

MR FREEZY



Teachers Notes

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Introduction

These teachers' notes have been designed to assist teachers with classroom preparation and extension work in relation to Arena Theatre Company's production of **Mr Freezy**. The activities are based on the understanding that the students will have seen the play first. We hope that this resource will assist you to further enjoy your theatre experience back in the classroom. The activities are designed for students from Years Prep – 6.

These activities have been designed using many of the VELS Domains and Dimensions. Many of the activities can be modified to suit the appropriate year level. However, the Object Theatre activities may be more suitable for upper primary students.

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.

We hope that you and your students enjoy the play and the activities listed in this kit!

Mr Freezy

The power of steel. The soul of a scoop. The heart of a hero.

An ice-cream van comes alive as everything in it transforms to create a wild and epic story...

Scoopy is an ice-cream scoop who can't stand the cold or the brain freezes that come with his job. When his home is endangered, he is called by Mr Freezy on a quest to distant and dangerous lands. On his travels, Scoopy encounters a world of robo-chickens, milkshake speedway racers and Godzilla-like food processing machines.

With all the characters created out of real food, utensils and packaging, Mr Freezy demonstrates the incredible skills of object theatre makers Men of Steel in imaginative play exploring ideas of bravery, loss and belonging.

Mr Freezy will delight and excite very young audiences, while exploring themes of conflict, conciliation and creativity. The use of object theatre will inspire young audiences to discover a new world of everyday objects just waiting to go on adventures.

Playing with food has never been so exciting!

About Arena Theatre Company

Arena Theatre Company creates dynamic, sophisticated, contemporary theatre designed to genuinely engage young audiences aged 5 to 25. The Company creates productions of varying scales for regional, national, and international touring, from small in-schools touring shows, to large-scale, site-specific multimedia works that combine a seamless fusion of cinema, theatre, animation and surround sound. Based in Melbourne, Victoria, the company tours its work regionally and nationally each year. Internationally, the company has toured to the United Kingdom, Asia, North America and New Zealand and embarked on international collaborations with companies in Manchester and Tokyo.

Arena's mission is to create inspiring live performances that have an authentic dialogue with young audiences. The Company's program reflects an ethos founded in entitlement and engagement – the belief that young people are not only entitled to cultural experiences, but that a mutual engagement between young people and professional artists is vital to the evolution of our artform.

Arena Theatre is founded on the belief that theatre creates a space that is surprising, alive, fertile, explosive, dangerous and inspiring. It is a space where contemporary human experience can be uniquely expressed, felt, celebrated and reinvented. It is a space for the exploration of ideas and possibilities. Everyone is entitled to access this space, on equal terms. Arena believes that theatre for younger audiences is not preparation for adulthood, a form of education, or a marginal version of theatre for adults, but an investigation and celebration of the reality of its young audience, in the here and now.

For full information on Arena, visit the website at www.arenatheatre.com.au where you can see videos and photographs of **Mr Freezy** and many other productions for young audiences.

Detailed Activities List

Performing Arts

- Object Theatre Activities: Improvisation – Hot Seat
Improvisation – Life Story
Improvisation – Conversation between two objects
- Create a scene
- Gibberish
- **Mr Freezy** soundtrack

Health

- Healthy food van

Civics & Citizenship

- Friendship
- Heroes & Villains

Mathematics

- Favourite character poll

English

- The Narrative of **Mr Freezy** (including printable jigsaw activity)
- Classroom object character
- Write a review (including printable PMI chart)

Visual Arts / Design

- **Mr Freezy** portraits
- New character for **Mr Freezy**
- Design your own set
- Create your own wordsearch
- Printable wordsearch
- Printable colour-in activity

Performing Arts

Object Theatre Activities

VELS: *The Arts, Interpersonal Learning, Communication, Thinking Processes*

Mr Freezy is performed using Men of Steel's fantastic object theatre skills. There is some more information on object theatre at the back of this resource. Here are some activities you could try in the classroom:

- Improvisation: Hot Seat. A student performs with an object answering questions from the class. Some examples are: A press conference where the object is being interviewed by many members of the media (this creates an atmosphere of the whole class performing, not just one student), a red carpet event where the object character is a celebrity and the rest of the class fans or media
- Improvisation: Life story. A student tells the life story of an object from the objects point of view. Encourage the students to be as creative as possible, telling their story with great pride.
- Improvisation: Conversation between two objects. Give the students a scenario. E.g. a conversation between two classroom objects after the students and teachers have left for the day, two objects waiting for a bus.

