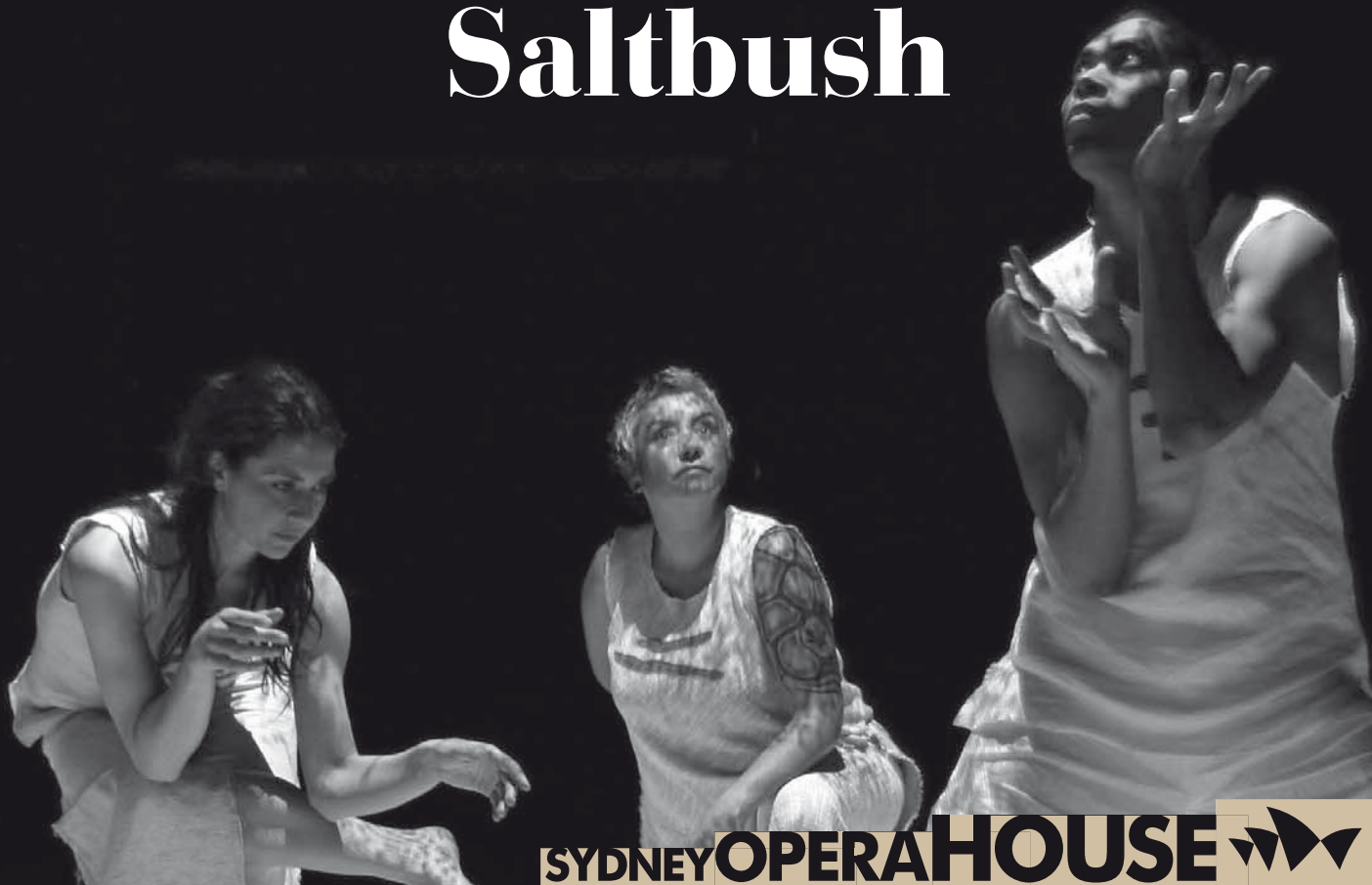




Children's Cheering Carpet  
**Saltbush**



**SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE** 

**Teachers Notes**  
HOUSE: ED 2010

SUITABILITY

Years K – 4

DATES

October 12 – 15

# Introduction



These Teacher's Notes have been designed to assist you with classroom preparation and extension work in relation to the production of *Saltbush*. We hope that this resource will assist your students to further enjoy and enhance their performing arts experience back in the classroom. The activities are designed for students from Year K to Year 4.

