

Overview of performance

In *Boats* we see two central characters, Jof and Nic, telling stories of their lives and journeys. The performance plays on the traditions of 'spinning a yarn' over a cuppa, and that of sailors telling each other stories to pass the time and get through tough times. Through story telling the characters reflect on their lives, inspire each other, face their fears, encourage each other to move forward and accept their past and themselves.

The performers 'unpack' the show as they have a cup of tea. Basic tea props become part of the story. The puppetry in the performance is primarily object theatre, where every day objects are put together and animated to create a puppet. Sometimes objects are used as subtle references, such as a tea cup being used as a crow's nest on a boat, and sometimes they are used to create central characters.

The set consists of a table covered in tea cups, a kettle and some sound equipment. As the show progresses, a sail is attached and the table gradually transforms into a boat. The sound equipment is clearly visible as sound is an essential element in the performance. Throughout the performance, the performers build sound scapes looping their voices and other sounds from objects.

During the creative development of the show, the performers, director, designer and writer used objects found in boats to find characters and puppets. They used the motions and impetus of the sea as well as songs and narratives of the sea to inspire improvisations and movements in the performance. The performers would explore the push and pull of the tide as a physical energy between them and use the physical qualities of objects such as the sail and rope as character traits to drive certain scenes.



After the show: some suggested activities

The following activities are based on ideas/concepts from the performance and may be used with a range of students. Activities are divided into two general age groups, however some activities are interchangeable between younger and older students.

References

Dalton, J., 1990, *Adventures in Thinking: creative thinking & co-operative talk in small groups*, Thomas Nelson, Australia

Mallan, K., 1991, *Children as storytellers*, Primary English Teaching Association, Australia

Useful Websites

<http://www.maritimetas.org/> (Tasmanian Maritime museum)

The Tasmanian Maritime museum, based in Sullivans Cove, Hobart, offers excursion options for schools. Contact Peta Knott for further information.

The website includes a section of information and on-line activities for schools and students. Topics include communication at sea; navigation and mapping; light houses; shipwrecks; whaling; and transport.

<http://www.mi.mun.ca/mi-net/topics.htm> (Marine institute networked educational topics)

This website offers on-line activities and information for students K-12

<http://www.woodenboatcentre.com> (The Wooden Boat Centre, based in Franklin, Tas)

The Wooden Boat Centre is dedicated to the history of Tasmania's association with the sea, ships and ship building, and offers interactive tours of the discovery centre, including the Wooden Boat School.

<http://www.woodbridge.tased.edu.au/MDC>

(home page of Marine discovery centre, based in Woodbridge, Tas)

<http://www.tcmall.com/nauticalknowhow/GLOSSARY.htm>

(Boating Basics Glossary of terms)

The website provides an A-Z of boating terminology.

<http://www.boatsdepot.org/boats/types> (information on different types of boats)

<http://www.contemplator.com/sea/index.html> (Sea music and lyrics)

<http://www.folsoms.net/knots> (information on nautical knots and knot tying)

www.terrapin.org.au

www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/ (puppetry homepage)



Production Credits

Director	Frank Newman
Writer	Finegan Kruckemeyer
Set and Puppet Design	Greg Methé
Costume Design	Roz Wren
Composer	Matthew Fargher
Original Cast	Quinn Griggs and Jeff Michel
Education Kit Activities	Melinda Mills-Hope



Terrapin Management

Artistic Director	Frank Newman
General Manager	Kevin O’Loughlin
Production Manager	Andrew MacDonald

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 DESIGNERS:

Because puppetry is a visual art form, design is incredibly important. The designers are 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 Terrapin 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 PERFORMER:

Puppetry is a very technical art form – a lot like dance. 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. Like dance, puppetry is a very physical art form and requires the performers to be fit and strong.

Writer Finegan Kruckemeyer

Finegan (29) has had 48 commissioned plays performed, and in 2011 fifteen plays have seasons on five continents. His plays have been part of 31 (inter)national festivals, three Sydney Opera House seasons, an Abbey Theatre (Dublin) season, and a New Victory (off-Broadway, New York) season. In 2010, *The Girl Who Forgot to Sing Badly* (The Ark/Theatre Lovett) was the first children's work ever selected for the prestigious Re:Viewed programme (Dublin Theatre Festival).

