

Indefinitearticles present

claytime



Marketing Pack

Developed with Colleges Nursery Cambridge, Junction Theatre Cambridge, Lyric Hammersmith, Colchester Mercury Theatre and the New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich

About Indefinite Articles:

Indefinite Articles was started in 1995 by sculptor Sally Brown and puppeteer Steve Tiplady. They wanted to create a theatre that was open and live that lets its audience know it; believing that this is the medium's trump card over its more technological rivals. They also realised that it was often the most ordinary things that made the most interesting transformations and decided to let objects and materials tell their own stories.

Their first project **Pinocchio** (for 4-11 year olds) told Collodi's story of a puppet boy Who wants to be real using the tools from a carpenter's workshop, it subsequently toured nationally and internationally and has been performed over 600 times in theatres, festivals, schools, arts centre and village halls.

Their second show **Bullseye** (for 6-11 year olds) told the story of Theseus using a giant ball of string. It played for two seasons at the National Gallery and has toured many schools.

In 2002 their third show **Dust** (for adults) won the **Time Out Live award** for most innovative show. It used sand and overhead projectors to tell the story of the Odyssey. In 2005 their fourth show **The Magic Lamp** (for 4 year olds and over) oil, paper and light brought to life an Iraqi telling of Aladdin, it was commissioned by BAC and the Junction and was reinvented for the Lyric Hammersmith for Christmas 2005 and the Royal Exchange Manchester Christmas 2006.

Claytime is the fifth Indefinite Articles production and the first created for and with such a young audience. It has developed from a philosophy of making "open" theatre shows where the audience are actively involved in the creation of the story.

About Claytime:

Where does clay come from?

‘The shop’ Mariama aged 4

‘The pipes in the play factory’ Chelsea aged 4

‘The mountains’ Katriona aged 4

Background:

Claytime was developed over the last two years from Sally’s work as an artist in residence in Colleges Nursery in Cambridge. Her work with the children is child-centred, process led and focused on developing children’s ideas and imaginations. She often uses clay as a medium and observed how the children reacted to, what was often, their first experience with the material.

‘Clay by its very nature is democratic and inclusive. It offers rich possibilities for children at all levels of development. The malleable character of clay has the effect of slowing children down as they experience its qualities. They become scientists, alchemists, sculptors and architects in their investigations of what the material can do and what its properties are.

Through the process of discovering that clay can hold water, dry out, change shape or become liquid, the material acts as a spur for thinking through and realising an idea. It also becomes a safe outlet for exploring and expressing difficult emotions; such as the shock of finding a dead bird, or the anxiety of a new baby in the family.’

“T.(aged 4) had been working for some time with a slab of clay, breaking little pieces off and rolling or squashing them back into the lump, until they disappeared. He then announced that he was making a bike. He tore off another bit, named it as a ‘seat’, then flattened it into the clay. Next came a ‘wheel’, then a ‘bicycle bell’, another ‘wheel’ and so on, all to follow the same fate. Finally he said, ‘I’m making my bicycle, I’m making it safe’. T’s new bicycle, which he rode to nursery, had been stolen from outside the gate the day before.”

Recognising that clay could be a powerful vehicle for emergent stories, we decided to research this more fully and Steve began improvising stories with small groups of the children. The clay provided a tactile and physical approach to making and inhabiting a story. It allowed children who were less verbally confident to actively engage in the process, and opened up different possibilities for building the narrative, through movement and form as much as words. When a story had seemed to reach its natural ending, anything made from the clay would be returned back to the original mound,

and then, the children would often re-enact the tale and talk about the ‘story in the clay’. Children’s self-esteem and confidence grew as they saw their ideas being valued and taken up in the storying.

A postscript to the Colleges sessions:

Ten months after the clay stories were made; a reception teacher who now had some of the children in her class shared this feedback with us (having watched documentation of the nursery sessions at a recent study morning):

‘I told my class about how I had watched the videos of them doing the clay at Colleges. This began a huge chorus of ”with Sally and Steve, Sally and Steve” and a great deal of reminiscing. Timothy then brought in the books that he had helped to make, which we all shared. I wish I had been videoing them as I read the stories – it was incredible how the children remembered the whole-body movements from acting out the stories with Steve!’