The activities included in this resource, provide opportunities for students to explore the broad themes and style of the performance. NSW Board of Studies syllabi have been used as guides for the planning of these activities. You should consider adapting and rephrasing the questions and activities to suit the particular terminology, curriculum foci and outcomes used in your school.

Some websites are suggested throughout this resource. It is recommended that you first visit the sites and assess the suitability of the content for your particular school environment before setting the activities based on these.

## B. Classroom Context and Curriculum Links

The Compagnia TPO co-production of *Saltbush* is an exciting fusion of multi-media, music, theatre and dance. The interactive and participatory nature of this performance encourages young children to engage with an exploration of Indigenous Australian culture that enthralls all senses as a means of encouraging kinesthetic learning. This performance provides excellent opportunities for classroom activities and discussions with links to various curriculum areas including:

**HSIE:** *identity, cultural diversity, relationship with places, environments*

**PDHPE:** *moving, communicating and interacting*

**Creative Arts:** *Visual Arts (appreciating and making), Dance (making and appreciating)  
Music (organizing sound and moving)*

## C. Performance Event Description and Synopsis

*Saltbush* is an interactive journey through Aboriginal culture, celebrated through dance, music, song and stories. This new work by the internationally acclaimed Italian company Compagnia TPO has been developed in collaboration with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians and centres on the journey of two friends as they cross the diverse Australian landscape.



### ***Introduction Continued***

*'A complex interplay of light, dance, music and interactive technology.'* *The Age*, Melbourne

Inspired by the Aboriginal artists' personal relationships to their home and country, *Saltbush* takes its visual cues primarily from the paintings of Aboriginal artist Delwyn Mannix. Performed on a touch-sensitive carpet that triggers image, sound and animation, the landscape is magically brought to life in a kaleidoscope of patterns and vibrant colours.

Contemporary choreography fuses the traditions of separate cultures and combines with a soundtrack of didgeridoo, voice and clapping sticks to produce a powerful sensory journey. This visually stunning production makes accessible the complex ideas of kinship, lore, reconciliation and relationships to the land.

Further information about this performance and Compagnia TPO can be found at the following web links:

Compagnia TPO  
<http://www.tpo.it/>

Review of *Saltbush* - *The Australian* newspaper  
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/arts/sensory-artisans-roll-out-magic-carpet/story-e6frg8n6-1225713269894>

# Pre Performance

## Activity One - Travelling Our Land



### Curriculum Links      Drama/English

---

1.1 For this activity you will need to refer to a map of Australia. Ask students to point out on the map where they live. Either in pairs or as a class, encourage your students to talk about the different types of places they might have been to in Australia or within New South Wales. Ask them to identify where these places are on the map. Invite students to tell descriptions of these places - get them to focus on giving sensory descriptions.


1.2 Ask students to draw a picture of a place in Australia they would like to visit for a holiday. Share these drawings with the class.

1.3 After sharing the drawings, show some images of places in Australia that your students may not have experienced. These might include deserts, rainforest, cities, etc. A Google image search for 'Australian Landscape' or 'Australian Cities' will provide you with lots of images for discussion. Ask volunteers to name the sorts of things they might find in these different places. List these ideas where everyone can see them.

1.4 In this activity you will use teacher-in-role to help students engage in an imaginary journey through different Australian landscapes. Explain to students that they are going on a bus trip to some different parts of Australia. The purpose of this trip is to collect information about the locations that can be shared with other students overseas. Ask them to use their imaginations to pack a pretend back-pack with the sorts of things they might need for this journey and the collection of information. Ask volunteers to share what they are taking with them and invite them to demonstrate the items they are taking using mime.

