



*Sherman Theatre / Theatr y Sherman*

# TALES OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM

*26 Nov / Tach – 31 Dec / Rhag*



# PRODUCTION ACTIVITY PACK

*Sherman Theatre*

## TALES OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM

*By Hannah McPake*

*Director / Cyfarwyddwr Joe Murphy*

*Associate Director / Cyfarwyddwr Cyswllt Alice Eklund*

*(Supported by / Cefnogir gan The Darkley Trust)*

*Designer / Cynllunydd Hayley Grindle*

*Composer / Cyfansoddwr Lucy Rivers*

*Musical Director / Cyfarwyddwr Cerdd Barnaby Southgate*

*Lighting Designer / Cynllunydd Goleuo Andy Pike*

*Sound Designer / Cynllunydd Sain Ian Barnard*

## AN OVERVIEW

Whether using this at home, or in a classroom, we hope that you will find these exercises to be just the start of your discussions surrounding reclaiming fairy tale narratives, and interactions with live theatre. We suggest that you see this as a guide; providing lively and engaging activities for your young people that connect with both the live theatrical experience and the world around them.

### STATEMENT OF LEARNING INTENT

We are keen to incorporate the four purposes of the New Curriculum For Wales into our work with young people, in order to best support their learning within the framework outlined by the Welsh Government.

Through these activities, we hope to improve and develop young people's knowledge and understanding of the world around them as well as assisting in their personal and social development. We hope that the young people will be inspired by the messages in *Tales of the Brothers Grimm* to break free from their narratives and rewrite the story.

If you would like any more information or have questions about the resource or workshops we offer please feel free to get in touch with us

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Many thanks and enjoy!



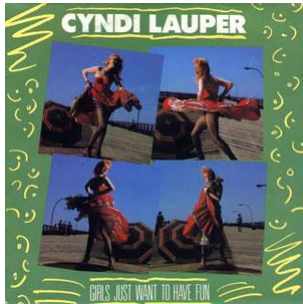
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# RECLAIMING NARRATIVES



## AND NEXT...

Much like these songs *Tales of the Brothers Grimm* invites us to consider stories from different perspectives – particularly where female characters find themselves within the fairy tale world.

You could discuss some other contemporary performances which invite us to consider alternative perspectives on how we see stories differently when we change WHO tells them.

We have picked three musicals your young people might know or be able to access to start your discussions – are there any others they can think of?

**& Juliet** – The story focuses on a "what if" scenario, where Juliet does not die at the end of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

**Six** – The musical is a modern retelling of the lives of the six wives of Henry VIII presented as a pop concert, as the Queens take turns singing and telling their story to see who suffered the most due to Henry and should, therefore, become the group's lead singer.

**Wicked** – *Wicked* tells the story of two unlikely friends, Elphaba (the Wicked Witch of the West) and Galinda (later Glinda the Good Witch), whose relationship struggles through their opposing personalities and viewpoints, same love-interest, reactions to the Wizard's corrupt government, and, ultimately, Elphaba's private fall from grace.

## IN THE BEGINNING...

### Listen to:

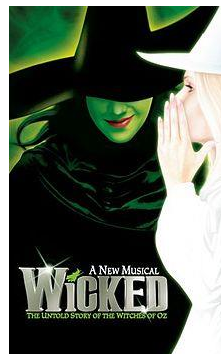
*Respect* by Otis Redding, 1965 and  
*Girls Just Wanna Have Fun* by Robert Hazard, 1979.

Now compare and contrast these versions with:  
*Respect* by Aretha Franklin, 1967 and  
*Girls Just Wanna Have Fun* by Cindi Lauper, 1983.

### Compare and Contrast:

Discuss the following within your group:

- How does a different gendered singer change the message of the song?
- Which of these is most empowering to you as an individual?
- Do either of them provoke any strong feelings for you?
- Do you feel that the female singers have changed a perception of women by performing these songs?



### Compare and Contrast:

- Once again consider how we feel about these stories when the person telling it has changed?
- What opinions have changed from the original story?
- How does that make us feel?

# UPDATING OUR TALES

When fairytales were originally written it was not just to show a “happily ever after” but to teach morals to children. But as time moved forward and politics changed, fairytale characters became trapped in narratives and by morals of the time they were written. This is why we often find stories filled with female protagonist waiting around to be rescued, marrying their prince, and living happily ever after – something which *Tales of the Brothers Grimm* seeks to challenge. Nowadays, these fairytales do not feel realistic to us and the stories we see in our world.

This exercise examines how we can modernize a fairy tale.

## IN THE BEGINNING...

Start by discussing with the group the key elements that they feel make up a fairytale. You can use the questions below as prompts.