It was then we realised we had the potential for a powerful theatre piece.

Breakdown of Show

- The audience enter and are greeted by the ushers and Sally, who directs them to their seats and/or mats, placed around a vivid blue yet empty stage. Giles plays gentle percussive sounds at side of stage and Steve is sits quietly as a ‘member of audience’.
- When everyone is seated, Sally moves to centre of stage, smiles and welcomes the audience, then disappears behind blue backdrop. Sounds come from offstage of rustling and Sally sighs contentedly as she lifts something up.
- Sally reappears on stage with a large lump of terracotta clay, moves to centre stage and carefully places the clay on the blue ground. She smiles at audience, and then walks round clay and back behind the stage. Steve looks intrigued and sits forward.
- Sally enters stage again, happily carrying second piece of clay and places next to first piece, acknowledges audience then leaves again. Steve slowly moves from his seat towards the stage and stops when he hears Sally entering stage again with third piece.
- The game slowly builds; Steve edges nearer to the clay - trying not to be seen yet finding the material too exciting to resist. Whilst Sally is off stage, he reaches the clay and is so enthusiastic that he can’t help dive-bombing his raised finger into the clay. Sally re-enters with eighth piece and, much to Steve’s surprise, looks on approvingly at his tactile exploration of the material. The clay squelches pleasingly and Steve proceeds to poke more fingers in the clay finally ‘playing’ the clay like a keyboard with all fingers.
- After Steve has played his ‘symphony’ in clay, he jumps up triumphantly and moves to side of clay, Sally smiles, and nods at Steve and then, much to his surprise, suddenly throws him the last piece.
- A shocked Steve staggers around the stage with the lump of clay, trying to lift it above his head, wobbling around until Sally effortlessly lifts it back from him and places it with the rest of the clay in the centre of the stage.
- Sally slowly places one foot then the other on the clay and holds out hand to Steve. He steps on it and when Sally walks forward on the clay, does the same.

Then Steve takes the lead and begins a funny dance over the clay. He takes Sally's hand and together they do a 'tango' on clay.

- They spin around together and then Sally collapses down to rest, sitting on the clay. Again, Steve looks momentarily surprised then also 'sits' on the clay. Sally starts to pull a small piece of clay, rolls it in her hands and passes it to Steve. He examines it and tries out possible uses for it while Sally rolls a second ball and passes it to Steve. Now he jumps up and plays with them as 'eyes' and tries to juggle as Sally throws him a third one, fourth one and so on until Steve can no longer catch them and the balls roll all over the stage floor.
- Steve gathers up all the balls as if to juggle them then, quickly squashes them altogether to make one big ball and – looking very pleased with himself – throws the ball up into the air and catches it. He throws it higher and higher until splat! Meanwhile Sally has made another ball, which she turns into a bowl and offers it to Steve. He places it on his splat-shaped clay while Sally reaches for a terracotta jug and pours water into the clay bowl.
- Sally lifts the bowl full of water to show Steve while he puzzles over how the water can stay in there. He decides to test this material and pushes his finger into the clay. The water pours out onto the mound of clay on the floor and Sally smooths the clay and water together. Steve copies her action and shares his clay coloured hands with the audience and wipes them on his shirt.



- Now Sally builds a landscape on the large mound and after a pause Steve asks 'Where is this?' Sally replies, "I don't know, why don't you ask them" looking to the audience.
- Steve now asks the audience where this landscape is – and they tell him. They also tell him who lives there and a whole lot of other stuff. This material is then fashioned into a story as Sally creates the characters involved out of clay.
- Their story is titled and replayed back to the audience by the performers using the puppets modelled by Sally.

- At the end of the story the audience is thanked and invited onto the edge of the playing surface to play with “our clay.” A number of balls of clay are revealed on the set and the workshop begins.
- At the end of the workshop everyone is invited to place their creation inside a marked-out square at the centre of the stage and asked to clean their hands in the provided bowls of water and dry themselves off with the supplied towels.
- Digital photographs are taken of the clay creation and given to the venue to display.