1.5 Set up enough chairs to create bus seats. In role as the bus driver, explain to your passengers that the bus has magical properties and can take the passengers to anywhere they want in the blink of an eye by using a special lever located next to the steering wheel. The magic bus only travels to environments made by nature and can only make three trips in one day. The passengers will need to choose their destinations carefully. When the bus arrives at each location, use imagination and creativity to point out the sorts of things the passengers might see and guide them in the collection of information that supports preserving the environment.

- A visit to the Simpson Desert - it is very hot so everyone needs to wear a hat and drink some water. You might see a big lizard or a desert mouse. Information is recorded on an imaginary camera.



## Activity One - Travelling Our Land Continued

- A visit to the beaches of North Western Australia. The passengers can play in the sand, sun bake and go swimming. They will need to dry themselves before they get back on the bus. The temperature is measured with an imaginary thermometer.

1.1 Finish this introductory activity by showing the class the Aboriginal Map of Australia. Allow your students to ask questions about what the map shows and encourage them to identify the differences between the version of the map they saw at the beginning of the activity and this one. You may need to explain how Indigenous Australians belong to many different cultural groups. For younger students you might explain this by referring to cultural groups as 'big families'. Ask students to identify the Indigenous country in NSW where their school is located. Then ask them to locate on the map the places the magic bus visited and identify the Indigenous country for each location. A link to a copy of the Aboriginal Map of Australia is provided below:

Government of South Australia

<http://www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/pages/Educators/aboriginalaustralia/?reFlag=1>

A person is sitting on a stage, viewed from behind. They are looking at a large, circular light projection on the floor. The projection has a pattern of dots and lines, resembling a traditional Indigenous Australian design. The background is dark, and there are other people visible in the distance, suggesting a performance or rehearsal space.

# Pre Performance

## Activity Two - Land and Plants and Animals

### Curriculum Links Drama/HSIE

2.1 This activity is an extension on the previous activity. Begin singing the song *Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree*. Follow this with a research activity in which students find images of and information about Australian plants and trees.

2.2 For practice, ask the class to find a place in the room to work on their own. Ask them to choose one of the images from their research. Ask them to take a frozen pose as the plant or tree.

2.3 Explain to the class that the whole class will work together to create different Australian natural environments using movement and body shape. Ask for volunteers to describe what a forest of gum trees might be like. Encourage the use of adjectives to describe what different gum trees might look like, their colour, the different shapes of the trunks, branches and leaves, how they smell, how they move in the wind and the sorts of animals that might be found in the branches.

Now ask the class to stand. Each person creates a frozen pose so that the class creates a forest of gum trees. Continue this activity by asking the class to represent other Australian natural locations, for example, a beach, mountains, a rushing river, an open plain with only a few trees, a rain forest, etc. Continue to encourage your students to engage with ideas about our connection to the environment by asking them to reflect on how these places make people feel when they are there.

2.4 Ask students to list as many Australian animals as they can recall. Explain that they are going to use movement to pretend to be some of these animals. Some examples are: kangaroo, koala, platypus, echidna, wombat, blue tongue lizard, red belly snake, cockatoo, etc. Choose one animal at a time and ask your students to think about the sorts of movements and noises the animal might make. Then ask them to create a frozen statue of the animal. On your signal, the animals can then show how they move and search for food.

2.5 Using the locations created in activity 2.3 and the animals created in activity 2.4 create a game where one animal chases another through a landscape. Ask for two volunteers to play the Australian animals. The rest of the class become the gum tree forest and create obstacles around which the animals run. To make the game more complicated, change the environment at different times during the chase so that one moment they animals are running through a rock filled desert, the next moment they are in a rainforest. You could adapt chasing games for this activity.

# Pre Performance

## Activity Three - Special Places



### Curriculum Links

### Drama/ HSIE

---

3.1 This activity is more suited to older primary students and is designed to help them begin to engage with the Indigenous Australian cultural understanding of one's identity as connected to land or country and all that is part of it.

