

HAMLET: PRINCE OF SKIDMARK

A BADAPTION OF THE BARD

By The Listies

Education Pack



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ABOUT THE PLAY

Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark

By The Listies

A very cheeky, very clever, utterly irreverent riff on Hamlet – made especially for children.

The Listies, maestros of children’s entertainment, have pulled apart Shakespeare’s classic and glued it back together with hilarious costumes, loads of silliness and plenty of interactivity. Hamlet is already full of things kids love in a good story: ghosts, castles, sword fights, bodily fluids and spooky stuff. Add to the mix some supersonic gags and expertly timed stage magic and you have a brilliantly disguised Shakespearean tragedy for everyone aged five and over. And that’s not all... expect bonus pillow fights, pirates, ninjas, ninja pirates, aliens, ninja pirate aliens, zombies and a bunch of other hilarious stuff as The Listies take kids and their adults on a fun-filled hour of theatre. The only thing we can be sure of is that everyone dies at the end – including the audience!

Created by – Richard Higgins, Matt Kelly & Declan Greene

Director – Declan Greene

Designer – Renée Mulder

Lighting Design – Verity Hampson

Composer & Sound Designer – Jed Palmer

Cast – Richard Higgins, Matt Kelly, and one female performer.

Produced by The Listies and Critical Stages Touring

ABOUT THE LISTIES



The Listies are Richard Higgins and Matthew Kelly, a comedy double act who are serious about being silly. They formed during the latest Ice Age (2008) to perform absurdist comedy to elderly people (i.e. 18+) but switched to full time kids comedy in 2011, and finding it to be a wondrous and rewarding sphere full of joy, never looked back (plus the hours are heaps better).

To date, they have claimed to have written nine-ish award-winning & critically acclaimed live shows, collaborated with most major theatre companies and festivals in Australia, toured 3 continents, recorded three albums, and published two books with Penguin - and they have 4 books on the way. Though we only have their word for it.

On Australian television you can see them on ABC with their show ‘The Listies Work For Peanuts’, their music video ‘Wash Your Hands’ (with Zoe Coombs Marr and muso Ryan Ritchie) and occasionally in the background of outside weather broadcasts.

In 2019 they performed over 120 shows to tens of thousands of people all over Australia. Nearly all of them stayed awake and only some of them vomited. Recently, in what may have been an

administrative error, they won the Edinburgh Festival's 'Primary Times award for Best Production for Children'.

In the past they have received a Sydney Theatre Award, 'The HarperCollins Best Designed Children's Fiction Book', and the Best Independent show (Golden Gibbo Award) at Melbourne Comedy Festival, (and they are still the only kids act to have been nommed for the Comedy Festival's 'Best Show' award). What can we say - the bribery seems to have worked.

They are currently working on new books and working on their fourth album 'The Listies Musical Owl-Bum'... It's almost like they aren't touring as much in 2020, not sure why.

OTHER CREATIVES



DIRECTOR | DECLAN GREENE

Declan Greene is a theatre-maker, director, playwright, screenwriter and dramaturg. He is currently the Artistic Director of Griffin Theatre Company in Sydney. In 2019 Declan directed a one-woman re-versioning of Australian classic WAKE IN FRIGHT with Zahra Newman for Malthouse Theatre. In 2018 Declan directed Malthouse Theatre and Sydney Theatre Company's co-production BLACKIE BLACKIE BROWN by Nakkiah Lui. In 2016 he directed The Listies' PRINCE OF SKIDMARK for STC, which had a return season and tour in 2018. As a director and dramaturg, his works include Zoey Dawson's THE UNSPOKEN WORD IS 'JOE' (MKA / Griffin Independent) and CONVICTION (ZLMD Shakespeare). Declan has won awards including the Malcolm Robertson Prize, the Max Afford Playwright's Award, an AWGIE for Theatre for Young Audiences and the Green Room Award for Best Original Writing.

Note: There is a female performer who is yet to be cast for this production. They play the role of Ophelia/Stage Manager.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS FOR DRAMA

Drama in the classroom can be used to support learning in a variety of key learning areas, giving students the opportunity to explore ideas and issues in a meaningful and realistic manner. Drama has been considered to assist with the development of self-esteem, communication skills, problem-solving abilities and in the development of focus and team building through fun activities.