Marketing strategy ideas:

Indefinite Articles will provide the following:

- A3 posters (numbers as agreed with marketing dept.)
- Full colour flyers address (numbers as agreed with marketing dept.)
- Images and copy for your brochure.
- A sample press release
- A sample direct mail letter for nurseries, schools and children’s centres
- A member of the artistic team available for phone interviews.
- Contact with a dedicated freelance press officer.

Target Audience

- Children aged 3-6 years and their families
- School groups (especially reception and year 1)
- Nursery groups
- Sure Start groups
- Playgroups and play schemes
- Children’s Centres
- Teachers and childcare workers
- Audiences that have attended comparable shows
- Trainee teachers and students
- Those looking for a high quality interactive first experience of theatre for their child
- Puppetry practitioners

Selling Points:

- Unique work for 3-6 year olds.
- High quality product for young audiences that has already been successfully tested.
- Interactive theatre experience
- An improvised show for the age group with live improvised music.
- Puppets made before your eyes.
- An opportunity for parents/carers and children to participate and enjoy a show together.
- Indefinite Articles have a fantastic reputation- Steve is a leading practitioner of puppetry in Britain.
- Sally Brown is an artist in residence at a Cambridge nursery so is very experienced in working with this audience.

- Designed around the principles of Reggio Emilia (a method of learning for young children developed in Italy) by encouraging children to be independent learners, developing and promoting children's creative skills and giving them the opportunity to work alongside professional artists.

Reviews and comments:

About Claytime:

"This is a delightful show that engages the audience directly in its story telling and the use of clay. At the Mercury Theatre, parents and older children as well as the very young seized the chance to participate."

Adrian Stokes, Associate Director, Mercury Theatre, Colchester

About Indefinite Articles:

"Wonderful work which celebrates the possibilities of theatre"

Lyn Gardner, The Guardian

"Genius... a kind of theatrical sorcery. I'd be pleasantly surprised to come across a more original evening"

Time Out, Critic's Choice.

Box Office notes:

Credits:

Directed by Carey English
Designed by Sally Brown
Performed and Devised by Steve Tiplady and Sally Brown
Instruments made and performed by Giles Leaman.
Creative Consultant Guy Dartnell

Practicalities:

Length of show:

- 60 minutes including workshop

Audience numbers:

- Upper limit of 50 children and unlimited adults

Recommended age limit:

- 3-6 years olds.
- It's not recommended for babies.
- Younger children (2 year olds) do enjoy it but it helps to be verbal.
- Older children also seem to want to be involved, though if there are too many they can dominate and unbalance the story.
- Adults enjoy the experience through their children and for themselves; they eagerly grab the clay in the workshop and start creating.

Mess:

- Yes there is mess; it's about clay and participation and children should not be encouraged to wear their Sunday best.
- Every attempt is made to keep it to a minimum; water, soap and towels are on hand for clearing up and the set is waterproof.
- Children are encouraged to sit at the edges of the set during the workshop.
- The clay is machine washable there should be no permanent marks left on clothes. White clothes are best avoided as it may take several washes to clean.

At the end:

- Children will not be allowed to take the clay away with them (that would be really messy). But a group photo of the creations (maybe individual shots) will be taken and given to the venue in a digital format that can be displayed as they see fit.

Suggested brochure copy:

Indefinite Articles present their brand new work for the very young, Claytime, a play with clay, where the audience are invited to participate.

They invite you to a place where the earth's natural material meets with children's imaginations: a world of fabulous forms, amazing animals and morphing monsters. Each Claytime is totally unique - creating its own world, its own characters and its own stories drawn directly from its young audience. Truly, interactive theatre at its most engaging.

This show is made with and for 3 to 6 year olds.

Direct mail letter:

"Wonderful work which celebrates the possibilities of theatre"

Lyn Gardner, The Guardian
(on Indefinite Articles)

Dear Teacher,

Claytime is coming soon!

