Me and My Shadow

Sydney Opera House

Years K - 4
5 - 8 Apr

PHOTO: ME AND MY SHADOW
A. Introduction

These Teacher's Notes have been designed to assist you with classroom preparation and extension work in relation to the production of *Me and My Shadow*. 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. The 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 Patch Theatre Company production of *Me and My Shadow* is a delightful exploration of the imaginary world of a young girl whose play with light and shadow brings unexpected fun and adventures. Using screens, lighting, music and projection, *Me and My Shadow* creates many surprising and magical theatrical moments. The dramatic journey of the performance is an accurate and insightful observation of how the playfulness of young children leads to discovery through imagination. *Me and My Shadow* is often very funny with some wonderful comic, slapstick moments. This performance provides excellent opportunities for classroom activities and discussions with links to various curriculum areas:

Creative Arts: Visual Arts (Appreciating); Drama (Role, Elements of Drama); Music (Listening)  
PDHPE: (Communicating)  
English: Talking and Listening (Listening); Reading (Reading and Viewing Text)  
Science and Technology: (Physical Phenomena).
C. Performance Event Description and Synopsis

*Me and My Shadow* is a play about making friends with your shadow. Alone in her bedroom, a young girl amuses herself with her toys. As she plays, she notices how her movements create shadows on her bedroom walls. Her investigations reveal curious and peculiar oddities.

Suddenly, strange things begin to happen. Toys seem to take on a life of their own and shadows begin to move by themselves. A boy shadow appears and it seems he is in need of a friend - but making friends with your shadow can be a tricky business especially when it is so hard to catch! As the girl and her shadow get accustomed to each other they learn to negotiate problems, have adventures and join together in fun and laughter.

Engaging stage imagery created through lighting, physical theatre, evocative music, shadow puppets and other stage magic creates a whimsical and enchanting tale of friendship that will engage and inspire.
Activity One: Making Shadows

Curriculum Links: Drama/English

1.1 This activity and activities 1.2 and 1.3 are designed for outdoors on a day when sunshine will cast shadows. This first activity will help students explore how shadows are made. If it is a sunny day, take the students to an outdoor area. Encourage them to point out the shadows of different objects they find in the playground. See if they can find any moving shadows or shadows that change their shape.

1.2 Ask students to stand in a place so that they can see their own shadow. Direct them to move and to observe the changes in their shadow's shape and size. Ask questions that help students think about how shadows are made and why they change shape or size: for example, the distance between object and light source. In pairs, students explore the shapes that two shadows can make when joined together.

1.3 Designate one player to be `It' and have them chase the others in this version of tag. Instead of tagging another person physically, `It' has to touch the other player's shadow with their own. When another person's shadow is tagged, that player becomes `It' and the game continues until no shadow remains untagged. If this game is interrupted by clouds, just switch to regular tag until the sun returns.

1.4 The classroom gives greater control over the creation of shadows. Firstly, ask students to find an individual space in the room; then, standing up they practice using their bodies to create the following letters, I, Y and P. Working in pairs, students are to create the letters O, B, A and L.

Use an overhead projector or data projector to create an area of light on a blank wall or screen. Place the overhead projector or data projector away from the wall or screen to allow space so that shadows can be created by the students. Ask each student, or pair, to stand in front of the light source to show the shape created by the use of their bodies to form the letters. As they watch the screen and create the shadow shape, encourage the adjustment of body shape to make the outline and shape of the letter clear.
1.5 In pairs, students create a frozen picture of two characters in a situation that they will show as a shadow:

- Two people playing tennis
- Two ballet dancers
- An owner and their pet dog
- Two runners in a race
- A couple processing down the wedding aisle.