Finegan received the 2010 Rodney Seaborn Playwrights' Award, 2009 AWGIE Award for best Australian children's play, 2009 Young Tasmanian Artist Award, 2008 Best Children's Theatre Playwright, 2007 Best Playwright Oscarts, 2006 Jill Blewett Playwright's Award, and 2002 Colin Thiele Scholarship. In 2010, *Man Covets Bird* (Slingsby) received the Best New Work Ruby Award, and Best Work (Comedy) Curtain Call Award.

Finegan is part of the ASSITEJ Next Generation, 25 young theatre makers selected worldwide, and spoke at the 2008 ASSITEJ World Festival and Congress (Australia) and Take Off Festival (England), the 2009 Schäxpir Festival (Austria) and Imagine Festival (Scotland), and 2010 ITYARN Children's Theatre Conference (Argentina). He is an invited presenter at this year's ASSITEJ World Festival and Congress, and ITYARN Conference (Denmark/Sweden).

For Terrapin, Finegan has also written *When the Pictures Came*, *Con Artists*, *The Falling Room and the Flying Room* and *Helena and the Journey of the Hello*. Examples of his work can be seen at <http://www.doollee.com/PlaywrightsK/kruckemeyer-finegan.html>, and www.fineganworks.com.



Composer Matthew Fargher



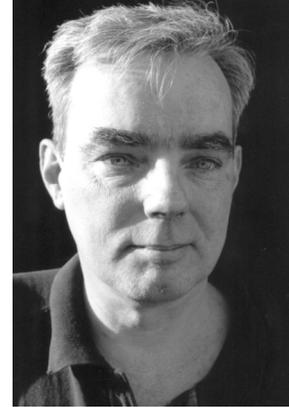
Matthew has composed original music for Terrapin Puppet Theatre (*Touch the Air*, *Boats*, *The Gatekeeper*), Marrugeku's *Mimi*, *Crying Baby* and *Burning Daylight*, Circus Oz, Australian Theatre for Young People, Australian Theatre of the Deaf, Sidetrack, Belvoir Street Theatre, Kickstart Arts (*Home Truths*, *Every Wrinkle Tells a Story*, *A Cat Called Bird*), various festivals and events, as well as numerous films and animation projects. He has recently created *Origins* with musicians and storytellers from Hobart, Melbourne and Broome. As a musician he toured in *Diary of a Madman* with Geoffrey Rush and Belvoir Street Theatre.

Matthew has worked nationally and internationally since the early 1980s and has been resident in Tasmania for 8 years. Matthew has worked with a wide range of musical styles and technologies in his 20 years as a composer. His composition often uses custom designed instruments and manipulated found-sound along side contemporary forms (Hip Hop, Reggae, World, Roots and Blues). He has also been involved in location specific sound design, instrument making, and soundscape design for organisations such as the Art Gallery of South Australia, Mountain Festival Hobart, Utungan Percussion, and the Works Festival Glenorchy. He has coordinated music for many festivals and events including The Works Festival, Addison Road Community Centre's Vox and the Choral Sea for the Paralympic Arts Festival Sydney 2000.

Matthew is currently a youth and community producer in Tasmania working with aboriginal elders and emerging artists as well as young rock bands, vocalists and hip hop artists producing original work for audio and video, and teaching song writing and audio design. He has established and runs a community access recording studio for the Pulse Youth Health Centre in Glenorchy, Hobart. In this context he also produces under the alias BJ Bedlam.

Designer Greg Methé

Greg is a designer/maker who completed a Bachelor of Environmental Design at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education in 1981. Greg moved from architectural projects to theatre-based design and has worked with a range of companies including Salamanca Theatre Company, Zootango Theatre Company and the State Theatre Company (South Australia). Greg is one of the most experienced and skilled designers for puppet theatre in Australia. His dedication and skill in his work with Terrapin since it started has had a lasting influence on the artistic development of the Company.



He has worked on nearly 100 productions as designer/maker and has toured to six countries as tour manager/technician. He has also worked on many non-theatrical commissions including interpretation centres and the Tasmanian Float for the Centenary of Federation Parades in Sydney and Melbourne.

Greg was a member of the Australia Council's Drama committee from 1993-6. He chaired the committee and was a member of the Performing Arts Board from 1994-6. He has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Salamanca Arts Centre since 1996 and President until 2004.