We are delighted to let you know about **Claytime**, a brand new and high quality theatre show, for young children aged 3 to 6 years coming to NAME OF VENUE on DATES.

Presented by Steve Tiplady and Sally Brown, from the award-winning puppet and animation company Indefinite Articles, **Claytime** is a play with clay in all senses of the word. After exploring the medium of clay through clowning, they ask the young audience for ideas for characters, settings and stories which are then developed immediately. Based on this input, the company then improvises a play. Each play is unique to that specific audience. The piece culminates with a short on-stage workshop where the children have their own opportunity for some hands-on clay time. The whole experience is underscored by a live musician. The environment and characters created are documented by camera and these pictures are left with the centre to be displayed.

Claytime has developed from a philosophy of making “open” theatre shows where the audience are actively involved in the creation of the story. It has also developed out of Sally Brown’s extensive work with early years children in long-term artist’s residencies in nurseries and study of Reggio Emilia. It uses the successful learning principles of Reggio Emilia by encouraging children to be independent learners, developing and promoting children’s creative skills and giving them the opportunity to work alongside professional artists.

To ensure that its young audience have the best possible experience each performance is limited to 40 children (with an unlimited amount of adults).

To book your ticket or find out more information about **Claytime** please call THEATRE BOX OFFICE NUMBER.

With warmest wishes,

THEATRE CONTACT PERSON

Cast and crew biographies:

Sally Brown (Designer, devisor and performer)

Sally Brown is a visual artist with an MA from Chelsea School of Art. She makes objects and installations using diverse materials such as film and horsehair, porcelain and empty swimming pools. She designed The Tiger Child for Tam Tam Theatre and Karagoz for the Little Angel. She is an experienced workshop leader working in a child led and open-ended way. For the last three years she's worked as an Artist in Residence with College's Nursery in Cambridge. In 2004 she visited Reggio Emilia in Italy to look at their world-renowned approach in working with young children.

Carey English (Director)

A founding member of Quicksilver Theatre the pioneering children's theatre company, she notched up over two thousand performances for them in the Eighties. During this time she became increasingly aware of the great aesthetic learning potential of very young children and felt that the artistic principles guiding Quicksilver should apply equally to this age group as to older children. In 1988, supported by an ACGB bursary, she and Cheryl Moskowitz conducted groundbreaking research into theatre for the under- fives, one outcome of which was the first ever national conference to explore this subject. Thus she made a pivotal contribution to the nation-wide momentum in this field and continues to do at a national and international level. Her artistic and education aims are a) to develop a purer, simpler theatre form, which will have deep resonance with very young children; b) to introduce a new dimension into Creativity in the Early Years, which will enfranchise children and empower teachers to trust that their children can be more creative than they ever could have believed.

Giles Leaman (Musician)

Giles has played with The Penguin Cafe Orchestra and Rip Rig and Panic and worked extensively with Echo City designing and building instruments into outdoor sonic play-spaces. He is currently a member of alt-folk band the Drones -the artwork for their current album 'Sounds from the Beehive' is his design - with help from his daughter Lucia. He can turn his hand to all stages of the design and build of instruments, sonic environments, large-scale sculptures, indoor DIY, works of art, collages and self-published books. He also runs a thriving scrap project in North London, and composes and plays music for Indefinite Articles' Pinocchio.

Steve Tiplady (Devisor and performer)

Steve Tiplady has been using puppetry in his work since 1989. Outside of Indefinite Articles he has directed many shows for companies such as Garlic Theatre, DNA and Storybox. He became Artistic Director of the Little Angel Puppet Theatre in 2004 and has directed eight times there, before, during and after he was Artistic Director; credits include Jabberwocky, Fantastic Mr Fox and The Mouse Queen which recently finished a run at the Hampstead Theatre. He was puppet director on Venus and Adonis and Midsummer Nights Dream (dir Greg Doran) for RSC and has worked with the acclaimed Improbable Theatre on 70, Hill Lane and Animo with whom he won an OBIE. He also worked with Theatre Rites on their breakthrough show Houseworks.

Contact:

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