

Garlic Theatre Fiddlesticks



**Workshop ideas
on puppetry, storytelling and drama
Autumn 2011**

Written by Garlic Theatre using some ideas and exercises devised by Hilary Lewis.
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Introduction

We hope you enjoy exploring some of the themes and ideas surrounding **Fiddlesticks**. The play evolved from a love of puppetry, clowning and music. The rehearsals captured the essence of this through improvisation and 'play' with these ideas. Out of it came the clown playing with her old violin – the character of fiddlesticks emerged and the story evolved from there.

Contents

About Garlic Theatre
Fiddlesticks. A synopsis of the story
Storytelling exercise
Movement and music
Movement to the music on the CD
Make your own box of sounds
Make your own rod puppet
Making puppets come alive
Make your own sound track with percussion
Write your own soundtrack from your own instrument

All the activities can be adapted to suit your particular age range and ability of child. They give children a chance to explore and experiment with a range of cross-curricular activities.

Built into these activities are opportunities to reflect, evaluate and develop the children's ideas. They should make learning fun and allow a wide breadth of creativity.

About Garlic Theatre

www.garlictheatre.org.uk

Founded in 1997, **Garlic Theatre** is a visual Theatre Company that uses image, puppet animation, movement and live music. The Theatre Company aims to challenge, entertain and stimulate people of all ages through work which encourages imaginative play and develops a new awareness of the power of puppet animation.

Over the last 14 years our productions have reached young audiences in Theatres, arts centres and schools throughout the United Kingdom and across the world.

Current productions of **George and the Dragon**, **Old Mother Hubbard**, **Little Red Robin hood** and **Fiddlesticks** have reached young audiences in Theatres, arts centres and schools throughout the United Kingdom and across the world.

Garlic Theatre has participated in eighteen international festivals, and won five awards for excellence. The company has toured to many countries including Spain, Brazil, Sweden, Finland, Singapore, and Taiwan. This October 2011 Mark will be taking **The Magnificent flying Machine** to Romania and next year Iklooshar will be taking **Old Mother Hubbard** to Brittany in France.



Fiddlesticks. A synopsis of the Story.

Fiddlesticks is the story of a broken violin that comes to life and falls in love with the lovely Violinka, a trumpet violin.

Fiddlesticks wakes up and plays with the puppeteer. They play on the xylophone and play with the little dog Nicolai.

Violinka arrives. She is looking for her dog Nicolai and meets Fiddlesticks. They decide to go and find the dog who has run away.

We meet Metronomous who makes music with the audience and then tries to compose music himself. He can only think of the theme from East Enders and Lady Gaga and puts all his efforts on paper inside a box which plays a cacophony of music.

Violinka travels to a forest where she meets a little boy who makes a lot of noise and is put in the box by Metronomous. When she tries to rescue him she is put inside the box and it is then locked.

Fiddlesticks arrives on his horse and falls off. He is injured and put inside the music case. The puppeteer explains that she broke her violin when she was playing around with it and it got broken.

A knocking sound makes the puppeteer open the box and discover that Fiddlesticks is alright so he is told to rest and put to bed.

Fiddlesticks has a dream of Violinka in the box. In the dream music paper birds fly out and music notes dance.

He wakes up and tries to rescue Violinka by opening the box but it is locked.

Metronomous arrives and there is a fight between Metronomous and Fiddlesticks.

Fiddlesticks triumphs, unlocks the box and rescues the little boy and Violinka.

Metronomous gets his own medicine and is put into the box.

The puppeteer puts Fiddlesticks, Violinka and the dog Nicolai into the music case and it is transformed into a boat with a music paper sail.

They sail off. The puppeteer comes out and tells the audience that she got rid of the metronome and started to play the fiddle.

Storytelling exercise

The aim of this exercise is to talk about the different ways of telling stories and to talk about where stories come from and to focus on made up stories.

Discussion should be open as the

What do you think is the story of the show?.

Why do you think that it is difficult to pinpoint the exact story?

As the story is quite dreamlike and visual then it is sometimes hard to find the words to tell the story.

Do you find it easy to tell someone else what happened in your dream?

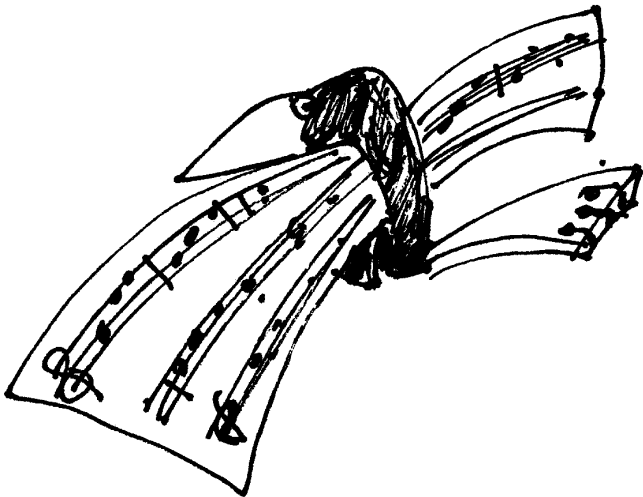
Where do you think the story takes place?