- What do we always find in a fairytale?
- What characters do we see making recurring appearances in these tales?
- What morals are repeated?
- What locations do we see a lot?

Add in any further information that comes up in your discussions.

These can be written down as a list, on a mind map, or if you’re working in a classroom they could be written on the board.

*These lists will prove useful for the next step of the exercise.*

## AND NEXT...

Using these key thoughts, split the young people into groups and encourage them to intervene into a fairytale with our modern world.

- Firstly they should choose a fairytale they know well.
- Ask the groups to make a note of the key story points (beginning, middle and end).

With this chosen we now need to focus our modern twist.

Ask the groups to consider one of the following elements relating to their story:

- Character
- Location
- Moral



## FINALLY!

With your chosen elements in place swap them for something more in keeping with our world.

For instance a fairy tale castle could become shopping centre or an evil step mother could become a horrible supply teacher.

*Encourage the young people to be as bold as they can with their choices of locations.*

Once the young people have swapped out these elements get them to tell you or write their new version of the story we all know so well.

- Is there a new moral now we have changed this element?**
- What do we learn by the end of the tale?**
- What else has changed in our story?**

# WRITING TIPS FROM HANNAH MCPAKE



In her work Hannah will decide on the genre or style at the very beginning sometimes even before she knows the story she wants to tell. Choosing this means that she knows what the final play will look and sound like; she knows what the world is that she is inviting audiences to enter. It is a restriction that helps her create work.

These exercises are based on improvisation games played by *Told by an Idiot*. They are a world renowned devising theatre company, who regularly tour their work. For more information check out their website: <https://www.toldbyanidiot.org/>.

Setting rules and restrictions can be liberating and free us up from worrying about what we're writing and if it's any good. All of the devising and improvisation work Hannah does is around finding 'the game' in whatever she's doing. It is important to remember throughout these exercises that the content you are creating is not the focus; we're just playing the game.

## STICK OR TWIST?

Stick or Twist is about very quickly creating bold imaginative worlds using genre or style as a restriction.

This example uses *Little Red Riding Hood* but you could use whatever theme or story you like.

1. Start by writing a list of genres/styles - Documentary, Film Noir, Eastenders, Crime Fiction, Thriller, Children's theatre, Fantasy etc..
2. Next list a series of scenes and story moments - Meeting the wolf for the first time; Setting off into the woods, Eating grandma etc
3. Pick your top 5 from each of these lists and write them on separate cards / bits of paper. Now put them face down in front of you.
4. Perform a short drum roll (this is very important) then turn over the two cards (one genre and one scene) - you might end up with. It could be 'Going off the path' in the style of a 'Nature Documentary' OR 'Meeting the wolf' in the style of 'Eastenders'.
5. If you like the combination 'stick' with it. But if you do not like it then you can 'twist' and turn over another set of cards – but you can only do this once.
6. Now you have your chosen set of cards set a timer for 5 minutes and have a go at writing the scene (*to help the writing process you could use another restriction exercise such as every line starting with a different letter of the alphabet or characters only being able to speak in three word sentences*).
7. After your 5 minutes are up quickly read what you have written and highlight things you liked, thought were interesting, or worked.
8. Now move on to the next combination, do not give yourself too long to think in between.

*The point of this is again about creating content quickly, not worrying about what we're doing or planning in advance but working towards spontaneity.*

Once you have all this material you can go back and begin to piece things together for your story. Select moments that you thought were interesting or might develop into another storyline.

After choosing these you can use this games again and create more scenes, hopefully developing to a whole play given time.

# VISITING THE SHERMAN



**To help your young people gain a wider understanding of the variety of jobs in the world, and specifically within theatre we encourage you to arrange a visit to the Sherman to see how a production is created and supported. We are able to offer digital tours so you can visit via Zoom from the classroom.**

## Starter

•Begin by asking the young people who they think is involved in the creation of a theatre production? What do these people do and what are their job titles?

Director / Actor / Designer / Stage Manager / Lighting Designer / Sound Designer

*They may need help with the titles of these jobs so it may be easier to allow them to describe the job and give them the titles.*

•Once they have identified the job, break them into small groups to create mind maps that show the different things that each person does on a production.

## Costume Exercise

**This exercise looks at how the way we wear something can change what it is.**

- The group should form a circle and place any material or clothing at its centre.
- One person should enter the circle and pick up the item.

*N.B The material / clothes should NEVER be worn as what they actually are.*

- They should interact with the item and adopt a pose that shows what it is without telling us.
- The rest should guess what their clothing is based on how it is worn.
- Once guessed correctly they must swap with the next person in the circle.
- You could pause the action and ask the group to discuss how the colour, texture and style might affect how we view the person wearing it.*



## Lighting Exercise

**This exercise examines how angles of light can affect how we feel about someone.**

- Take a light source (a torch / phone torch / desk lamp).
- Ask one person to stand in front of the group – they will be your actor.
- Experiment with placing the light in some different locations relating to your actor's face.
- Ask the young people to make suggestions about different heights, proximity, and if the light is in front or behind the actor.