1.6 Ask students to volunteer to come in front of the screen and create a new shape of their choosing or to create a frozen picture of a situation that they imagine. Show these to the class.
Curriculum Links: English/Visual Arts

2.1 Divide the class into two groups: group A and group B. Ask group A to sit in a circle. Ask group B to sit in a circle around group A’s circle so that one circle is inside the other circle. Each person in the inner circle is to sit facing a partner on the outer circle. The following questions come from the Patch Theatre Company notes for the performance *Me and My Shadow* and were asked by children:

- Are people the only things that have shadows?
- Are shadows different colors?
- Can we catch our shadow?
- Can we make our shadows bigger, smaller?
- Can you figure out a way to make your shadow hands larger, smaller?
- Can we make our shadow run, hop?
- Can you get away from your shadow?
- Can you make your hand shadow look like an animal?
- Can you make your shadow hands touch without having your real hands touch?
- Do fish make shadows in the water? How?
- Do shadows talk?
- Do you have a shadow at noon?
- How does something make two shadows?
- How is a shadow made?
- If I hold my hand close to the light, what happens to the shadow?
- If there were no light, would there still be a shadow?
- Our shadows were in front of us when we left, but are behind us now. What happened? How can we get our shadows in front of us again?
- What kind of light makes shadows when you are outside on a bright sunny day?
- What kinds of shadow shapes can you make?
- What makes a shadow disappear?
- What makes shadows at night?
- Where and when do you see the best shadows?
- Where do shadows go when the sun goes behind a cloud?
- Why are shadows dark?
Activity Two: Shadow Investigators (Continued)

Ask the students to answer some of these questions. Once a question is answered the inner circle moves around in a clockwise direction so that each person has a new partner to work with for each new question. Once several questions have been answered move on to activity 2.2.

2.2 Using the overhead projector or data projector, create a space where students can test their answers to the questions by demonstrating how shadows are created, changed or manipulated.

2.3 See if the students have any further questions they would like to ask about shadows. Working in pairs, students can create new questions about shadows. Each pair shares their questions with the class and the class tries to provide the answers.

2.4 The following questions can be used for further investigation:

- Why don't people's shadows have colours even if their clothes are coloured?
- Why is a shadow sometimes dark and sometimes light?
- Why does a kid have three shadows sometimes?
- If you switch shoes with somebody, do your shadows switch too?
- Can you see shadows in the mirror?
- Can you see your shadow when it is raining?
- Are the shadows of snakes dangerous?
- Can you see shadows in the sand?
- What happens to a little shadow if it goes inside a big shadow?
- Does it disappear or does it just go underneath?
- Can a shadow be captured in a box?
- Can three kids together have just one shadow?
- To make a gigantic shadow, do you have to be close to the light or far from the light?
- Can the shadow of an eraser be longer than the shadow of a pencil?
- Why does a tree that always stays still have a shadow that moves?
- Can a shadow disobey the light?
Activity Three: Coloured Shadows

Curriculum Links: Visual Arts/English

3.1 You will need to have access to the children's picture book, The Biggest Shadow in the Zoo. The publishing details for this book are:


Read this story aloud for the students as preparation for the following activities. Once you have read the story have a class discussion about how the elephant, Goober, lost his shadow and how the doctor was able to save the day.

3.2 Students will need coloured cellophane, A4 squares of card, scissors, glue and sticky tape. They are to cut a geometric shape or animal shape out of the centre of a piece of card. Some guidance will be needed to demonstrate how to cut out a shape.

Pre-prepare one or two examples to show how to create coloured shadows. One example might be of a shape like a square or circle and another example might be of an animal shape.

Draw an outline of a geometric shape or an animal shape. Pre-cut templates can make this easier. Using a pair of scissors work from the edge of the card towards the edge of the outline. Cut around the outline of the shape. Cover the empty space by taping or gluing a piece of coloured cellophane over one side of the card.

Show students how the shape appears on a wall or screen when held in front of a light like an overhead projector. If strong sunlight shines through the classroom windows, you can tape the student art work to the windows; ask them to watch how the coloured shadows move across the room as the sun moves across the sky throughout the day.
Curriculum Links: English/Drama

4.1 Students can have a lot of fun creating hand shadow puppets. This activity requires strong fine motor skills and may only be suitable for older primary students. Show students the following Youtube clips to demonstrate how various performers and puppeteers create shadow puppets:

Youtube - Richard Bradshaw Shadow Puppeteer
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNsJ6kDVbfk

Youtube - Cirque De Soleils KA Shadow Puppets
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPu-Dmq39rk

Youtube - Hand Shadow Raymond Crowe at The Royal Variety Show
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAQxNVQF10&feature=related

Talk with students about the different ways in which shadow puppets were created.