Create a scene

In small groups students can create a scene with objects found in the classroom. Each group should have the same objects. E.g. A ruler, a pencil, an eraser an exercise book. Give each group the same instructions but allow them to come up with their own scenarios.

A good set of instructions could be:

1. Create a scene with four characters (who)
2. Decide on a location for the scene (where)
3. Decide a time for the scene (when)
4. Come up with a scenario (why/what)
5. The scene can be no longer than two minutes.

"You have ten minutes. Go!"

After the scenes are presented, compare them. Where there any similarities / differences?

Did

particular objects invite particular kind of voices or personalities?

As with all performance-based activities, encourage students to practice good theatre etiquette and be supportive and encouraging of each other by clapping after each performance.

SKILLS: *collaboration, communication, performing, persuading, responding to other's work, sharing ideas, viewing, working to a timeline*

Gibberish

VELS: The Arts, Communication, Thinking processes

In **Mr Freezy**, the performers use mostly gibberish to tell the story. **Mr Freezy** is the only character who speaks in English.

- Why do you think that they do that?
- What benefits could this have for different audiences? (e.g. If the show is performed in different countries).

In this production, the performers have used their own made-up version of gibberish. Can you come up with a made-up language? This could be lots of fun.

A good starting point could be "Create a short scene of buying an ice-cream - or something healthy!" It may be helpful for the students to create the scene in English first and then 'translate' to Gibberish.

For older students, here is a link to lesson on how to speak a particular gibberish dialect:
<http://www.wikihow.com/Speak-Gibberish>

SKILLS: communication, creating, performing, presenting in a range of ways, seeing patterns

Mr Freezy 'Soundtrack'

VELS: The Arts, Communication, Thinking processes

In groups, create a piece of music that tells the story of **Mr Freezy**. Here are some different ways you could do this:

- Write the lyrics to a song telling the story of Mr Freezy, about one of the characters or a relationship between two of the characters, about the Mr Freezy van or the people who work there, about Prong City, etc
- Use the music from Mr Freezy to generate your own lyrics, or if you have access to music programs (like Garage Band) at your school create a song from scratch
- Use musical instruments (or other objects from around the classroom) to create a musical score for Mr Freezy. In animations and film music is often used to tell the story or heighten the emotions. Remember the story of Mr Freezy (see the Narrative activity for a list of plot points) and create a piece of music that reflects the story. E.g. What does Scoopy sound like? Is he an upbeat character or a slow plodding character? How did Scoopy feel when his Mum told him that he would never be a scoop? What does Prong city sound like? Etc.

You could record these, using a program like Garage Band or film the performances. If you were really excited, you could make a music video!!

We'd love to hear your songs! Please email your recordings, lyrics or films to Arena Theatre Company: info@arenatheatre.com.au

SKILLS: communication, creating, performing, presenting in a range of ways

Health

VELS: Health & Physical Education, Interpersonal Development, English, Communication, Design, Creativity & Technology, ICT, Thinking processes

Healthy food van

Is the food in the Mr Freezy van healthy? In groups, create a food van that sells only healthy food and drink.

Give it a name. Create a menu. Give the menu items prices. Design a logo for your van.
Extension: What sort of characters could emerge from this food van?

Older students could use the Internet to research the food, prices, etc for their food van and present their end product in a PowerPoint presentation. They could even 'pitch' their idea to the rest of the class.

SKILLS: collaboration, communication, designing, explaining, locating information, making choices, organising, persuading, planning, presenting in a range of ways, selecting information, sharing ideas

Civics & Citizenship

Friendship

VELS: Civics and Citizenship, English

Scoopy and Scrappy both felt like 'the odd one out' before they found each other. In the story of Mr Freezy, becoming friends made them feel good about themselves. Discuss the theme of friendship through the characters in Mr Freezy.

