



TEACHER'S KIT

Activities written by Sarah Duffus

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am interested in activities that we might undertake in our spare time as adults that are close to puppetry. Racing slot cars is one of those activities, like model railroading or racing remote control cars. Though the task may be to control a vehicle in such a way so it wins a race, we are still bringing an inanimate object to life. It requires us in some way to imagine ourselves as a tiny driver sitting in the car or as an all-powerful giant that has control of everything in her world. This task of the imagination is something we naturally undertake as children every day. When we engage in the above activities as adults, we engage with the ability of the miniature to transport us back to our childhood, where our small selves felt large as we played with tiny versions of big things like cars, or humans in the form of dolls.

I don't think we experience the same return to childhood when we undertake the task of controlling a car in a video game. The virtual world lacks a physicality that we find in scale modelling or remote control. This physicality is being lost from children's programs such as *Thomas the Tank Engine*, *Bananas in Pajamas* and *Fireman Sam* to their detriment, with characters reduced to existing solely in a virtual world. This is why we are starting to see a return to this sort of physicality in film, most notably in the new *Star Wars* Episode, which is reportedly filled with puppets, scale models and masks. We can all unconsciously identify an object on screen that we would be able touch in real life, aiding us in judging the authenticity of the world it is apart of, no matter how fantastical that world may be. This physicality is still thankfully very present in the theatre (even when there are screens involved!)

It has been great to work with two strong female characters in Sean Monro's play and I hope audiences enjoy watching Red and Gran go to head to head as Red attempts to win the Grinalong Classic. Puppetry is the most collaborative of art forms and the creation of this show has totally relied upon each artists' understanding of all the theatrical forms at work being present and embracing them wholeheartedly.

SHOW OVERVIEW

Welcome to the town of Grinalong!

Grinalong was once famous for the car race, The Grinalong Classic. Fifty years ago the race stopped when a wolf that lived in nearby Tangled Woods destroyed racing cars and the drivers fled in terror. Now, the new Mayor has a plan to bring back Grinalong's glory days, and re-launches the race. But it soon becomes obvious that he is more interested in furthering his own ambitions and lining his pockets than helping the town. And he doesn't mind hurting Red and Gran in the process.

Red and Gran fight for survival, relying on their wit, determination and cunning to overcome the Mayor and win The Classic. Environmental and civic responsibility, the survival of small towns and the strength of women, young and old, are all themes that are explored via the medium of slot car racing!

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Sam Routledge
Writer: Sean Monro
Composer: Heath Brown
Lighting and AV Designer: Jason James
Puppet Maker and Set Dresser: Jill Munro
Production Manager: Andrew MacDonald
Slot car track made by Mr Slotcar

Original Cast: Bryony Geeves, Maeve Mhairi MacGregor and Thomas Pidd

THE ROLES OF THE CREATIVE TEAM

The Director

The Director oversees the play and the puppetry and makes sure that all elements of the production (script, design, puppets, music, performers, lights, sound and other technical requirements) come together to communicate the ideas and the story to the audience.

The Writer

The Writer develops the script, often in consultation with other members of the creative team. The script includes not only the text for the performance but also stage directions and visual descriptions.

The Designer

Because puppetry is a visual art form, design is incredibly important. The designer is not only working on the set and costumes but also the puppets. Often the designers will make 'mock-up' puppets for early rehearsals, so that problems with manipulation and movement can be identified and overcome early. Terrapin designers also have the challenge of making a set that is quick to set up and able to fit in the touring van.

The Composer

The Composer creates new music to help the audience understand the story and what is happening on stage. Music helps create atmosphere and mood.

The AV and Lighting Designer

The AV Designer helps the Director to source the software, hardware and apps to make the various bits of digital equipment work together. The Lighting Designer creates the lighting effects for performances that will take place in theatres.

The Performers

Puppetry is a very technical art form. Not only do puppeteers have to think about what the puppets are doing but their own bodies are also choreographed. The puppeteers often work in confined spaces, so the way their bodies move together is important. Performing is a very physical art form and requires the performers to be fit and strong.

