



# Darling Tales

Loose Canon Arts

**SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE** 

Teachers Notes  
HOUSE: ED 09

SUITABILITY  
Years K – 6

DATES  
December 14-17

# Introduction



## A. Introduction

These teacher's notes have been designed to assist you with classroom preparation and extension work in relation to the production of *Darlingwood Tales*. We hope that this resource will assist you to further enjoy your performing arts experience back in the classroom. The activities are designed for students from Years K-6. Drama educator Mathew Clausen, has prepared the notes.

Included in these notes are a number of activities that you can use with your students. These activities provide an opportunity for students to explore the broad themes and style of the performance.

Syllabi written by NSW Board of Studies have been used as a guide for the planning of these activities. You should consider rephrasing the questions and activities to suit the particular terminology, curriculum foci and outcomes used in your school.

Some websites are suggested in this kit. It is recommended that before setting activities based on these, that teachers first visit the sites and assess the suitability of the content for your particular school setting.

## B. Classroom Context and Curriculum Links

The production *Darlingwood Tales*, offers many valuable opportunities for educators to integrate the core themes and performance techniques and style into a range of classroom topics and units of work. The activities provided in these notes provide extension and enrichment work in a range of curriculum areas including Music, Drama and English. In particular, the work of Roald Dahl has provided inspiration for *Darlingwood Tales* and the influence of Dahl's ideas and stories have also shaped the content of various activities.

The activities in these notes are suitable for both lower primary and upper primary students. The practical and interactive workshop activities explore comedy, characterisation, fairy tale narrative structure and aspects of physical theatre.

## C. Performance Event Description and Synopsis

Subtitled, "A mischievously modern fairytale", *Darlingwood Tales* takes the audience on a surreal and colourful journey into the mythical Australian suburb of Darlingwood, inspired by the characters and laneways of the inner city suburb of Darlinghurst. This outlandish musical theatre experience cleverly reinterprets old-time Aussie vaudeville with classic fairytale sentiment, wit and wisdom.

Amongst its rows of terrace houses and cafes, live a colourful and wacky cast of characters who are suddenly confronted with a dilemma. Citizens are mysteriously disappearing. Of course everyone has their suspicions, but no one is coming forward to solve the case!

Persuaded by the beautiful fortune-teller Bella de Ball, Inspector Detektif undertakes to expose the villain, following the mysterious disappearances of the Whippet Triplets, Burt and Ivy Brooze and the Leaf Brothers. Drawn from classic fairytales with a nod to Roald Dahl, and the madness of Looney Tunes cartoons, *Darlingwood Tales* is set in a wonderful urban neighbourhood of laneways and terrace houses inhabited by deliciously eccentric and wickedly humorous characters.

# Pre Performance

## Activity 1 - Comic Character Walks

### Curriculum Links

Drama/Music

1.1 You will need a light hearted and/or comic piece of music for this activity. Ask your students to find somewhere in the room where they can work on their own. Ask them to complete different types of stretches as part of a warm up. You could ask different students to lead a stretch and have everyone else copy. Once you have completed a few stretches ask your students to stand as high as they can on their toes and reach their arms up towards the ceiling. Have them repeat this stretch trying each time to reach a little higher. Ask your students to sit on the floor with their legs straight out in front of them. Ask them to begin wiggling their toes in their shoes. Then to focus on moving their foot by flexing and rotating their ankles. Now ask your students to stand. Ask them to gently swing one leg back and forth and then repeat this using their other leg. Ask them to crouch bending their knees and then to stand as high as they can on their toes.

Ask your students to walk through the room exploring different ways they might walk. Suggest that they walk with heavy steps or very light steps. Ask them to walk using little steps or very wide steps. Ask them to walk with wobbly knees or to walk with very stiff muscles. Continue this exploration of movement using different walks.

Ask your student to sit on the floor. Play your piece of music and ask your students to listen to the rhythms. Talk about the kind of mood that the music conveys. Ask your students to stand and explore walking while the music is playing. Encourage your students to explore different ways of walking to suit the music. Divide the class into groups and ask the class to watch each group practicing their walk while the music plays.

1.2 Ask your students to choose one way of walking they liked the most. Explain that they are going to make a character from this walk. Allow your students time to practice their walk. As they practice, encourage them to include the use of their arms, torso and head as part of the character movement. Ask the class to freeze. Give your students fifteen seconds to think of a character name. Walk through the room and tap students on the shoulder and ask them to say their character name out loud. Ask the class to walk again as their character and then call freeze. Each student must now add a mannerism or gesture to their character movement. Allow your students time to practice this. Stand in a circle as a class. Ask each student to say their character name out loud and then to show their walk and mannerism.