What were some of the 'feelings' Scoopy experienced when he couldn't scoop the ice cream? How did those feelings change when he met Scrappy? Ask students to write about what it means to be a good friend. It could be a list of attributes, a story, a play, a journal entry, etc.

SKILLS: inquiry, reflecting, social awareness

Heroes and Villains

VELS: The Arts, Civics and Citizenship, Thinking processes

In fairytales, cartoons, books, television, film and theatre there are often heroes and villains.

- What is a villain?
- Who is the villain in Mr Freezy?
- How do we know Prong is a villain?
- How do his actions show us that he is a villain?

- Do the theatremakers use any other techniques to show us that he is a villain? (e.g. Voice, sound, lighting, etc.)

Use role-play to present some real-life heroes and villains. If this is difficult, you could use heroes and villains from TV. Remember, some peoples' ideas on what makes a hero or villain may be different. Some ideas to get you started: Australians of the Year (Lee Kernaghan, Tim Flannery, Cathy Freeman etc), sports heroes, everyday heroes (someone who saved a life, Mum or Dad, etc) thieves, an arsonist who started a bush fire, everyday villains (people who waste water, tobacco companies, athletes who use performance-enhancing drugs).

A great extension activity for older students can be found at:

http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/gender_portrayal/villains_heroes_heroines.cfm

SKILLS: creating, generalising, performing, questioning, recognising bias, sharing ideas, social awareness

Mathematics

Favourite character poll

VELS: Mathematics, ICT

Who was your favourite character in Mr Freezy?

First ask the students to make a guess and write it in their books. Come up with a list of characters in the class and conduct a vote on who was the class favourite. Use this data to generate a graph. Older students can do this using Excel.

To jog the students' memories, the characters are:

- Scoopy – an ice cream scoop and the hero of the show
- Scrappy – also a scoop, used for lollies, nuts and other toppings (and Scoopy's friend)
- Mr Freezy – is the logo of the van and is under threat from Prong
- Prong – a hot dog machine and villain of the show
- Scoopy's Mum – also an ice cream scoop who is kidnapped by Prong
- Scrappy's family – lolly scoops of assorted sizes

SKILLS: analysing, checking, classifying, predicting, presenting in a range of ways, problem solving

English

The Narrative of Mr Freezy

VELS: English, Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning, Communication, Thinking Processes

In groups, unscramble the events on the jigsaw worksheet provided, by cutting along the dotted lines and putting the pieces in the correct order to tell the story of Mr Freezy. (There is a teachers' copy that has the correct order)

OR:

Retell the story of Mr Freezy by writing a short story or creating a picture book. It will help to have a brainstorm to refresh the students' memories on the finer details of the story. (Students may find this challenging as Mr Freezy is mostly performed using gibberish.)

1. In small groups brainstorm the events that happened in Mr Freezy. E.g. Scoopy and Scrappy meet, They arrive at Prong City, Mr Freezy calls on Scoopy for help.
2. Each group can share their list of events with the class, creating a big list that the class can then put in the correct order. (I have included a list to refer to so that you may help the students if they get stuck)
3. Students can use this order of events to create a storyboard for their short story or picture book.
4. When writing their stories, encourage the students to create dialogue for the characters, create some back story for the characters – perhaps revealing why Prong has turned evil, if Scoopy has any other siblings, perhaps Mr Freezy and Prong were once friends?
5. Have a presentation of the students' work. They could read the stories to each other, share the picture books with students from another class, etc

SKILLS: collaboration, considering options, elaborating, ordering events, planning, presenting in a range of ways, reflecting, restating, sharing ideas, working independently

The Story of Mr Freezy – Teachers version (in order of events)

1. Scoopy is not very good at scooping ice creams as he is afraid of the cold. His Mum tells him that he'll never be a scoop.
2. Mr Freezy calls to Scoopy to help. He tells Scoopy that he is dying and that Prong is killing him.
3. Prong kidnaps Scoopy's Mum.
4. Scoopy sets off on journey to save Mr Freezy. Scoopy finds himself in the middle of a Monster Derby.
5. Scoopy meets Scrappy, who does not fit in either.
6. Scoopy and Scrappy set off to save Mr Freezy.
7. Scoopy and Scrappy get caught in a sink and are separated.
8. When Scoopy gets to Prong City he finds that Prong is turning everything into chips.
9. Scoopy finds Scrappy and they fight Prong.
10. Scoopy and Scrappy defeat Prong and save Scoopy's Mum and Mr Freezy.
11. The End.