ABOUT TERRAPIN

Established for over 35 years, Terrapin is the centre of excellence for contemporary puppetry in Australia creating puppetry-based performances for all ages.

Telling sophisticated stories of humour and pathos, the company embraces new technologies whilst remaining true to the wonder and illusion resident in the age-old craft of puppetry. In its productions, the company aims to inspire families by encouraging them to express the power of their collective imagination through inventive play with the objects and devices that surround them.

Terrapin injects skills and programs into the Tasmanian community, supporting and developing artists and touring nationally and internationally.

Terrapin has created over 73 productions, all of which have toured across Tasmania, and many have toured into mainland Australia. The company has completed 15 international tours to countries as far afield as North America: the USA and Canada; Europe: the UK, Ireland, Denmark, The Netherlands and Hungary; Asia: China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Malaysia; and New Zealand.

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Production Manager:	Andrew MacDonald	Australia
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ACTIVITIES

She's a Winner!

Gran is a self sufficient, independent business woman who is mechanically savvy. She supports both herself and Red. Age is not a barrier to her. Celebrate some winning women.

- What women do you admire:
 - a) from your own life?
 - b) from Australia?
 - c) from history?

There are some listed here: <http://www.amightygirl.com/character-collection>

Gran makes the journey from mechanic to mayor.

- What two occupations would you choose for yourself? Why?
- Make a poster with your two chosen careers.



Red achieves her goals through a combination of listening to instruction, practicing, observation, and thinking outside of the square. Like Gran, age is not a barrier to her.

- Check out these inspiring young women:
 - a) The youngest Nobel prize winner Malala Yousafzai.
<http://www.biography.com/people/malala-yousafzai-21362253>
 - b) Jessica Watson sailed solo around the world at 16.
<http://www.jessicawatson.com.au>
 - c) Brittany Wenger was in year 10 when she built a breast cancer app.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcSWmoiLhzY>
<https://www.google.com.au/#q=brittany+wenger+ted>

A Mighty Girl website has dozens of great books about inspiring women.
<http://www.amightygirl.com/books/history-biography>

Humans, Animals and Towns.

Imagine you are running for mayor.

- What key points would you address in your town or city? Think of two things you would love to change, two things you admire about your city/town, and two reasons why you would make a good mayor. Be as serious or as funny as you like.
- In groups, brainstorm characteristics you would make a good mayor. Choose one group member to run for mayor. Together write a short speech stating why your representative should be elected mayor. Present speeches to class.



Red is determined to win the Grinalong classic because she doesn't want to leave her town, her home or her friends.

- What is special about your town, home and friends? Fashion these thoughts into an individual or class poem.

Red understood the point of view of the wolf.

- In pairs, make up a short scene. One person plays a reporter who interviews a character from the Red Racing Hood story and get their thoughts on this year's Grinalong Classic.

Noise pollution.

Noise pollution is the disturbing or excessive noise that may harm the activity or balance of human or animal life. The source of most noise pollution worldwide is caused mainly by machines, transportation systems, motor vehicles, aircraft and trains.

Noise pollution is what upsets the wolf. Red's solution is sound baffling (a tea cosy over the car). A sound baffle is a construction or device which reduces the strength (level) of airborne sound. Sound baffles are a fundamental tool of noise mitigation, the practice of minimizing noise pollution or reverberation.

- Research how a muffler works. <http://auto.howstuffworks.com/muffler.htm>
- In groups come up with some solutions to noise pollution from aircraft or trucks. The solutions can be both real or creative.
- What other forms of pollution cause harm to animals? What possible solutions can you see for these?
- How else do cars affect our environment? Research the benefits of electric cars.

As Mayor of Grinalong, Gran closes the road into Tangled Woods to protect the wolf.

- Brainstorm some ways we can help protect native animals in cities and towns.

Wolves

Wolves are predators that live primarily in wilderness and remote areas.

- Here is a map of wolf distribution.
<http://www.canids.org/species/view/PREKLD895731>
- What do wolves need to survive?
- What climates are they found in?
- Do they live in packs, with families or alone?

There are no wolves in Australia.

What predators are found in Australia?