## Activity 1 - Continued

1.3 This activity is a game but can be used to help your students develop character. The game is called 'Murder in the Market Place'. The aim of the game is to identify a murderer before everyone is killed. To play the game, the class begins by sitting on the floor with their eyes closed. The teacher secretly chooses a murderer. Once the murderer has been chosen, the class set up a market place. For this activity, set up a public area of your choosing that can be found in a suburb. For example a library, an outdoor fair etc. Ask your class to use the characters they have developed in the previous activities and allocate characters to jobs or roles in the public space. When the game begins, the murderer must 'murder' individuals by whispering quietly to them "You're dead". After about ten seconds, the character must fall to the floor and stay there until the game finishes. Anyone can try to guess who the murderer is by calling 'freeze' and naming the murderer. If they are correct the game begins again with a new murderer, if they are wrong they must die and the game continues.

# Pre Performance

## Activity Two - Fairy Tale Locations

### Curriculum Links

English/ Drama

2.1 In this activity your students will complete some written and drama activities that use research based on the people in their local neighbourhood. Ask your students to draw an aerial map of their street. Ask them to draw the buildings and houses on either side of their street and write the name of the business or the name of the families or people who live or work there. It does not matter if your students do not know all of this information. They may need to complete part of this activity for homework. Ask them to find out the names of at least three other residents in their street. Divide your students into small groups. Each person is to share their diagram with the others.

2.2 Ask the class to sit at one end of the room facing an area for performance. Ask the class to brainstorm the different types of buildings and houses in their neighbourhoods. Encourage your students to be very descriptive by using lots of adjectives.

Choose one of these descriptions as the basis for a group tableau. Ask for a volunteer to come out to the performing area to create the first part of the house or building. It is best if the student doesn't tell the class what part of the building they are but find a way to show it. Ask for more volunteers until the representation of the building is finished. Ask the class to represent some other types of neighbourhood buildings.

2.3 Divide your students into groups of six. Ask each group to choose one group members house to represent in a tableau. Allow time for the group member to describe the exterior of their home and then time for the group to create the tableau. View the student work and comment on effective choices made by the group.

2.4 Finish this activity by asking half the class to create a street or row of three or four different types of buildings and houses. Extend on this activity by asking three or four other students to place the characters they created in activity one into each of the houses on the street. Using teacher in role, you could knock on the door of the house and meet the character who lives there or you could ask a student to play the role of a census collector who interviews the characters.

# Pre Performance

## Activity Three - Fairytale Features

### Curriculum Links

English/Drama

3.1 Ask your students to work with a partner. Each pair is to list as many fairy tales as they can in two minutes or less. Ask the pairs to share their lists with the class.

Choose ten fairy tales. Explain to the class that they will now create frozen pictures with their partner to show one moment from each of the ten fairy tales. As you call out the fairy tale title, each pair has fifteen seconds to decide on the two characters they wish to be and the moment of action from the fairy tale. Ask for volunteer pairs to choose one of their frozen pictures to show the class. Ask the class to guess the fairy tale, the characters and the moment in the story.

3.2 Ask the class to divide into pairs so that each person is now working with a new partner. Each pair is to list as many types of fairy tale characters as they can. Share these lists as a class. See if the class can identify character types that appear in many different fairy tales.

3.3 In this activity your students will become fairy tale character types rather than specific characters from specific fairy tales.

Common fairytale characters are: a witch, an ogre, a princess, a wood cutter, a prince, a king and a little old woman.

Ask the class to come up with phrases or sayings that each of these characters might say in a fairy tale play. Record these using paper, a white board or blackboard.

Ask your students to find somewhere to work on their own. Choose one of the characters from the list and ask your students to become this character using their body to create a frozen pose.

Encourage them to be imaginative so that if they are playing a witch, they create their own type of witch. Asking questions about physical features, personality or other attributes that will help your students develop original versions of these characters. Now ask your students to add a gesture or mannerism, as they did in the creation of character in activity one, to help build the character. Finally ask your students to add the saying or phrase to their acting as the character. Repeat this process working through the list of fairy tale characters.