Who are the main characters?

What is Fiddlesticks like as a character?

What is Violinka like?

What is Metronomous like?

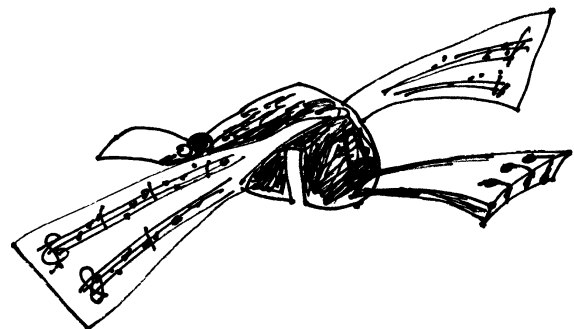


Describe some of the other characters that you saw:

the dog, the little boy, the horse and the characters in the woods.

What kind of music do you remember hearing in the show?.

How were the woods created?



Movement and music

These ideas for follow up movement and music activities can be adapted for different ages and levels. If you have a metronome on hand use it to show the different speeds and discuss the different Italian words for tempo.

Lento
Andante
Allegro
Presto
Maestoso

Using a drum, vary the tempo of the beat and call out the different Italian words until the children become familiar with them.

What is tempo?

Tempo is the speed of movement.
How can we express this in our bodies?

What are dynamics?

Dynamics are the loud and soft of music.
How can we express this in our bodies?

When we play music we mix these two up. We can have fast and quiet or slow and loud or slow and loud and fast and quiet.

Movement exercise for expressing dynamics and tempo.

Two lines of children stand on opposite sides of the hall facing each other. The reason for this is so that they can in turn watch and then try out the different movements.

Taking turns they walk to the centre of the hall and back again. First try out these:

Fast then Slow
Light then Heavy
Big then Small

Then mix them up
Light and slow
heavy and slow
Big and heavy
Small and fast etc

Talk about what they found easy
and what they found difficult.



Movement to the music on the CD

Track one on the cd.

What music do they remember from the performance?

Moving on from the last exercise, the children can start by walking around the room and then move to the music on the track. The cd can be paused at any point to discuss the different kinds of tempo and dynamics. How do they effect the kind of movements that can express the music?



The music

Throughout the show a mixture of live and recorded music is used. Originally composed music by **Garlic Theatre** has been carefully worked out to evoke a feeling or create a certain atmosphere at different key points in the play. Different styles of violin music show the range of the violin in different contexts. Classical music, folk, solo violin, duets and plucking all feature at various moments throughout the play.

A folk tune from Finland in the form of a polka. This is played when the folk dance in the forest and when the horse enters with Fiddlesticks riding on his back. Iklooshar plays it at the end.

A romantic violin duet is played when Fiddlesticks and Violinka fall in love. This piece was composed specifically for the production.

A Czech lullaby. Iklooshar sings this to Fiddlesticks and he then falls asleep. We see his dream come to life on the shadow screen.

A violin duet by Kreisler is played in the dream sequence

Mozart's 'The marriage of Figaro' is played when Metronomous and Fiddlesticks fight over the opening of the box.

The trumpet violin or stroh violin is played at the end when Fiddlesticks and Violinka sail away on the boat. This is a traditional Hungarian folk instrument. The horn is made from an old wind up gramophone, which gives it its distinct sound quality.

Make your own box of sounds

You will need a cd player and a box with a lid.

This is an exercise to encourage coordination and collaboration between pairs of children. Try getting different children to work together and change partners at least once.

In **Fiddlesticks**, a box is opened and shut and music comes out. How is this done?

An engineer devised a system where an ipod is attached by a cable to the sound system at the back. The ipod is set to play the sounds continuously. A switch on the box itself cuts off the speaker on the sound system when the box is closed.

But in the past this was done by a technician in the theatre. The technician would switch on the music when the box was opened and switch it off when the box was closed.

Try doing this yourselves.

One person will be the performer with a box. The other person will be the technician with the CD player. After a while they can then swap roles.

The technician plays track 2 and then presses the pause button.

When the performer opens the box, then the technician will make the music sound and when the performer closes the box then the technician will press pause again to make the music stop.

At first the performer can look at the technician. Then the performer must not look at the technician. What was easier?

What sort of things make it easier for the technician to anticipate the actions of the performer.

Try rehearsing a routine of set movements. Does this help?