Costume Designer Roz Wren



Roz studied retail display and design and worked as a window dresser at Jaeger and Selfridges in London for 10 years. During that time she designed and made sets, props, jewelry and wild fancy dress costumes for herself and friends.

After moving to Hobart she made costumes for Theatre Alfresco's (now Big Monkey) production of *Robin Hood* in the Botanical Gardens and has subsequently been their principal designer/maker for the past 12 years.

In 2000 Roz received an Emerging Theatre Artists grant and was mentored by Greg Methé during her work on Terrapin's production of *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*. Roz has taught Display and Design at TAFE, has run numerous puppet-making workshops for Terrapin, and has created sets, props, costumes or puppets for many Hobart's theatre companies. Recently she worked on Salamanca Arts

Centre's *Dream Masons*, was the costume designer for the Tasmanian Theatre Company's *Bombshells*, and for Terrapin was co-designer of *Con Artists*, and designer for *Explosion Therapy*.

Original Cast: Quinn Griggs

Quinn began training with Is Theatre while completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree at UTAS in 2002. Since then he has performed and trained with Is Theatre, Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Festival of Voices, AboutFace, The Mountain Festival, corporate performances and also presented a variety of independent works.

From Shakespeare to Moliere to contemporary physical theatre, Quinn's skills have seen him operate through a wide base of performance styles, and he has enjoyed playing many diverse and challenging roles. Learning and working with many talented Tasmanian artists, including Jesse Griffin, Ryk Goddard, John Bolton, Neil Cameron, Justus Neumann and Tania Bosak, Quinn is just as happy improvising performance pieces or working to structure of script and director.



Boats is Quinn's second show with Terrapin after appearing in *Con Artists* in 2007.

Original Cast: Jeff Michel



Originally from the USA, Jeff is a performer and singer who trained in New York City with The Michael Howard Studios Summer Acting Conservatory and the School of Russian Art Theatre at Columbia University.

In New York, he appeared in the Sydney Theatre Company production of *The White Devil*. Since moving to Tasmania, he has performed in a variety of shows including *Alice in Wonderland* and *Pinocchio*, (Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens), *The Wizard of Oz* and *Beauty and the Beast* (Theatre Royal), and at the Hobart Rep with *The Wind in the Willows* and *A Slice of Saturday Night*. In 2010 he co-founded The Blue Cow Theatre Company and performed in their inaugural show *Art*.

For Terrapin he has appeared in *The Falling Room* and *The Flying Room*, *Boats* and *The Gatekeeper* and has toured to Victoria, New Zealand, Ireland and the USA. Jeff performs as a member of the comedy duo The Red Hot Cols.



ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Storytelling

In *Boats*, most of the sound effects were created using every day objects and sounds.

Using objects in your classroom and sounds you can make with your bodies, create the following sound scapes:

- a) calm at sea
- b) a storm

Perhaps half the class could create a sound scape while the other half performs the accompanying action.

In the show a hat was used to create the scene of an island on which Jof and Nic were shipwrecked.

Create a short performance using 3 or 4 hats with different scenes on each hat. You could have one person narrate the story, a few people wear the hats and a few people interacting with the hat sets or using little puppets for characters.

We saw Jof and Nic make some of the characters in the show out of objects around them. Yukio was made from cups, spoons and cloth and they created Eliza by covering parts of their body with different fabric. Jof made a bird out of rope.

What objects can you find that could become characters? Think of some familiar characters, perhaps out of fairy tales, and recreate the characters using every day objects.

Find where the eyes, nose and mouth of each puppet would be and experiment with moving the puppet and interacting with other puppets.

Create short stories and perform them with the object puppets.

As a class invent a 'Good luck, bad luck' story about the sea.

For example: "What good luck! The day was warm enough to go out in the boat. What bad luck! We forgot to buy petrol..."

Have the students sit in a circle and ask each person to continue the story with a sentence.

(Dalton, J., 1990, p73)

Create a character box that contains a card for each character in the play (Jof, Nic, Jof's father Jof the Elder, Jof's mother Matilda, Eliza Turk, Okinawa Yukio). On the cards write a brief description of each character.

In small groups have the children select 3 or 4 cards and build a new story around these characters.

(Mallan, K., 1991, P.31)

Make up legends about one of these:

- Why the shark has such sharp teeth
- Why oysters have pearls
- Why the sea is salty

(Dalton, J., 1990, p71)

In pairs, retell a familiar fairy tale, adapted to a sea theme:

For example –
Red Riding Hood and the Shark
Goldilocks and the three fish
Mermaidella

(Dalton, J., 1990, p73)

As a class create a poem about the sea.