Incorporating drama in a primary school classroom presents a number of challenges for teachers but reaps many rewards for all involved when attempted. The following suggestions are designed to provide some food for thought in relation to doing drama in the classroom and are intended as a guideline only.

When doing drama in the classroom ensure:

- A clear workspace is available for the drama activity. If desks cannot be moved in the classroom, try to use the hall or outside open area.
- You talk to the students about the creation of a 'safe space'. In this space students don't laugh at each other, but support and encourage (forming a circle at the beginning and end of a session or sitting with eyes closed are simple ways to focus students for a drama session)
- Incorporate a reflection session at the end of every drama activity. This allows the students to consider what has been done and take more meaning away from the activity than it just being fun (which it will be!)
- Be firm with the students. If a student does not follow instructions, they should be removed from the activity. This will allow the other students to see that you as the teacher are assisting in maintaining the safe space for them to work.
- Always begin every drama session with a warm-up. This could include a focus activity, drama game or pure physical warm-up. There are good books and websites available with suggestions of warm-up activities and drama games.
- Don't be afraid to participate in the activities yourself. The students like to see you as the teacher taking a role in an activity. This can also allow you to help any improvisations or role plays flow and move forward more easily. (Dorothy Heathcote's work on Mantle of the Expert and Teacher in Role discusses this in more detail)

Rachel Perry (2010)

THE BENEFITS OF PLAY

Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development and is a fundamental part of being human, it is the way we learn, innovate and solve problems. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them.

Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark breaks down for young audiences what seeing a theatre play is whilst making fun the ultimate priority. A young person attending the show will leave feeling less intimidated by Shakespeare and the theatre experience in general.

BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW

Discussion points



- What is a theatre?
- What is a play?
- Who was Shakespeare and why is he so important?

Tasks and Analysis:

- Talk through with the students the plot of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. As a class, pick a moment in the play, for example Hamlet seeing the ghost, and make a tableau (a still image). This activity we will come back to in *Review and Reflection* below.



POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION

Review and Reflection



Discussion:

- As a group, discuss each person's favourite part of the play. Focus on the articulation of why and what parts of the elements of drama made it so fantastic for the student. Elements of drama to consider include: props, costume, plot and character.
- As a group, discuss a moment in the play that students perhaps did not enjoy as much as the others. Why was this so?



Tasks and Analysis:

- As a group, pick one of the moments that did not rate so highly with the class and restage it. Brainstorm what could have happened in the moment to make it more exciting. Elements to consider include different props or a new setting.
- Re-create the tableau the class staged in the *Pre-Show Activities*. How did the Listies perform this moment? As a class, create a new tableau inspired by the Listies show.



Staging A Play



Discussion:

- Shakespeare is known as one of the most important Playwrights of all time in the Western canon and Hamlet is arguably his finest tragedy. Discuss with students why the Listies chose to tell this story.
- The Listies are very funny and use humour in all their shows. Did the comedy in the show make you more interested in the story? Why or why not?
- Discuss what characterisation is and why it's important.
- This show has three actors playing many characters. How did you know when the actor's changed character? Did they change costume? Did they change their voice? How they stand?
- What are the different creative roles of people who work on a play and what do they do? Roles to consider include: the director, performers, lighting designer, set designer, costume designer, stage manager, assistant stage manager, production manager, producer.



Tasks and Analysis:

- Have the students think about their favourite story. Maybe it is a superhero story, or a fairy tale. As a class, choose a story that everyone knows and restage it Listies style. Have a lot of fun with this. You can change the story, setting, characters, costumes and props. Stage it with the class as their very own play. This activity can be done over one lesson or multiple lessons.
- Individually, have each student draw a character. This can be their favourite character from a movie or a new one they make up on their own. Once drawn, have the students walk around the room as that character. How do they walk? Stand? Sit? Jump? Do they walk or fly? Maybe they are not human? How does this effect how they move? Encourage the students to be as imaginative as they like in this activity.