Class version

✂- - - - -

Scoopy and Scrappy get caught in a sink and are separated.

✂- - - - -

Prong kidnaps Scoopy's Mum.

✂- - - - -

Scoopy is not very good at scooping ice creams as he is afraid of the cold. His Mum tells him that he'll never be a scoop.

✂- - - - -

Scoopy and Scrappy defeat Prong and save Scoopy's Mum and Mr Freezy.

✂- - - - -

Scoopy meets Scrappy, who does not fit in either.

✂- - - - -

Scoopy sets off on journey to save Mr Freezy. Scoopy finds himself in the middle of a Monster Derby.

✂- - - - -

The End.

✂- - - - -

Mr Freezy calls to Scoopy to help. He tells Scoopy that he is dying and that Prong is killing him.

✂- - - - -

Scoopy finds Scrappy and they fight Prong.

✂- - - - -

When Scoopy gets to Prong City he finds that Prong is turning everything into chips.

✂- - - - -

Scoopy and Scrappy set off to save Mr Freezy.

✂- - - - -

Classroom object character

VELS: English, Thinking processes

Find an object in the classroom and write a story, newspaper report, journal entry etc about it. It will help to create a profile on the character first. Include the following: Name, age, gender, profession (if an adult), family, ethnicity, hobbies, likes/dislikes etc etc. You can go into as much details as you like.

SKILLS: creating, making choices, presenting in a range of ways

Write a Review

VELS: The Arts, English

After watching Mr Freezy, complete a PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) chart to record the students responses to the show. These can be explained using the following questions:

PLUS What did you like about Mr Freezy?

MINUS What were the things you didn't like in Mr Freezy?

INTERESTING What did you find interesting about Mr Freezy?

You can prompt the students by reminding them of the different parts to consider:

- The story?
- The characters?
- The performers?
- The set?
- The lighting?
- The music and sound?

The review can be modified to suit different levels. It could be a one sentence review for early years or half a page for middle years. Early years students could draw a picture to go with their review and middle years could type it up and present like a newspaper review.

We'd love to see your work! Please email your review to Arena Theatre Company:
info@arenatheatre.com.au

SKILLS: analysing, communication, explaining, providing feedback, reflecting, reporting



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PLUS

MINUS

INTERESTING

Visual Arts / Design

Freezy Portraits

VELS: The Arts, Design, Creativity & Technology

Draw a picture of your favourite character, or a scene from Mr Freezy. (These could make a nice display, reminding students of the performance)

SKILLS: designing, presenting in a range of ways, visually representing

New characters for Mr Freezy

VELS: English, The Arts, Design, Creativity & Technology

What are some other objects that you might find in an ice cream van? List some other characters that could have been in Mr Freezy. Draw pictures of them and give them names.

SKILLS: creating, designing, presenting in a range of ways

Design your own Set

VELS: The Arts, Design, Creativity & Technology

The set design for Mr Freezy was very colourful and complex. Discuss the elements of set design with the students. What sort of considerations would they need to make when designing? (E.g. When creating the Mr Freezy set, Jonathon Oxlade would have needed to find out what characteristics an ice cream van has and how they would work in theatrical setting.) Discuss the process of designing a set. (E.g. Discussions with the director, research, drawing, building a set model). Here is a picture of the concept sketch for the Mr Freezy set by designer Jonathon Oxlade. This may help students to get an idea of what set sketches look like.



Ask students to design their own set for Mr Freezy. It could still be an ice cream van or perhaps an ice cream shop. When designing their sets, they will need to keep some of the following in mind: How will the audience view it? (They may need to play with the scale – making some objects bigger or smaller so that the audience can see them). Where is the ‘backstage area’ (so performers can be hidden from the audience)? What materials could they use? What colours? Lighting? Etc. The level of detail will be dependent on the level of the students.