Boats

What could you use to make a miniature boat?

Looking around your classroom or school environment, what would make the most efficient vessel?
Try different materials and objects in water.
Which materials float best?
Which objects can hold the most things?
Try blowing the boats – what could you use for a sail?

Sea Life

People living in Tasmania are surrounded by sea.

How do Tasmanians living on the main island and the smaller islands use the sea/ocean?
Create a class picture map of Tasmania which highlights the water world surrounding the island state.

Other

Jof and Nic found a bottle at the bottom of the ocean with a message inside from Eliza Turk.

Write a message to someone who lives on the other side of the world. If you were to put the note in a bottle and someone found it, what message would you want them to receive?

Jof was very skilled at tying knots. He tied knots for the boats, knots for the circus and everywhere he went, he knotted.

Research nautical knots and try making some knots of your own. Can you make a puppet out of knots, like the gull puppet in the show? Can you knot a person puppet? What else can you make out of knots?

One of Okinawa Yukio's skills was origami.

Try making an origami sailor's hat, a boat and a bird.
These could be used as puppets and props in a performance.

Draw a map of the island that Nic and Jof lived on for 4 years.

Create a 3-dimensional model of the island.



Write a letter from Jof to his family from his travels.

The performers in *Boats* sing songs of the sea in rounds.

As a class create a simple song about the sea.

Try dividing the class into small groups and have each group sing a different phrase or part of the song to create layers.

Try singing the same song but starting each group at a different time.

Eliza Turk loved the different sounds of things and one of her favourite games was guessing what was in the pockets of people passing by from the sounds they made.

Have the class close their eyes and identify sounds they hear.

Blind fold one student at a time and have the rest of the class choose an object or objects which make a sound. Ask the blind folded student to identify the object/s.

In the show a balloon was blown up to look like a puffer fish.

What other animals could you make out of balloons?

Compose a song about the sea to a well-known nursery rhyme tune.

For example:

“Three fat fish, three fat fish, see how they swim...” (To the tune of ‘Three blind mice’)

(Dalton, J., 1990, p71)

In small groups invent a new game that could be played under the sea, and tell:

- a) the aim of the game
- b) how it is played
- c) how many people can play
- d) materials or equipment needed.

(Dalton, J., 1990, p71)

ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Story telling

The music and audio effects in *Boats* are essential ingredients in the telling of the story, through the songs that the characters sing and the atmospheric or background sounds.

Discuss:

- How does music affect how we experience a performance?
- How does the different music change our experience of the scene?
- How important do you think music is in our experience of theatre and film?

Create a short scene that can be performed over and over.

- Play different types of music to the same scene.
- Try rhythmic, atmospheric, happy, sad music, etc.
- Try playing happy music with a sad scene or sad music with a happy scene.

The performance begins with Nic and Jof in the kitchen surrounded by objects which form the setting for the action of the play.

What other everyday scenes/physical spaces could be used effectively as a set? Perhaps the contents of a desk, a craft table, the sports store room, etc. In pairs create a short performance using one of these settings.

Choose a well known story or fairy tale and retell the story as a short performance using elements of sound and objects.

Imagine you had to perform the story to a group of people who could not hear. Adapt your performance for the greatest impact and enjoyment for your new audience.

This time, imagine you have a group of people who cannot see. Adapt your performance again to create an enjoyable and understandable story.

Compare and discuss each performance.

- Which elements were the same for each performance?
- Which changed?
- What did you discover about communicating a story well?

Write a newspaper article with this headline '*Strange creature seen by deep sea divers*', giving all necessary information (who, what, where, when, why and how).

(Dalton, J., 1990, p73)

Bring back a famous 'sea' person from the past, and plan to interview this person for a radio program. (Examples include; King Neptune, one of the sirens, Christopher Columbus, Captain Bligh, Captain Cook)

(Dalton, J., 1990, p74)

Boats

The Indigenous inhabitants of Tasmania made and used boats.

What were the first boats that they used?

What did they look like and how were they made?

Could you make a boat or a raft out of materials in your environment?

Using materials from your school and natural materials that you can find on the ground in your local school area, build a class boat or raft (that could hold one or two people at a time).