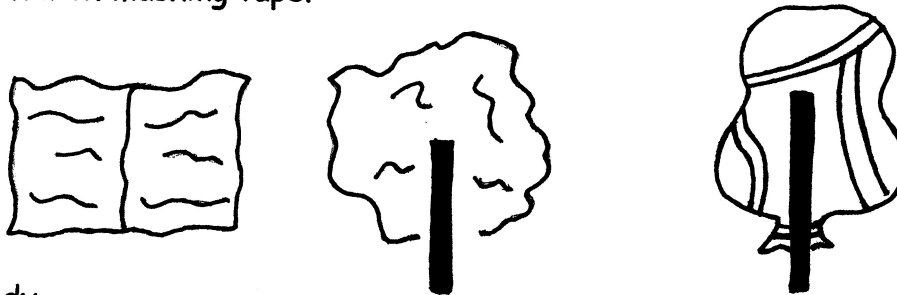
Make your own rod puppet

A rod puppet is a puppet that is manipulated/moved by rods. Here are some simple guidelines to making a rod puppet:

Materials: Newspaper, three rods/garden sticks (per puppet), masking tape, white tissue paper, rubber bands. **Decoration:** buttons, wool, ribbon, foam. **Scissors, glue, cardboard.**

The head

Take a sheet of newspaper and a rod/stick. Scrunch the paper into the head shape you want around the rod, leaving the rod sticking out. Use masking tape to mould it further into shape and stick it securely to the rod. Cover it with white tissue paper to make a smooth surface and bind the neck with masking tape.

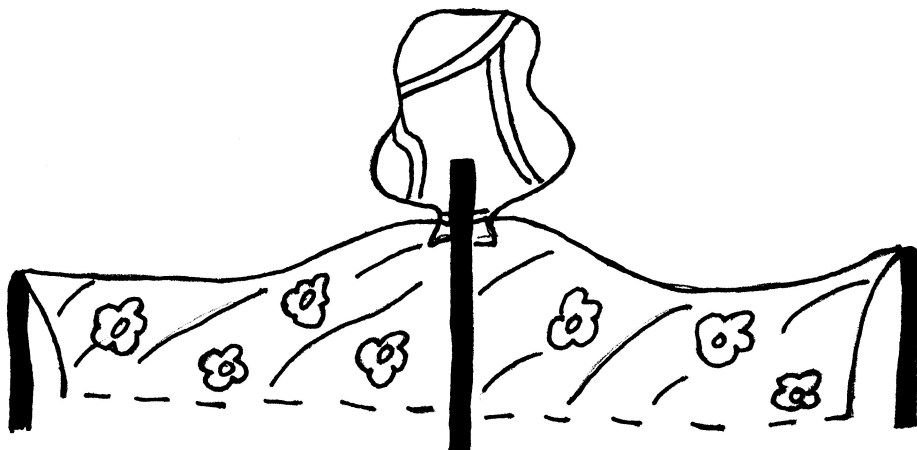


The body

Cut a square of colourful material and make a small hole in the centre. The easiest way to do this is to fold the material into quarters and nip the centre with scissors. Push the stick through the hole in the material, turn the puppet upside down and secure the material onto the neck of the puppet.

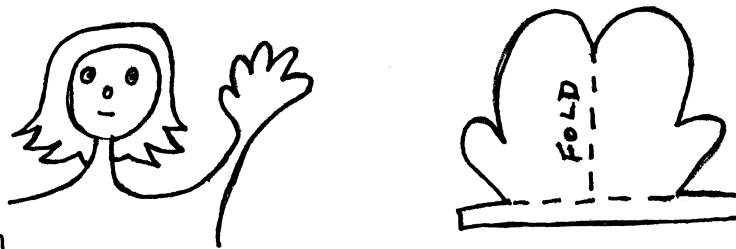
The Arms

Take two smaller rods and attach them to two corners of the material, using rubber bands.



The hands

Cut out two hand shapes in cardboard (see diagram below). Wrap and stick both hands to the puppet at the point where the rods have been attached to the material. NB. Make sure the hands are big enough - look how big your hand is in relation to your face.



Decoration

Decorate the head with eyes (buttons), ears (cloth), eyebrows (wool), mouth (ribbon/wool) and nose (foam). Use wool for the hair.



Making puppets come alive

Here are a few tips on how to move your puppet successfully on stage; how the puppeteer manipulates the puppet. These are all points that Iklooshar, Garlic puppets' puppeteer had to remember when performing Fiddlesticks.