We’d love to see your work! Please email your sketches / photos to Arena Theatre Company: info@arenatheatre.com.au

SKILLS: creating, designing, presenting in a range of ways

Create your own Word Search

VELS: Design, Creativity & Technology, ICT, Thinking Processes

After completing the Mr Freezy word search, upper primary students can create their own wordsearch using the link below:

<http://www.creativity-portal.com/becreative/activities/wordsearch.html>

SKILLS: designing, making choices, planning, presenting in a range of ways, problem solving, selecting information, visually representing, working independently

Mr Freezy Word Search

N	A	V	M	A	E	R	C	E	C	I	M
G	Z	S	C	O	O	P	Y	E	I	O	K
E	R	T	A	E	H	T	H	L	N	Y	O
B	Y	P	P	Q	C	A	D	S	A	F	R
N	L	R	Y	F	S	I	T	C	U	S	M
F	P	O	G	O	D	E	Z	R	B	T	W
P	K	N	V	O	R	T	A	A	E	C	I
C	A	G	R	D	Y	B	Y	P	P	E	T
Y	Z	E	E	R	F	R	M	P	W	J	P
O	H	R	X	A	M	I	G	Y	Q	B	N
E	B	E	V	Y	O	P	C	S	Z	O	T
Y	S	D	U	B	A	H	O	T	D	O	G

Find these words:

Food	Ice cream van	Monster derby
Mr Freezy	Objects	Prong
Scoopy	Scrappy	Theatre

And there’s one other food in the word-search... can you find it? Hint: h _ _ _ d _ g

Name: _____



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I'm Mr Freezy. Colour me in!



8 Helpful hints on Object Theatre by director Chris Kohn

Object Theatre is a term that has been used in many different ways. For the purposes of this paper, I will define it as a form of puppetry in which real objects, unchanged with in any way, are taken out of their original context and are animated by a puppeteer in order to tell a story.

Below, I have outlined below a basic series of questions to help teachers who wish to use object theatre in the classroom. The suggestions below are not hard-and-fast rules, but are intended as a guide and departure point.

1. *Decide on Object-driven or Story-driven model*

Broadly, there are two main ways to begin. In the object-driven model, the creators choose an object or category of objects, and build a story through improvisation, working with the inherent qualities of the objects. In the story-driven model, the creators decide on a narrative to be told, such as a familiar myth, historical event, novel or something from their own lives and then appropriate objects are sought and used to tell the story. Each method contains elements of the other, as you will see.

Mr Freezy example: *We started with an object-driven model, choosing to start with a world, gather objects from that world and devise a story through improvising with the objects. As we made decisions about the story, we shifted into story-driven mode, seeking out appropriate objects to be our villains, antagonists and so on.*

2. *Decide on a world*

As there is an almost endless array of objects to choose from, it is useful to set some boundaries. You could choose to limit the objects to those found in one room of the house, or one particular environment. For example, a tool shed, school library or bathroom. Once decided, students can bring objects from home that come from that room. But you don't have to work with locations. You could ask students to bring an "odd-shaped object" or "broken thing" from home. Or you could ask half to bring a blue object, and the other half to bring a red object. That could be an interesting way to explore issues of difference as a source of conflict.

Mr Freezy example: *We decided on the world of the fast food van. We divided this into two opposing lands – that of the cold (ice cream) and the hot (hot dogs and hot chips).*

3. *Choose objects from the world*

If the world is readily at hand (like a class room or school library) you can have everyone choose an object of their own to bring to the play. If the world is a domestic one, ask everyone to bring an object from that room (with permission, naturally.) Encourage students not to bring toys or objects that have a pre-determined character, like an action figure or doll. It is far more fun and interesting to invest character into something more neutral like a cup, banana or hand towel. It is also worthwhile to ask students to first play with the object to see if it lends itself to transformation. Some objects just seem to work better than others,

but some just take longer than others to reveal their true nature! Also some objects work better in a group, like a bucket of chips, rather than an individual chip.