Consider floating potential, sturdiness and treading lightly in your environment.

Explore materials, discuss design options, decide on the most viable design and then construct.

Research boating terminology and look at how every day language has been influenced by nautical language.

Some examples of common words and phrases are 'bitter end', 'boogie man', 'the doldrums' and 'tying the knot'.

Which words or phrases surprised you the most?

Life at sea

Jof chooses to leave Eliza and their son Barnaby Argos on land and return to the sea that he is drawn to so strongly.

How would life have been had Jof stayed on shore with Eliza and his son?

Make a list of positives and negatives for

- (a) staying on shore and
- (b) returning to sea.

Can you think of an alternative option where Jof, Eliza and Barnaby could all have their needs met and still be together? Discuss.

Write a diary entry that Jof would have written the day he left Eliza and Barnaby behind.

Jof's family started working in the circus after they lost their boat in the storm.

What similarities are there between the lives of circus performers and the lives of sailors?

Jof has a strong connection with a gull that watches over him and keeps him safe.

What other sea stories do you know of that describe the connection between sailors and birds?

Why do you think some sailors look to birds for signs?

Think about people and the sea.

List all the ways that people use the sea now.

Predict all the ways that people might use the sea in the future.
Give reasons for your predictions.

(Dalton, J., 1990, p74)

Hypothesise about what could happen if the seas ran dry.

(Dalton, J., 1990, p73)

Map your ideas to create a visual cause and effect chart.

What role did the water and sea play in the lives of Australian Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders before European settlement?

How did they make use of the marine resources surrounding them?

How did European settlement affect their use of the sea?

What significance does the sea have for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders today?

Research and create a sequential display of your findings.

Find out about Jessica Watson, the youngest person to circumnavigate the globe solo, unassisted and non-stop in 2010, age 16.

Also Captain Joshua Slocum, the first American to sail around the world solo in 1898 and Australian Kaye Cottee, the first female sailor to perform a single handed non-stop circumnavigation of the world in 1988.

How do solo sailors cope at sea?

What challenges would they face?

How would they entertain themselves and keep themselves positive?

What are some of the sounds they might hear or things they might see?

Imagine you were planning to sail around Tasmania in a small boat by yourself.

Prepare a survival kit for yourself including all the things you would need to have a safe and comfortable journey. Plan for the unexpected!

A famous Australian yacht race is the Sydney to Hobart race, which starts each year on Boxing Day. Trace the route of the race on a map.

What particular challenges do you think the sailors would face during their journey?

How would they prepare for the mental and physical challenges?

You have been selected to interview the winners of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race. In small groups plan six interesting questions that you will ask.

(Dalton, J., 1990, p73)

classes using some performance elements (sound, puppets or objects, characterisation, etc).

Think about how Australians use the seas and oceans that surround them.

How do you think living on an island, surrounded by water affects how people relate to the water?

Imagine you lived your whole life until now in Tasmania, close to the water and you had to move with your family to Central Australia, miles from the Coast.

How would you cope?

What could you do that would help you feel connected to the sea without being near by?

Imagine you were alone on a boat, far from land, without your camera or mobile phone, and you saw a sea creature that has never been seen before.

What would you do?

How would you convince people that it exists and that you really saw it?

In pairs conduct an interview (radio or TV) about the sighting, with one person role playing the sailor and the other role playing the interviewer.

Based on the same information from the interview, write two newspaper articles – one supporting the sailor and the other making fun of him or her.

Discuss the role of journalist/ interviewer/ reporter and the interpretation of facts or information.

In pairs, compare the *goals* that the following people may have. Say how they are alike and how they are different:

- a diver searching for pearls
 - a sailor in a yacht race
 - a captain of a passenger ship
- (Dalton, J., 1990, p74)

You are in charge of an expedition to 'rescue' important documents from a chest on the ocean floor. How will you overcome the following problems?

- a family of octopi live near the chest
- the chest is made of heavy steel and it would take more than three people to lift it
- you only have one air tank
- acid is locked inside the chest, and is 'timed' to spill and ruin the documents if the chest is rocked at all
- you need to sail past an island to get to the spot and the cannibals who live on the island keep a 24-hr watch for victims. (You have an old but sturdy sailing ship to help you.)

What is your plan? Perhaps you should prepare two, in case the first one doesn't work!

(Dalton, J., 1990, p74)