1. The puppeteer should look at the puppet in order to keep it at the correct height (particularly in relation to the other puppets on stage)
2. The puppeteer should be aware of the audience. Make sure the puppet is seen face on and not too much in profile so the audience can see it clearly.
3. Puppets should move when they speak, with clear exaggerated movements. They should be still when other puppets are moving so that the audience know which puppet is speaking.
4. Each puppet should have a way of moving appropriate to its character. Large puppets can move slower, smaller ones with fast dancing movements. Don't forget you can shake the puppet to express fear or excitement. Stillness can show a puppet thinking.
5. Puppets should make use of all parts of the stage; they can appear over edges and at different levels.
6. The puppeteer should be aware of his/her body while operating the puppet. Puppeteers should also be aware of each other and work out the best way in which they can use the space successfully.



Make your own sound track with percussion

Fiddlesticks plays the xylophone, dancing on it with his long gangly legs, Violinka swirls about in her long flowing dress, the dog sniffs here and there as he moves, Metronomus waves his baton in the air, strictly beating time. All these aspects of the puppets movement give them their individual characters and suggest the type of music that goes with each one. Each character has a rhythm to the way they move and a tune to represent their spirit and character. You can explore this idea with the puppets that the children have made.

For this exercise you will need to work in pairs. One person operates the puppet and is called the puppeteer and one person operates a percussion instrument and is called the musician.

The puppeteer moves their puppet to the tempo and dynamics of the musician.

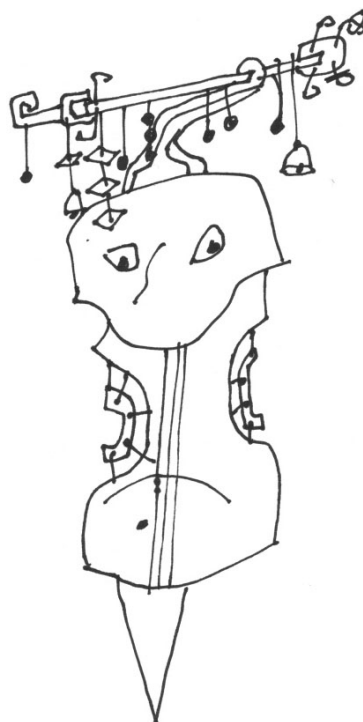
Experiment with the different tempo and dynamics to change the character of the puppet.

Puppeteer and musician swap roles.

Find different percussion instruments and see how the puppet changes its character.

Ask the pairs to feedback which instrument best suited their puppet. Can they give a demonstration to the class?

This exercise can be developed into a piece of writing by asking the children what sort of a person or animal the puppet is? Are they happy, sad, grumpy, loud, quiet, shy etc what sort of short story would go with the puppet? What would it be about? What sort of music would go with the story?



Write your own soundtrack from your own instrument

Original music was written especially for the production. The Xylophone tune, the lullaby and the love theme were all inspired by the story. You too can make your own music and you can write it down so that someone else can play it. Here's how:-

You will need: a shoe box or small cardboard box, string, elastic bands, yoghurt cartons, rice, paper, sellotape etc

This could be done in pairs or as individuals.

Make a soundboard of bangs, twangs and rattles by attaching lots of different home made percussion instruments to the box. i.e. a yoghurt pot with rice in covered with paper and an elastic band round it can be attached to the box with string.

Decide on a symbol to represent the sound of each percussion instrument.

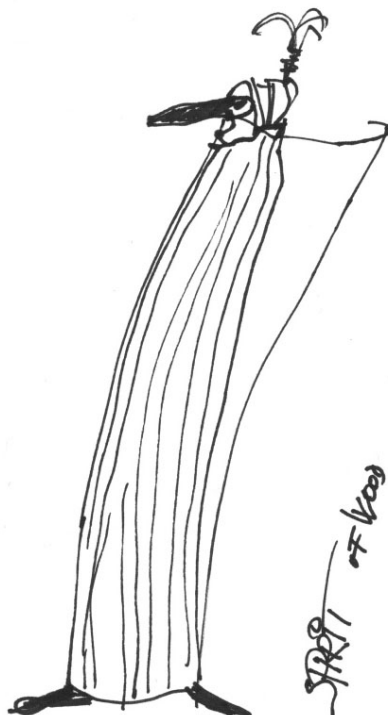
e.g. a twang = | a bang = x a rattle = >

Organise the sound sequence you want to make and write the symbol for it in a line e.g.

| | | X > > X

Swap your music score with another person and try to play their soundboard.

This can be further developed using real percussion instruments and making symbols to represent each one. An understanding of bar lines and beats in the bar could also be taught in a very simple manner using this technique.



We hope that you have enjoyed the exercises in this booklet.

Norfolk is home to many talented experts in puppetry music and drama

Here are some relevant websites for developing work on drama puppetry and music:

Jonathan Lambert Musician

www.lamsound.com/

Dave Farmer Drama Specialist

dramaresource.com/

Our designer Michaela Bartonova is a wonderful artist who is also a puppeteer. She lives in Prague, home to many puppet makers.

Tineola Theatre

Michaela Bartonova Designer

www.tineola.cz/en/