Mr Freezy example: *We went shopping in kitchen supply stores, food packaging wholesalers, supermarkets and fruit and vegetable markets, “trying” objects out in the store before purchasing them and bringing them to the rehearsal room. About eighty per cent of the things we bought ended up in the show.*

4. Find the “character” for each object

This is a really fun part that encourages participants to consider the inherent qualities of an object and project human or animal qualities onto it. The character might emerge from the object’s shape, weight, the way it moves or its function. Find these characters not through discussion, but through play.

Mr Freezy example: *In our potato city, the poor, disenfranchised people were represented by unwashed potatoes while the upper classes were washed and more expensive varieties. And who was responsible for law enforcement and punishment? A menacing red potato peeler, of course! This object was perfect because its function, colour and shape all suggested the character. Another example was an ice cream scoop, who we called Scoopy. It had a “mouth” which was always agape, so his character became an adolescent who was adventuring through the world, in a constant state of wonder.*

It is a good exercise to ask everyone to look at the object from all possible angles. A teapot might just look like a teapot right way up, but turn it on its head and it becomes a wise old woman with a long nose and mouth that opens and closes. Also, an object may have two contradictory characters, like a Jekyll and Hyde.

Mr Freezy examples: *a relatively bland hotdog machine was turned upside down and suddenly it was a three-fanged beast with a long electrical cord for a tail – we had our villain! Her henchman was an old-fashioned chip cutter which was a placid pussycat when in its normal position, but became a Godzilla-like monster when stood on its end.*

5. Find a voice for each character

This stage is often inextricably linked to the previous one. The character’s voice emerges in tandem with its physicality. There are a few key choices to be made in relation to an object’s voice. Firstly, do they need to speak at all? It is possible to create character without voice, just as dancers can communicate without words. If they are to have a voice, do they need to speak a recognisable language? Gibberish can be great because it requires the performer to communicate feeling through pitch, tone, direction, dynamics and rhythm. This is an important skill for any performer, as the words themselves only ever tell a small part of the story. It also liberates the performer from having to write and/or learn vast lines of dialogue. Some objects may lend themselves to a female voice, others male. Some are high status and others low. It can be an interesting exercise for participants to swap objects and experiment with different voices for the same object. Through play, children naturally negotiate the rules and a single voice will probably be agreed upon, probably without it needing to be stated. It is a good exercise for different puppeteers to try to find their own interpretation of the same voice, representing the same qualities. It demands the use of imagination, focus and vocal performance skills.

Mr Freezy example: *We chose to use mostly gibberish, with a few key words to signpost key elements of a scene, because we were interested in telling the story through rhythm, dynamics and intention. However, we discovered that we needed a little more help through*



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text and decided that one character alone – Mr Freezy himself, would speak entirely in English to ensure the story was crystal clear.

6. *Create interaction between the objects*

All children understand the concept that status and conflict are at the heart of all drama – children’s informal role playing games are founded on it. It is even built into the most simple of games – scissors, paper, rock. Some objects, like people have more power in certain situations than others, and this creates conflict. How does this relate to our objects? One way to find this out is to bring two objects together, animated by two puppeteers, and improvise.

Mr Freezy example: *When we introduced the character of the Chux wipe, it was clear that his function was to clean. His preoccupation with physical cleanliness quickly morphed into a religious devotion to moral cleanliness. When we brought him into contact with Scoopy, the relationship quickly developed into that of evangelical preacher and potential convert. Conflict was introduced when Scoopy was quite happy how he was, and didn’t want to be cleaned!*

7. *Create some scenarios*

Use the objects to play out small scenes. It is probably best to use two or three at a time, to keep the focus clear. If you are working in an object-driven mode, create lots of scenes and show them to each other. See if there are underlying themes emerging, or episodes that could be linked to create a larger narrative. If you are working in a story-driven mode, you might want to assign characters to objects, and start playing out scenario from the narrative in order.

