



**Little Angel Theatre
& Polka Theatre
Present**

The Paper Dolls



Education and Participation Resource Pack
Written by Laura Halliwell

Little Angel Theatre
14 Dagmar Passage, Islington, London, N1 2DN

0207 226 1787
www.littleangeltheatre.com



The interior of Little Angel Theatre auditorium before it was re-built in 1961



John Wright
Theatre founder

Background Information

The history of the theatre and show!

The Little Angel Theatre

John Wright, the founder of The Little Angel Theatre was born in South Africa in 1906. He travelled to England in 1935 and worked as an assistant stage manager for the Ballet Rambert while studying at the Central School of Art and Design. It was during this time he saw a puppet performance by Podrecca's Piccoli and became hooked. John made his very first puppet in 1938.

He returned to South Africa at the outbreak of the Second World War and continued to make and perform with puppets in his home country. When the war ended he returned to England, overland, performing with his puppets along the way.

In 1961 John and his troupe found a derelict temperance hall in Islington and transformed it into a magical little theatre, specially designed for the presentation of marionette shows. It opened on Saturday 24th November 1961. This was to be the first purpose built puppet theatre the country had seen for many years and the only one with a permanent long string marionette bridge constructed backstage. The bridge was designed for puppeteers to stand on while they manipulate long stringed puppets who perform on the stage below leaving the audience unable to see the puppeteers. The original bridge is used to this day. The theatre has a traditional 'proscenium arch' and seats 100 audience members.

Over the next 30 years, the Little Angel team created and performed over 30 full-scale shows, with John and his wife Lyndie designing, making, performing and directing as they established Little Angel as 'The Home of British Puppetry.' Little Angel shows were taken to 23 International Festivals, representing Britain.

John Wright died in 1991 but the work of the theatre continued apace with family, friends and supporters working tirelessly to continue in his footsteps to make sure John's legacy would delight generations to come.

The Paper Dolls

The Paper Dolls is a beautiful picture book by acclaimed Author and Children's Laureate Julia Donaldson, and illustrated by Rebecca Cobb. Little Angel Theatre and Polka Theatre's production brings this magical story to life through puppetry, song and imaginative design.

The Paper Dolls tells the story of a little girl who cuts out a string of paper dolls with her Mother. She takes them by the hand and together they go on a fantastical adventure whirling through their home and garden.

Ticky, Tacky, Jackie the Backie, Jim with two noses and Jo with the bow fly through time and tear across worlds of fun and excitement. They face the jurassic clutches of a toy dinosaur and the snapping jaws of the oven-glove crocodile, and then a very real boy with very real scissors threatens to snip their adventure short...

The show combines storytelling, music and song and beautiful puppets and set based on the illustrations in the book.

The show is a co-production between two of London's famous theatres who make shows for children – Little Angel Theatre and Polka Theatre.

Directed by Peter Glanville, former Artistic Director of Little Angel Theatre, and now Artistic Director of the show's co-producers, Polka!

Set and Puppets Designed by Lyndie Wright
Music by Julian Butler

A Little Angel Theatre & Polka Theatre co- production, based on the original book by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Rebecca Cobb. Published by Macmillan Children's Books © 2013

The Paper Dolls

Julia Donaldson

Julia Donaldson MBE is an English writer, playwright and performer, and the 2011–2013 Children's Laureate. She was born in 1948 and brought up in London, but she now lives in Scotland.

She has over 150 published works - lots of which you will probably know! Her first published children's book was *A Squash and a Squeeze* (published in 1993) which was originally a song. She is most famous for her rhyming stories which include titles such as *The Gruffalo*, *Room on the Broom* and *The Snail and the Whale*.

Julia Donaldson has worked with a wide range of illustrators on her books. Perhaps her most famous partnership, is with Axel Sheffler who illustrated the books listed above, as well as many more of her titles, but she has also worked with many others including Lydia Monks, David Roberts and Nick Sharratt to name a few. *The Paper Dolls* is so far the only Julia Donaldson book illustrated by Rebecca Cobb.

Julia had the idea for the story of *The Paper Dolls* a long time before the book was actually published, and was very pleased to find Rebecca Cobb to collaborate with on the book.



Julia Donaldson with Lizzie Wort and Zoe Hunter who were involved in the development of *The Paper Dolls* production.

Rebecca Cobb

Rebecca Cobb has illustrated a range of children's books by authors including Helen Dunmore, Richard Curtis, and of course, *The Paper Dolls* by Julia Donaldson. She has also written and illustrated four of her own picture books. Her work has been nominated for various awards.

Rebecca grew up in Buckinghamshire and Somerset. She studied illustration at Falmouth College of Arts and has been living in Falmouth and working as an illustrator ever since.