- In groups, research an Australian predator and present them in the style of Steve Backshall, *Deadly 60*.
<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/wildlife/2013/03/australias-dangerous-animals-the-top-30/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNHuoP8AwHA>



According to the myth, the twin brothers Romulus and Remus, who founded the city of Rome, were suckled by a wolf when they were babies.

- A dingo is a native Australian canine. Make up a myth where a dingo is the hero, rather than a predator. Think about what characteristics the dingo possesses that might be used positively.

Grinalong is a fictitious town in Australia. How the wolf ended up here is not explained in the play.

- In groups of three or four make a short story showing how the wolf found itself in this town and on its own. Draw a map to chart its journey.

The wolf has been widely used in many forms in heraldry during the Middle Ages.

Though commonly reviled as a livestock predator, the wolf was also considered a noble and courageous animal, and frequently appeared on the Arms and crests of numerous noble families. It typically symbolised the rewards of perseverance in long sieges or hard industry.

- Design your own flag or crest, either with a wolf on it or another animal you admire.

Little Red Riding Hood

Red Racing Hood was inspired by the story Little Red Riding Hood. Compare and contrast the original story of Little Red Riding Hood and Red Racing Hood.

- Individually, using a venn diagram, or
- In groups, with each group focusing on one character ie. Wolf, Red, Gran, or Plod.

Compare the traditional story with a modern version.

- The original Brothers Grimm version:
<http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/LittRed.shtml>
- A more modern but still traditional version:
<http://www.dltk-teach.com/rhymes/littlered/1.htm>



There are many stories and fables that contain wolves.

- Compare fictitious wolves with real wolves.
- See how reintroducing wolves helped save a famous park.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI5l8aumEWE>
- More information about wolves myths and legends:
www.wolfcountry.net/stories/

Set Design

The Red Racing Hood set works on two scales.

It is both Gran and Red's house and the town of Grinalong. In the house scale there is an old blue phone. In the town scale, the phone is the Police station. In the house scale, there is the bread bin. In the town scale, the bread bin is Gran's garage.

- Take five photos of small objects from the classroom or playground. Use these photos to create a short comic strip where the objects appear large.

The set utilises real time video to change the viewing perspective and allow the audience to see smaller or hidden details.

- In groups create a short story of 2-3 scenes. Storyboard the scenes showing how you would cut between two alternate perspectives.

The set is made up of many everyday household items such as teacups, teapots, toys and tools.

- Collect a box of household items and play the game "What is it?" Students stand in a circle. One at a time, a student takes an item from the box. The teacher, or another student asks, "what is it?". The student offers an idea and action for the item, that is clearly not its intended use.



The set contains a working slot car track.

The slot car size is in a scale of 1:32. This scale means that for every 1 inch (2.54 cm) on the slot car there are 32 inches (81.28 cm) on a full size automobile.

- In the classroom or playground, measure out two cars using the 1:32 scale where the slot car is 4 inches long and 2 inches wide.
- Working in pairs measure the height of each other. Work out how small a model of each class member would be using the 1:32 scale.

The cars run on electricity.

Power for the car's motor is carried by metal strips next to the slot, and is picked up by contacts alongside the guide flag (a swiveling blade) under the front of the slot car. The voltage (speed) is varied by a resistor in the hand controller. If the car comes out of the slot it loses all power. Diagram:

<http://spraysbymac.com/wpcontent/uploads/2013/01/SlotcarElecCircuit.png>

- Imagine a town where slot cars have replaced petrol cars. What changes would you see? Would you need to have any new road signs? Draw or make them.
- Some countries have started using electric ambulances. They are lightweight, pollution free and can travel some places that heavier vehicles can't reach. Imagine you could create a new sort of police car or fire engine. It would run on a wonderful new fuel, which could be real or creative. What is the fuel? How does it work? Does it have any pollution? Is it silent or loud? Draw some diagrams to show how it works.
- Make a balloon powered car and have a competition to see whose car travels the furthest. Balloon powered car instructions:
<http://www.nationalstemcentre.org.uk/elibrary/resource/1203/balloon-powered-car>