Design Elements



Discussion:

- When you first walked into the theatre and saw the set and the theatre space, what did you expect?
- Where did you imagine the play was set?
- What was your favourite costume in the play and why?
- What was your favourite prop in the play and why?

Tasks and Analysis:



- Gather a collection of items and objects in the classroom. These can be everyday objects that the students have in their bags, or the teaching artist can bring in a variety of interesting objects. Conduct a re-discovery exercise where the students take turns to use these objects in new ways. The only rule: you cannot use the object in the way that it is traditionally used.
- Devise some short scenes using the re-discovered objects.
- Think about what costume can tell the audience about a character. Are they powerful? A clown? Sad? Excited? Can you tell their job? Pick a character from the show and draw a new costume for them.

The Actor



Discussion:

- Discuss with the students what type of actor/audience relationships were established by the performers? Did you feel you were observing? Were you directly addressed?

Tasks:



- Choose a character and as a class do a detailed analysis of them. Consider elements of performance – voice, accent, movement, gesture – as well as aspects of the character the students learnt from their relationship with the others.
- Have the students consider how they may have seen the events of the play differently if it had been told from the chosen character's point of view. How might we have viewed the character differently?

Technical Theatre and the Production Team



Discussion:

- *Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark* is a touring production travelling to 17 locations across Australia. What does it mean to tour a play?
- Discuss where you saw the production and how the experience may have been different for audiences in a different type of theatre.
- Discuss different types of theatres you may have seen or may have visited?
- What is a touring party?
- What types of things need to be considered to tour a play? E.g how to get the set around, where the actors are going to live, food etc



TOUR DATES AND LOCATIONS

4 January	Sydney Opera House, Sydney, NSW
23 April	Theatre Royal, Hobart, TAS
22 June	The Glasshouse, Port Macquarie, NSW
24 June	The Arthouse, Wyong, NSW
28 June	The Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Penrith, NSW
2 July	Dubbo Regional Theatre, Dubbo, NSW
5 July	The Q, Queanbeyan, NSW
10 July	Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre, Nowra, NSW
20 August	Darwin Festival, Darwin, NT
10 September	Orange Civic Theatre, Orange, NSW
13 September	Logan Entertainment Centre, Logan, QLD
16 September	Cairns Performing Arts Centre, Cairns, QLD
22 September	Brisbane Festival, Brisbane, QLD (TBC)
25 September	Redland Performing Arts Centre, Cleveland, QLD (TBC)
6 October	Dolphin Theatre, University of Western Australia, WA
13 October	Albany Entertainment Centre, Albany, WA
15 October	Goldfields Arts Centre, Kalgoorlie, WA



CURRICULUM LINKS

VICTORIA

VCAA Curriculum – Prep to Year 6

The Arts Foundation-Year 6 Curriculum

Foundation-Year 2

- Use voice, facial expression, movement and space to imagine and improvise characters and situations
- Present drama that communicates ideas and stories
- Respond to drama, expressing what they enjoy and why, and why people in their local area make and perform drama, including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Explore roles, characters and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation and process drama

Year 3 and 4

- Explore ideas and narrative structures through roles and situations and use empathy in their own improvisations and devised drama
- Use voice, body, movement and language to sustain role and relationships and create dramatic action with a sense of time and place
- Shape and perform dramatic action using narrative structures and tension in devised and scripted drama
- Identify intended purposes and meaning of drama, including the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Year 5 and 6

- Explore dramatic action, empathy and space in improvisations, play-building and scripted drama, to develop characters and situations
- Develop skills and techniques of voice and movement to create character, mood and atmosphere and focus dramatic action
- Perform devised and scripted drama that develops narrative and uses performance styles and design elements to engage an audience
- Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including in the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

English Pre-Primary-Year 6 Curriculum

Foundation-Year 2

- Respond to texts, identifying favourite stories, authors and illustrators
- Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations using interaction skills, including listening, while others speak
- Deliver short oral presentations to peers, using appropriate voice levels, articulation, body language, gestures and eye contact