Mr Freezy example: *We created several “chapters” to our show, each featuring one or two new characters, plus the protagonist, Scoopy. The concept of a “journey” from land to land emerged as we wanted to be able to introduce many different characters, without having an overly complicated plot. Separating it into chapters meant we could rehearse short sequences separately before trying to piece them together.*

8. *Put some scenes together, rehearse and show it to an audience!*

Who's Who: The Creative Team

Director/Co-Creator: Chris Kohn

Performers/Co-Creators: Hamish Fletcher, Tamara Rewse, and Sam Routledge

Designer: Jonathan Oxlade

Dramaturg: Julianne O'Brien

Composer: Kelly Ryall

Chris Kohn, Director / Co-Creator

Chris is a graduate of VCA School of Drama (Directing) in 1998. As Artistic Director of Stuck Pigs Squealing Theatre, he has directed and co-written many shows, including *The Black Swan of Trespass*, *The Eisteddfod* and *Lally Katz* and the *Terrible Mysteries of the Volcano*. He has directed for Red Stitch Actors Theatre, Melbourne Workers Theatre, Rawcus, Arena Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Company B Belvoir, ChamberMade and Sydney Theatre Company. In 2004 was recipient of an Ian Potter Cultural Trust fellowship, received the 2004 George Fairfax Memorial award and an award for Excellence in Direction from the New York Fringe Festival. His writing on the theatre has been published in *Real Time* and *Lowdown*. He was co-recipient, with *Lally Katz*, of a State Library of Victoria Creative Fellowship in 2006, researching the history of Vaudeville in Melbourne. His shows have been nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award and twelve Green Room Awards and received six, including two for Best Production in the Independent category. From 2005-2007, Chris was Artistic Associate at Arena Theatre Company, directing and co-writing *Missing Link* and *Mr Freezy*. He became Arena's Artistic Director in 2008. In 2009, he has directed *Goodbye Vaudeville Charlie Mudd* for Arena Theatre Company in a co-production with Malthouse Theatre.

Hamish Fletcher, Performer / Co-Creator

Hamish was a founding member of Kneehigh Puppeteers in 1995, a giant suit and stilt-based puppet company based in Adelaide; he toured nationally and internationally performing outdoor festival productions with them for 2 years. He then studied acting at VCA and went on to work in the props department of SOCOG and perform in the Sydney Olympics opening and closing ceremonies as an aerialist and stilt walker. Shortly after he began his own company, Oblivionart, and has produced and co-produced many community and arts performances and celebrations, including "8ft Baby Food" in conjunction with Fourbux Progressive Arts. During his Postgraduate Diploma in Puppetry (2004) he also completed an artist in residence program at the Melbourne Aquarium. 2005 saw him spend most of the year in Japan designing part of the Australia Day celebrations at the World Expo (Aichi) and stage-managing the outdoor artist program for the Australian Pavilion. He has worked as an Associate Director in puppetry for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games opening ceremony and Citrawarna 2007, Malaysia. He co-devised and performed in "Men of Steel" for the Melbourne Comedy Festival 2006 to a 5-stars from *The Age* and the Festival Director's Gong. "Men of Steel" toured to Edinburgh Festival in August 2007 and continued to Dublin, Brighton, Canterbury, Beijing, London and Singapore. Hamish studied under Philippe Genty and Mary Underwood as part of their residency at the VCA in 2006.

Tamara Rewse, Performer / Co-Creator

Tamara has BA Degrees in Drama, Dance and Education and a Postgraduate Diploma in Puppetry (VCA) 2004. Credits include *The Human Layer* (Visionary Award, 2005 Melbourne Fringe Festival) *Black Hole Theatre*, *In the Beginning Umphh.....* (2006) and *COOP* (2007-2008), and *Men of Steel* (2004-2008). In 2006 Tamara attended Charleville Mezieres International Puppetry Festival on the Handspan Research and Study Grant and also worked

with the director Die Schaubude Puppen Theater in Berlin. Tamara recently completing a world tour with Men of Steel to Ireland, Hong Kong, China the London SOHO Theatre, NZ and Singapore. She is returning to Berlin in December 2008 to work on an installation project called TUCKERBAG and to attend workshops with puppeteer Duda Paiva who is developing a new solo work with Tamara.