She has a very distinctive style of illustration which is a little bit like childhood drawings. When she is working on the illustrations for a book, she first works in pencil, and then colours in her drawings using watercolours, inks and coloured pencils. She chooses these because they all make different kinds of marks – scratchy, neat or messy, so she can choose which type of colouring works best.



There is lots of information about Julia Donaldson and Rebecca Cobb online. See the back of the pack for some useful links where you can learn more about how they work and how they collaborated on *The Paper Dolls*.

Activities and Ideas

Creative Writing / Group Story-Building Exercise

First, make and decorate your own string of paper dolls - you can find lots of useful links to help you at the back of this pack.



Now can you give names to them and write an adventure story for them? Where will they go, who (or what) will they meet and what will they get up to?

Use a real location as a starting point for your adventure, just like in the book. Perhaps their adventure could start in your classroom or your own bedroom at home – who or what will your paper dolls meet first?

Where can they go and what challenges and obstacles will they meet on their adventure? Have a think about what toys, objects and equipment you have that they could interact with. How will your story end?

You could do this as a group story building exercise where the whole class could be involved in coming up with ideas for the Paper Dolls' adventure. Get lots of suggestions for each part of the story and choose the most exciting or interesting ones. You could write the story up and turn it into a display, with drawings of each part.

Art Activity

Look at the page in the book where the Paper Dolls go into the little girl's memory and find all the things she has there;

... 'white mice and fireworks,
And a starfish soap,
And a kind granny,
And the butterfly hairslide,
And more and more lovely things each day
And each year.'

Can you draw a picture that combines all of your favourite memories?

What setting would you choose?

Which people, objects and moments would be in your picture?



Puppet Making

Puppet Knowledge

There are a range of puppet styles in the show – these include:

- Bunraku Puppets
- Hand Puppets
- Rod Puppets

The puppets in the show are made from a range of materials including foam, fabric, Styrofoam, paper and foam board.

These materials make the puppets as lightweight as possible so that the puppeteers are comfortable when performing. Foam is a great material for puppet making as it can be cut and carved and is flexible for great movement and realistic 'fleshy' touch.

The bunraku puppets are controlled with small rods attached to their heads, hands and feet. They are often operated by more than one puppeteer. The flexible nature of the materials they are made from means movement can be created easily.



Designing and Making Puppets

When you design and make a puppet make sure you think about these things:

- Decide on the character **first** (before you start drawing or making). Is it a person, an animal or a made-up creature? Is it a character for a show you will be performing? What is that character like? Match the character with a suitable puppet style (marionette, glove, rod, finger, shadow etc.)
- Decide what your puppet will need to do if it is performing in a show (walk, swim, fly, nod, wave?) Which parts need to move or not?

Materials

Remember that puppets have to be held up and moved by a puppeteer so choose light materials. If you make your puppet too heavy you won't be able to use it! **You don't have to use specialise materials to make a puppet – many everyday items can be used** such as from boxes/containers/old magazines and wrapping paper/tubs/tubes/wool/string/clothes/bottles etc..

- **Draw a design for the puppet and remember to include:**
 1. What materials you will need.
 2. Which parts of the puppet will move – How?
 3. Will any parts be jointed? (elbows or knees)
 4. Don't forget to draw the rods/strings/controls etc that move the puppet so that you know where they will go.
 5. How will you fix the parts of the puppet together?
 6. How you will show your puppet's character? (facial expression, clothes, decoration)
- As you make your puppet **test it out as you go**. Is it strong enough to use? Are the details clear (will an audience be able to see the face from a distance?) Does it move in the places it is supposed to?

Behind the Scenes – Making the Set and Puppets

Set & Puppet Designer and Maker Lyndie Wright in the workshop. Lyndie is working on the puppets of the little girl who is called Rosie in the show, and Rosie's daughter (who appears right at the end of the play when Rosie is grown up).

Lyndie's designs closely resemble Rebecca Cobb's illustrations from the picture book, even down to the tiniest details.



The back cloth which re-creates the beautiful illustration of Rosie's memories. First the cloth is painted and then it will be embellished with mirrors, ribbons and other textures to bring it to life under the theatre lights.



The Paper Dolls as puppets!



The Paper Dolls appear in various sizes throughout the show – here is a small scale version of them riding on the bus!



Work in progress on the 3 pigs from Rosie's toy farm. The puppet makers work from detailed plans to carve the parts of the puppet from Styrofoam before painting and decorating with final details.



Make an Envelope Hand Puppet

In both the book and the production of The Paper Dolls, Rosie's mum has an oven glove which is like a crocodile. In Rosie's imagination, the crocodile comes to life and snaps at the Paper Dolls.

A puppet worn on the hand is called a Glove puppet or Hand puppet – here's how you can make a simple puppet with a mouth that can open and close – or go snap snap snap!

You could create any kind of creature using this method – a bird, frog or fox, or maybe a dragon or an imaginary monster. Or how about making your own tiger or crocodile, just like the ones in the show?