**The young people should be encouraged to say how these different angles change how we feel about the person being lit? You may also want to pose the question what kind of character could they be?**

*Additionally you could consider the effect of colour on the actor by holding a Quality Street wrapper between the light source and the subject.*

## Sound Exercise

**This exercise looks at how sound can affect the listener.**

- Prior to the session choose three or four different music tracks – try to make these as stylistically varied as possible.
- Ask the young people to listen to each one of them at a time. The listener should write down the effect each track has on them – we suggest using post-it notes and encouraging them to draw an emoji on it to show how they are feeling. This could then be stuck to a wall or another sheet of paper that is assigned to the track.



- This should be repeated until all the tracks are done.
- The young people should examine the results of their listening and discuss why people felt the way they did. Was it because it was: slow / fast / high / low / loud / quiet?
- You could introduce some music terminology here such as tempo, pitch and rhythm.
- Discuss the dramatic settings or scenarios that these different tracks reminded them of.

## Take things further:

Ask the young people which job they would like to do? And why.

If you have arranged a visit to the Sherman you could put together a list of questions that you would like to ask the experts when you go to look around.

## BEING A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER

Before you take your seat consider the following:

What things distract or irritate you when you are trying to concentrate on something? Write 3 of these down:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

It is your duty as a member of a theatre audience to avoid creating or adding to these distractions. The theatre is full of energy and anticipation, which you are part of. As the performance starts and the lights go down, your excitement level – and that of people around you – will go up. It is important that you manage that excitement by being aware that you are just one element of the theatrical experience and must be considerate of both the performers and other audience members around you. It is your responsibility as an active participant in the theatre process, to make the productions you see as enjoyable as possible for everyone involved – both off stage and on.

The performers, creative and technical teams demonstrate the respect they have for their work and for you (the audience) by delivering the best possible work they can. The best way for you to show similar respect is by observing the following guidelines:

- Theatres are designed to help sound to travel so we can all enjoy the performance. Unfortunately this means that any noise you make can be heard by other audience members – please keep any noise during the performance to a minimum.
- We suggest you restrain from sharing conversations and comments until the interval or end of the performance.
- Also please turn off your mobile phone. Save all the enthusiastic Tweeting, Snapping and WhatsApping until the end.
- A good audience member knows that observing action requires respectful reaction. The play needs you as much as it needs the actors. If something is funny we encourage you to laugh or if something is spectacular show your appreciation through applause.
- However, above all remember to be sensitive to those around you when reacting – how will your reaction affect them?
- Show your appreciation for the production by clapping when the performers take their bow at the conclusion of their performance.
- Taking photos or recording performances is not allowed.
- Look and listen carefully – You never know what you might learn or discover.
- Observe how costumes, sets, music and lighting all add to the performance.
- Most importantly of all – Enjoy yourself.



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHERMAN THEATRE



Based in the heart of Cardiff, Sherman Theatre is a leading producing house which makes and curates theatre for audiences in Wales, across the UK and internationally. Sherman focuses on the development and production of new work particularly the work of Welsh and Wales based artists.

Sherman Theatre opened in 1973 as a University Theatre acting as a receiving house for productions. It began to create its own in-house productions in 1985 when it became independent from the University and began to operate as both a producing and presenting venue.

In 1989 Sherman became one of only two venue based producing theatres in Britain to encompass theatre for young people within its regular artistic output.

In Apr 2007 with the support of Arts Council of Wales and Cardiff County Council, Sherman merged with Sgript Cymru (the national company for contemporary drama in Wales) to form Sherman Cymru.

In Feb 2012 the theatre building re-opened following a £6.5 million redevelopment. Public and backstage

facilities were transformed to provide audiences and participants with a building that reflects the spirit and energy of Sherman.

In Jan 2018 Sherman Theatre became the first in Wales to win the Regional Theatre of the Year title at The Stage Awards, recognising the Sherman as the most exciting theatre in the UK, outside of London. In April 2018 Rachel O’Riordan’s production of *Killology* by Gary Owen won the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Affiliate Theatre. This was a co-production with London’s Royal Court Theatre.

In July 2019 a new era began with Joe Murphy’s appointment as Artistic Director, leading the Sherman into its next period of growth as an engine room of new Welsh writing, at the heart of Cardiff.

The building has:

Two auditoria (A 452 seat main house and a 100 seat studio space).

Rehearsal and production facilities, which include a double-height rehearsal room.

Excellent accessibility throughout the building.