Sam Routledge, Performer / Co-Creator

Sam has been working as a puppeteer, performer and a creator of visual theatre since completing a BA in Communication (Theatre & Media) at Charles Sturt University Bathurst in 2000. Alongside living the dream with Men Of Steel, he has performed with Black Hole Theatre, Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Kim Carpenter's Theatre of Image and LATT Children's Theatre, Seoul and completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Puppetry at the VCA in 2004. He co-directed Blood Policy's new media/puppetry work Operation as part of the 2006 Next Wave Festival and directed the installation performance Please Hold for the 2008 Next Wave Festival. In December, he travelled to Denmark to perform in Gruppe 38's production The Holy Night at their Aarhus base and has an ongoing collaborative relationship with My Darling Patricia, which continues on their new work Night Garden. Sam is currently directing the development of Blood Policy's new Machinima/Puppetry production The Outside.

Julianne O'Brien, Dramaturg

Julianne is a playwright with many stage and screen credits including Blue Heelers (Southern Star) and BackBerner (ABC TV Sydney). She consults as a dramaturg for theatre (Polyglot Puppet Theatre, Windmill Theatre Company in S.A.), lectures in story design at Victoria University, teaches comedy writing for Swinburne University and writes features for The Age. In 2005, O'Brien wrote, performed & produced The ArbiTraitor, one women show for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. O'Brien was head writer on Arena Theatre Company's multimedia trilogy – Autopsy, Mass and Panacea which won the 1999 ASSITEJ President's award for 'Best in the World', presented in Norway. Both Autopsy and her highly acclaimed first play The Women There. have toured Canada as invitees of major theatre festivals. O'Brien wrote Arena Theatre Company's Eat Your Young, commissioned by the 2000 Adelaide Festival; the 'sell-out' show was reviewed in The Age as 'exhilarating'. Eat Your Young toured Taiwan in May 2001 and then an extensive tour of Australian capital cities.

Jonathon Oxlade, Designer

Jonathon studied Illustration and Sculpture at the Queensland College of Art; since leaving he has trained with Kid Praha in the Czech Republic focusing on puppet design and aesthetics. He works as a freelance Theatre Designer, Visual Artist and Illustrator. Jonathon has designed set and costumes for many independent Australian theatre artists, collaborated with national and international theatre makers and worked with The Queensland Theatre Company, Circa, Kooemba Jdarra, Kite Theatre, Real TV Project, LaBoite Theatre, Venues and Festivals including the Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Festival, Adelaide Fringe Festival and the Queensland Art Gallery. Jonathon recently completed illustrations for a new picture book for Hachette Livre/Lothian Books called THE EMPTY CITY. Jonathon received the 2005 Matilda Award: Best Designer for A Christmas Carol and Contribution to Queensland Theatre. Jonathon was recently awarded the Lord Mayor's Fellowship Grant to attend the PRAGUE QUADRENNIEL of Scenography and Theatre Architecture.

Kelly Ryall, Composer

Kelly is an award winning composer and sound designer working in the realm of theatre, film and dance. In 2007 he received the Melbourne International Festival award (Spacemunki & Small Revolutions) and in 2005 received a Green Room Award and Fringe Award for

outstanding sound design. In 2008 he has been nominated for Green Room Awards for his compositional work on Chapters from the Pandemic. His recent shows include: Chocolate Monkey and Space Monkey (The Amazing Business), Chapters from the Pandemic and Detest (Angus Cerini's Doubletap), Mercury Fur (little death), The Meat Show (The Town Bikes) and Coop (Black Hole Theatre Co), Tenderness (Platform Youth Theatre) and The Glory (Hothouse Theatre Co), Attempts on her life (UHT) and Love Monkey (The Amazing Business). He is currently working with Griffin Theatre Co on Don't say The Words, Arena Theatre Co on Mr Freezy and the Uninvited Guests Show on The Man With The September Face. He is co-founder of the Amazing Business, an Artistic Associate of the Storeroom Theatre Workshop and a musician with his band High Pass Filter.

Useful resources

<http://www.arenatheatre.com.au/livework/index.php?work=mrfreezy>
The Mr Freezy page of Arena's website

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jebnP9vBT50>
A YouTube video of Men of Steel, in their self-titled show, Men of Steel.

<http://www.unima.org.au/>
The Australian chapter of the international puppetry organisation

<http://www.poconnor-puppets.com/articles.html>
An excellent short essay on the principles of object theatre by Pamela O'Connor

<http://www.wikihow.com/Speak-Gibberish>
WikiHow page on 'How to speak Gibberish'