# Post Performance



## Activity Four - Performance Evaluation and Reflection

Curriculum Links  
English/Drama

4.1 This activity is an opportunity for your students to share their responses to the performance. The questions provided cover all aspects of the performance and you are encouraged to select those questions that will be relevant for your students. The questions could also form a scaffold for written responses.

4.2 Ask the class to divide into small groups. Each group is to prepare a series of tableaux that recount the excursion and the performance:

- Create a frozen picture of you and your friends travelling to the theatre.
- Show a frozen picture of what you think the actors might have been doing backstage in their preparation for the performance.
- Create two frozen pictures of moments from the performance that you enjoyed.
- Create a frozen picture of the audience enjoying the performance.
- Create a frozen picture of you and your friends travelling back to school after the performance.

4.3 The following questions can be used as a guideline for a discussion or a written response to the performance:

1. How did the performance begin?
2. What was the performance about?
3. Name three physical skills that the performers showed during the performance.
4. What moments did you enjoy most in the play? Why?
5. What sort of music was used in the performance?
6. Was there anything you did not like about the performance? Why?

# Post Performance

## Activity Five - Magic Mirror

### Curriculum Links

English/Drama/Music

5.1 Ask the class to stand or sit in a circle. Choose a volunteer to leave the room. Choose one person in the circle to be the leader. Explain that the leader will make slow flowing movements that the rest of the class must copy exactly. Once the class begins the mirroring work, bring the person from outside the room into the centre of the circle. Their job is to find the leader of the movements in three guesses. Once they identify the leader, a new leader and person who leaves the room are chosen. This activity is a very good intro to help students develop concentration and control of movement. It also builds skills needed for the next activities.

5.2 Divide the class into pairs. Ask each pair to choose one person to lead and the other to follow. Ask the pairs to stand facing each other with enough distance between them so that they can see their partner head to toe. Ask the leader to begin a movement just using one arm and for the partner to copy. After a short while, swap the leader. Repeat this activity adding more movements until the pair are confident and skilled enough to move about the room without losing control and focus.

5.3 Ask each pair to make up a short role play. In the role play, one person plays a character of their choosing who looks into a mirror for a specific reason. For example, someone might need to check that their hat fits properly, or they are looking to see if they have food between their teeth. During rehearsal of the role play, encourage each pair to accurately show the character and their reflection.

Ask for volunteer pairs to show their work to the class. Give feedback on the accuracy of the mirror work commenting on good examples of practice.

5.4 This activity is more appropriate for upper primary student. Divide your students into groups of about five. Each group is to create a short play titled "The Magic Mirror". The play can use one of the following scenarios as a starting point:

Synopsis A: This version is to be set in a suburb in Sydney and is about a character that is drawn through a reflection into another world. In this new world they are faced with one challenge that they have to overcome.



## Activity 5 - Continued

Synopsis B: In this version, a mirror world character enters the real world but cannot return until a problem is overcome.

This activity will require significant preparation time. During rehearsals, ask your students to show you scenes they have developed and offer advice regarding characterization, plot and staging.

# Post Performance



## Activity Six - Neighbourhood Stories

Curriculum Links  
English/Drama

- 6.1 This activity provides some reading resources that explore themes and concepts related to neighbourhood and community. Ask your students to read from the list provided below:
- 6.2 Ask your students to complete a review of one of the books they read. The book review can cover plot, characters, favourite moments and an overall rating. The review can be oral or written
- 6.3 Ask your students to work in small groups. Each group is to choose one of the books they read and create a retelling of the story in no more than ten freeze frames. Each group is permitted to have one person act as narrator who explains each freeze frame to the audience. Allow the groups time to prepare and then show the work to the class.
- 6.4 This activity will need an extended period of time to complete.

# References



Author	Title	Web Address	Date Accessed
Yesterday's Classics	The Baldwin Project – Cautionary Tales for Children by Hilaire Belloc	<a href="http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php?author=belloc&amp;book=cautionary&amp;story=matilda&amp;PHPSESSID=2e1919b75e1a3c1f6bfc571e8c7a15a6">http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php?author=belloc&amp;book=cautionary&amp;story=matilda&amp;PHPSESSID=2e1919b75e1a3c1f6bfc571e8c7a15a6</a>	November, 2009
Jeffrey, Steven.	Author Information - Roald Dahl	<a href="http://www.iblist.com/author93.htm">http://www.iblist.com/author93.htm</a>	November, 2009



**Activity 1 - Continued**

A large, empty rectangular area with a light pink border, intended for student work or notes.