop approximately 80-90 minutes that explores the construction of a rod puppet from simple readily available materials that is then brought to life by the students.

1. A brief introduction to puppets: what they are, a display of different types of puppet and the mechanics of how they work, their different character traits and how each puppet has a different voice given it by the puppeteer.
2. Workshop facilitator will demonstrate an example of the rod puppet that the participants are going to make.
3. Students make their own puppet from cardboard and dowel. The steps that need to be taken to make the rod puppet will be clearly demonstrated at this point. This will assist the students to work at their own pace and enable the workshop leader and teacher to pay individual attention to students.
4. Students prepare and rehearse a play in groups of three written and supplied by workshop facilitator.
5. Groups present their play to the rest of the group.

### **Teacher's Role: - before session begins**

1. Form students into groups of six, sitting around "group tables". This is to enable students to share equipment easily. Students will work in groups of three for the enactment of the plays.
2. Have 3 or 4 spaces clear in different areas of the room where the puppet "bits and pieces" can be stationed.

### **Teacher's role: - during session**

To actively participate in the workshop and assist with the class management.

<b><u>Materials used</u></b>	<b><u>Tools used:</u></b>
Coloured cardboard (Supplied) String (supplied) Cardboard tubes Dowel (supplied) Masking tape (supplied) Wooden barbecue skewers (supplied)	Scissors (will supply some) Pencils Erasers Coloured pencils or textas Staplers (supplied) Hole punches (supplied)

Clear sticky tape (supplied)	
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### **Outcomes:**

At the completion of this workshop participants will be able to:

Identify a rod puppet

Build a rod puppet from cardboard with moving joints

Manipulate a rod puppet

Know and identify different types of puppet and how they work

Work in small groups to perform a short rod puppet play.

### **Learning Experiences**

**Students will engage in learning experiences during the course of the unit that may include:**

Turning a two dimensional material into a three dimensional shape

Drawing and cutting out of objects

Team work

Use of imagination

Co ordination

### **Suggested follow ups:**

1. Make more puppets and practise technical skills using following steps.

Steps:

\* Explain principles of building rod puppet

\* Build rod puppet following example in background notes

\* How to manipulating puppet

2. Write a procedure for the making and operating of a rod puppet

3. Describe the character that the student made. It's name, traits etc.

4. Devise a puppet Theatre for the rod puppets

5. Invent a narrative or write a script.

### **Things students need to have reinforced:**

1. How to manipulate their puppet

2. How to enter and exit the Theatre

3. To think of how their puppets might move

4. How their figures interact with others

5. To see their own puppets from both the front and back of the Theatre.