4.2 Do a Google search for images of hand shadow puppets. The image search will provide illustrations of hand shapes that can be used to create shadow puppets of various animals. Choose one of these images and have students practice using their hands to replicate the way the hands in the image are placed. Set up an overhead projector or data projector and ask each student to practice their hand shadow using the light source.

4.3 Use other hand shadow puppet images from the Google search or have students experiment and practice using their hands to create animal shadow shapes.

4.5 For the next part of this activity, you will need a piece of instrumental music to accompany the shadow puppet work devised by students. Students will need to work with a partner. Each pair is to create a short performance (one minute or less) where both students use their hands to create shadow puppets. Working with their partner they are to create a short role play where one animal meets and interacts with the other animal. They may incorporate their voices as part of the scene. Ask volunteer pairs to show their work to the class. Provide feedback on their manipulation of the puppets and effective use of voice.
Curriculum Links: English/Drama

5.1 Before your students complete the following drama activity, instruct them to recount the performance. In their recount, ask them to identify and describe the moments they liked the most. Ask the class to form groups of four or five. Instruct each group to create a series of freeze frames (no more than six) that recount their excursion to the performance. They can show the journey to the Opera House, the expectations of the audience, some key moments from the performance and the journey back to school. Ask each group to present their work to the class. As a challenge, groups could attempt to present their freeze frames in the style of the performance.

5.2 The following questions can be used as guidelines for a discussion of the performance.

1. What did the girl find in her bedroom?
2. How did she feel about the boy shadow?
3. What did the boy shadow try to do to be friends with the girl?
4. Can you remember one moment you thought was funny? Describe what happened and why it was funny.
5. Describe some of the lighting you remember.
6. What moments in the performance made you feel excited? Why?
7. What moments in the performance made you feel scared? Why?
8. Draw a picture of the girl and the boy shadow playing together.
9. If your shadow came to life in your bedroom, what would you do?
10. If your shadow could be your friend what games would you play together?
Activity Six: Being a Shadow

Curriculum Links: Drama

6.1 Ask students to sit in a circle. Begin a slow movement using one arm and ask the students to copy your movements. As they develop their skills, move both arms, stand and move legs, etc. Ask for volunteers to lead a movement that everyone will copy.

6.2 Students work in pairs for this exercise. Sitting opposite each other on the floor, one person begins a movement and the other person copies. After a short while swap the leader of the movement.

6.3 Ask the pairs to stand up. One of the pair is to be the shadow of the other by copying their movements. To help students control this activity, they should maintain a space between each other so that the shadow can see the movements of their partner. The person leading the movement should move in slow motion so that their shadow is able to predict movement and copy it exactly. Allow the pairs time to practice and then invite some pairs to show their work to the class.

6.4 Play a game that is a version of Giant's Treasure. Call for one volunteer to stand in the middle of the space facing away from the class. The other students are to stand along the wall behind the volunteer. When the volunteer walks forward or moves, the rest of the class must copy these movements as though they are the volunteer's shadow. The aim of the game is for any student to creep up behind the volunteer and tag them. The volunteer can only prevent this by turning around and catching shadows moving on their own.
Activity Seven: Other Stories about Shadows

Curriculum Links: English

This is a listing of children's literature books provided by Patch Theatre Company. Ask your school library to put together a collection of these books for further exploration and discussion of shadows.


Activity Seven: Other Stories about Shadows (Continued)


Wilhelm, H., *I Love my Shadow!* (Hello Reader Level 1), New York; Scholastic; 2002.
Book References


Website References

Youtube - Richard Bradshaw Shadow Puppeteer  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNsJ6kDVbfk

Youtube - Cirque De Soleils KA Shadow Puppets  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPu-Dmq39rk

Youtube - Hand Shadow Raymond Crowe at The Royal Variety Show  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAQxNVQF_I0&feature=related

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