Using appropriate resources, introduce culturally specific ideas about Indigenous Australians and their connection and relationship with the land. The following web link is a starting point to provide you with information to help explain this concept to your students:

Australian Indigenous Cultural Heritage - Australian Government

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/indigenous/>

Mission Voices - Spirituality, ABC

<http://www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/spirituality/default.htm>

3.2 Ask students to list or describe the places that have special importance to them and/or their family and community. Ask them to draw a picture of one of these places and to write words around the picture that explain why this place is special to them. Share these with the class.

3.3 As a class, visit the following web link:

Aboriginal Sites and Places

<http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/land/aboriginal-sites.html>

Hold a discussion about why the places shown on the web site are of importance to Aboriginal people. Divide the class into pairs and ask them to create three rules that a visitor to an Aboriginal site should follow. Ask each pair to share their ideas with the class.

# Pre Performance

## Activity Four - Indigenous Australian Art

### Curriculum Links Visual Arts

---

4.1 In this activity your students will view Indigenous Australian art works. Depending on the age of your students you can discuss the cultural meanings of some of the traditional symbols used in certain art works.

Some links to help you with this activity are provided below:

Women Indigenous Artists

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/indigenous/womenartistswa/>

Aboriginal Symbols and Their Meanings

<http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/aboriginal-symbols-and-their-m.php>

4.2 A Google image search of 'Australian Aboriginal Art' is a good source for examples of art works. Hold a class discussion that talks about the features of the art works the colours used, the patterns, symbols and representations of animals and people.

4.3 Explain to your students what a saltbush is. Once again you can find some images of this plant using Google. Explain to your students that the performance is called *Saltbush* because of the presence of this plant in almost all Indigenous Australian places. Ask your students to draw a picture of a saltbush using the influence of some of the colours and techniques used in Indigenous art works.

# Post Performance

## Activity Five - Performance Reflection



### Curriculum Links English/Drama

---

5.1 This activity is an opportunity for students to share their responses to the performance. Ask your students to refresh their memories of the performance by viewing the video of *Saltbush* at:

*Saltbush* - YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfHH88FnFn4>

5.2 After viewing the video clip of *Saltbush*, ask your students to work with a partner to recall and evaluate the performance. Each pair is to complete the following tasks:

- What was the story of *Saltbush* about?
- What places did the friends travel to?
- List four things you liked about the performance. You can comment on the music, the images and the dancing.
- Choose one moment in the performance and describe what happened.
- Give two reasons why you liked this moment.

5.3 In groups of three or four, ask your students to create three frozen pictures to show moments from the performance.

# Post Performance

## Activity Six - Indigenous Australian Stories



### Curriculum Links HSIE/Drama

---

6.1 In this activity your students will visit the ABC Indigenous Australian story website *Dust Echoes*.

ABC - *Dust Echoes*

<http://www.abc.net.au/dustechoes/>

This site shows animations of dreamtime stories from Central Arnhem Land. Choose one of the stories for your class to view.

6.2 Have a class discussion about the story and the events in the narrative. Use questioning to help your students identify characters and to recount key moments.

6.3 Divide the class into small groups. Each group is to create a frozen picture that shows one image from the story. Allow the groups time to prepare and then ask each group to show their work to the class.

6.4 Allow the class time to explore the *Dust Echoes* website. Form small groups and ask them to watch one of other stories on the website. Ask each group to recount the story they watched for the class.

# References



ABC - *Dust Echoes*

<http://www.abc.net.au/dustechoes/>

Aboriginal Art Store - Women Indigenous Artists

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/indigenous/womenartistswa/>

Aboriginal Art Store - Aboriginal Symbols and Their Meanings

<http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/aboriginal-symbols-and-their-m.php>

Aboriginal Sites and Places

<http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/land/aboriginal-sites.html>

Australian Indigenous Cultural Heritage - Australian Government

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/indigenous/>

The Australian, Review of *Saltbush*

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/arts/sensory-artisans-roll-out-magic-carpet/story-e6frg8n6-1225713269894>

Compagnia TPO

<http://www.tpo.it/>

Mission Voices - *Spirituality*, ABC

<http://www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/spirituality/default.htm>