

Monkey Baa

**Teacher Resource
Materials**

FOX

*By Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks
Created for the stage by Monkey Baa in
collaboration with Siren Theatre Co*

**Learning experiences
for
Year 3-6 students**

Vision

To be recognised nationally and internationally as a leader in the creation of meaningful and innovative theatre for young people, and to engage young audiences through the telling of Australian stories that entertain, inspire and encourage a greater understanding of the world and their place in it.

Monkey Baa

Theatre for Young People Ltd

Monkey Baa was established in 1997 by three actors, Tim McGarry, Sandra Eldridge and Eva Di Cesare. Based in Sydney, the company has achieved critical acclaim for its work and today enjoys a national reputation for producing quality theatre programs for young people. Australian stories adapted from established literature from well-profiled authors are presented with high production values. Monkey Baa's relationship with its audience is distinctive and many young people (including some from isolated areas) have the advantage of sharing the skills of Monkey Baa's creative team in comprehensive and inventive workshop programs.

Our **Mission** is to produce high quality theatre programs for young people, their families, teachers and communities throughout Australia and internationally.

Monkey Baa's goals are:

- To write and create high quality new Australian works for young audiences nationally and internationally.
- To develop and present quality theatre workshop programs accessible to all young people.
- To develop creative partnerships with other arts organisations.
- To achieve a financially stable organisation through diversified income streams – government (federal, state, local), corporate, philanthropic and self-generated.
- To develop and maintain a robust organisation led by highly skilled artists and administrators.

Monkey Baa has adapted, produced and toured Tim Winton's **The Bugalugs Bum Thief**, Gillian Rubinstein's **The Fairy's Wings**, Morris Gleitzman's **Worry Warts**, Andrew Daddo's **Sprung!** Stephen Michael King's **Milli, Jack and the Dancing Cat**, Susanne Gervay's **I Am Jack**, Sonya Hartnett's **Thursday's Child** and Jackie French's **Hitler's Daughter**. The script for **Hitler's Daughter** was published by Currency Press and the theatre production received the **2007 Helpmann Award for Best Children's Presentation**.

In 2010 Monkey Baa in association with Siren Theatre Co, will premiere Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks' incredible story **FOX** and will remount their highly successful production of **Hitler's Daughter**. The company will also creatively develop a theatrical script based on Duncan Ball's **Emily Eyefinger** which will premiere in July 2011.

For more information about Monkey Baa please visit www.monkeybaa.com.au

Monkey Baa isn't just about putting good books on stage. It shows kids how ideas and characters can be translated from one art form into another, keeping the essence of the book but refining it. It's an adventure of the mind and spirit. It makes kids think as well as feel.

JACKIE FRENCH

Fox

A picture book by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks

Fox by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks is an award-winning magical picture book combining stunning images with an inspiring and thought provoking text. The stage adaptation of this text combines a haunting operatic score and breathtaking physicality through which the heart will soar as friendship triumphs.

Magpie is injured in a bushfire but she discovers that riding atop her friend, one-eyed Dog, as he runs through the bush, feels almost the same as flying. “FLY, DOG, FLY! I will be your missing eye and you will be my wings.”

Fox arrives and tempts Magpie with an even faster ride. Desire, loyalty and friendship become confused and after an exhilarating ride, Fox dumps Magpie far out in the desert. Abandoned and alone Magpie begins the long journey home.

Teacher Resources Materials

Monkey Baa has developed a set of support materials to enhance attendance at this wonderful production. The materials focusing on the integration of creative arts in the classroom back-up existing teacher resources and include both pre and post performance activities. They are designed to prepare students, engage and extend their thinking in regard to the performance and connect to a broader range of curriculum areas.

The teacher notes target students in Stages 2-3 as well as providing suggestions for exploration within drama and English to Higher School Certificate level. Focusing primarily on engaging students in the production and story via the creative arts (drama, dance, music and visual art), activities are presented in a step-by-step format allowing teachers with minimal or no experience in the arts to implement them successfully.

The key themes addressed within the production include:

- love and belonging
- temptation
- risk and betrayal
- friendship

These materials are designed to be ‘teacher-friendly’, guiding you through step by step learning experiences. While all activities provide specific detail, minor adaptations should be made depending on the specific cohort, and expectation for ‘product’ and depth of discussion. In addition, suggested classroom management strategies for doing drama in the classroom have been included to assist with the implementation of the creative arts activities in this resource kit.

Classroom Management Suggestions for Drama

Drama, along with other areas of the creative arts, can be used to support learning through integration with a variety of key learning areas. These opportunities provide students the opportunity to explore ideas and issues in a meaningful and realistic manner. Drama, in particular, has been considered to assist with the development of self esteem, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and in the development of focus and team building through fun activities.

Incorporating drama in school classrooms presents a number of challenges for teachers, but reap rewards for all involved when attempted. The following suggestions are designed to provide some food for thought in relation to doing drama in the classroom and are intended as a guideline only.

When doing drama in the classroom:

- **ensure a clear work space is available for the drama activity.** If desks can not be moved in the classroom, try to use the hall or a contained outside open area.
- **talk to the students about the creation of a ‘safe space’.** In this space students don’t laugh at each other, but support and encourage (forming a circle at the beginning and end of a session or sitting with eyes closed are simple ways to focus students for a drama session)
- **incorporate a reflection session at the end of every drama activity.** This allows the students to consider what has been done and take more meaning away from the activity than it just being fun (which it will be!)
- **be firm with the students.** If a student does not follow instructions, they should be removed from the activity. This will allow the other students to see that you as the teacher are assisting in maintaining the safe space for them to work.
- **always begin every drama session with a warm-up.** This could include a focus activity, drama game or pure physical warm-up. There are good books and websites available with suggestions of warm-up activities and drama games.
- **don’t be afraid to participate in the activities yourself.** The students like to see you as the teacher taking a role in an activity. This can also allow you to help any improvisations or role plays flow and move forward more easily. (Dorothy Heathcote’s work on Mantle of the Expert and Teacher in Role discusses this in more detail).

If possible, conduct a ‘risk assessment’ with your class before embarking on any physical work. As a class it would be good to discuss the personal, group, physical, and psychological risks inherent in the working space. Together, the class could devise the measures that would help to minimize these risks. This collaboration would help the students to realise that physical work can actually be dangerous, and encourage them to take responsibility for themselves, the group, and the space in which they are working.