You will need:

- C5 Envelope (A5 size) which opens at the short end
- Masking tape
- Tissue paper in various colours
- Glue stick / double sided sticky tape
- Scissors

What to do:

- 1) First you need to make a mouth by re-folding the envelope.
Put your hand inside the envelope and push the middle of the closed end inwards.
- 2) Keep pushing inwards until you create a mouth shape with two pointed lips.
- 3) Now flatten out the envelope so that it has folds along the sides that were previously flat.



Make an Envelope Hand Puppet continued:

- 4) If you want to, you can make the lips a different shape (e.g. curved) by folding inwards and taping, or trimming with scissors, and re-sealing the ends with masking tape.
- 5) You can add on other features such as ears, horns, wings etc by cutting out and taping on card shapes.
- 6) Now you are ready to decorate your puppet – use tissue paper to cover the envelope all over so it no longer looks like an envelope. Create the texture of fur or feathers by scrunching paper, or cutting feather shapes and layering the paper. You can add eyes by sticking on balls of tissue paper and add teeth or a tongue inside the mouth.
- 7) Wear your puppet on your hand with your fingers in the top part of the mouth and thumb in the bottom part of the mouth so you can make it open and close. Can your puppet talk or make an animal noise? Can it eat, yawn or nibble someone's fingers?





Little Angel Theatre

Useful Resources and Links

About Little Angel Theatre

www.littleangeltheatre.com

More information about the history of the theatre and future puppet shows and workshops, including our school menu

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=little+angel+theatre&sm=3

Visit You Tube to watch trailers, clips and behind the scenes films of our shows past and present and see the puppets in action!

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/putting-on-a-puppet-show-pt-1-2/9654.html>

Two short films featuring Little Angel Theatre about the process of putting on one of our shows.

Visual stories for children on the autistic spectrum

Visit our '**access needs**' page on the website to find a general Little Angel Theatre visual story to prepare children for a visit to the theatre. This is also a useful resource for very young children who may not have visited a theatre before as it explains what happens when you visit a theatre and what you might see there.

Book a Table Top Puppet Workshop!

Want to make puppets with your class but don't have the confidence or time to plan, resource and deliver it yourself? We can come to your school and make puppets with your class. By the end of the day each child will have a finished puppet and we bring all the materials. All stories and themes considered! £350+VAT per class (in London). Contact education@littleangeltheatre.com for more information.

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=little+angel+theatre&sm=3

Visit You Tube to watch trailers, clips and behind the scenes films of our shows past and present and see the puppets in action!

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Two short films featuring Little Angel Theatre about the process of putting on one of our shows.

www.facebook.com

Make friends with Little Angel Theatre to keep up to date with the latest news

<https://twitter.com/LittleATheatre>

Follow us on Twitter!

Little Angel Theatre Puppetry Scheme of Work

Including detailed lesson plans and templates for delivering puppetry in the primary classroom with links to literacy £7

Contact: education@littleangeltheatre.com



About Julia Donaldson

<http://www.juliadonaldson.co.uk/>

Julia Donaldson's official website, including lots of information about her work.

[An interview with Julia Donaldson in The Scotsman Newspaper, which includes some information about The Paper Dolls](#)

<http://www.childrenslaureate.org.uk/previous-laureates/julia-donaldson/>

Information about Julia Donaldson as the Children's Laureate

About Rebecca Cobb

<http://www.rebeccacobb.co.uk/index.html>

Rebecca Cobb's official website

[An interview with Rebecca Cobb from the Independent Newspaper](#)

[An interview with Rebecca Cobb on the Booktrust website](#)

Information and resources about *The Paper Dolls*

<http://www.panmacmillan.com/paperdollsworldrecord>

Information and resources about the successful world record attempt to create the longest chain of Paper Dolls in the world! The page also includes video clips and templates to download.

<http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/shadowingsite/groupleaders/resources/2014/Resource-The-Paper-Dolls.pdf>

A useful resource exploring the imagery in the book and how it supports the story.

<http://www.elsa-support.co.uk/the-paper-dolls/>

A short page about the Paper Dolls, with links to some interesting ways of making paper dolls – the main website also has lots of information linking to Emotional Literacy which would be useful if you are looking at some of the deeper issues in the story such as loss, friendship and remembrance.

How to make Paper Dolls

You can find many many pages online with useful instructions for making paper dolls – here are just a few!

<http://www.auntannie.com/FridayFun/DollChain/>

<http://www.origami-resource-center.com/circular-paper-dolls.html>

<http://www.origami-resource-center.com/paper-dolls.html>

To decorate your paper doll chain, why not use a range of materials including paint, pencil and crayons as well as fabric scraps, coloured paper, doilies, wool, feathers, cupcake cases and shiny paper. Can you make each doll look totally different even though they are the same shape?