Year 3 – 4

- Compare and evaluate two texts presenting the same ideas and analyse why one is more comprehensible or engaging than the other
- Understand that social interactions influence the way people engage with ideas and respond to others
- Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view
- Interpret ideas and information in spoken texts and listen for key points in order to carry out tasks and use information to share and extend ideas and use interaction skills
- Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations incorporating learned content and taking into account the particular audiences and purposes such as informative, persuasive and imaginative, including

multimodal elements

Year 5 - 6

- Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions, and use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions according to group size, formality of interaction and needs and expertise of the audience
- Participate in formal and informal debates and plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements for defined audiences and purposes, making appropriate choices for modality and emphasis
- Make connections between own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts
- Compare texts including media texts that represent ideas and events in different ways, explaining the effects of the different approaches

Identify, describe, and discuss similarities and differences between texts, including those by the same author or illustrator, and evaluate characteristics that define an author's individual style

NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW Education Standards Authority

Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus:

Kindergarten:

- perform dance and drama with movement and expression
- sing, play and move to music, and experiment with sound

Years 1 and 2:

- sing songs, play and move to music using their voices and percussion instruments
- move to music in a variety of ways such as imagining they are a machine or a butterfly
- dramatise a story

Years 3 and 4:

- focus more on the detail of artwork subject matter such as facial expressions, body angles
- sing and move to the beat of music, identify structure and changes in pitch, tempo and beat
- role-play characters from plays, working in groups as well as individual roles.

Years 5 and 6:

- take on roles and situations adapted from their imagination and from literature, including poetry
- talk about different features of the music and differences in style, eg folk, rock
- take on roles to demonstrate characterisation such as challenging stereotypes or exploring status and relationships in performances.

English K-6 Syllabus:

Kindergarten:

- communicate appropriately and effectively within the classroom using agreed conventions, eg staying on topic, asking for and offering assistance
- give short talks and express ideas, eg tell news, describe a favourite toy, describe a science investigation

Years 1 and 2:

- engage in conversations and discussions using active listening behaviours, showing interest and contributing ideas, information and questions
- communicate simple information, eg give directions to the library, briefly retell a familiar story
- listen attentively and share ideas, or give information in groups, class discussions or presentations to other classes and in assemblies, eg talk about familiar topics such as birthdays, sport, family, friends.

Years 3 and 4:

- employ various speaking skills to give confident presentations, eg gesture, facial expression, pause, emphasis, volume, humour, rhetorical questions, clarity
- read and engage with a wide variety of stories, poems and visual texts
- use comprehension strategies to build meaning to expand content knowledge, identify the writer's point of view, describe and compare different interpretations, and identify stereotypes

- respond to a range of texts, eg through role-play or drama, for pleasure and enjoyment, and express thoughtful conclusions about those texts.

Years 5 and 6:

-communicate effectively for an increasing range of purposes, eg to entertain, inform and influence audiences

- think critically about aspects of texts such as ideas and events

- respond to short films, documentaries and multimedia texts that express familiar and new aspects of the broader world

-plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements for defined audiences and purposes

- think imaginatively when engaging with texts, using prediction, eg to imagine what happens to characters after the text.

TASMANIA

Australian Curriculum

The Arts Foundation-Year 6 Curriculum

Foundation-Year 2

- Explore role and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation and process drama
- Use voice, facial expression, movement and space to imagine and establish role and situation
- Present drama that communicates ideas, including stories from their community, to an audience
- Respond to drama and consider where and why people make drama, starting with Australian drama including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Year 3 and 4

- Explore ideas and narrative structures through roles and situations and use empathy in their own improvisations and devised drama
- Explore ideas and narrative structures through roles and situations and use empathy in their own improvisations and devised drama
- Shape and perform dramatic action using narrative structures and tension in devised and scripted drama, including exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama
- Identify intended purposes and meaning of drama, starting with Australian drama, including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, using the elements of drama to make comparisons

Year 5 and 6

- Explore dramatic action, empathy and space in improvisations, playbuilding and scripted drama to develop characters and situations
- Develop skills and techniques of voice and movement to create character, mood and atmosphere and focus dramatic action
- Rehearse and perform devised and scripted drama that develops narrative, drives dramatic tension, and uses dramatic symbol, performance styles and design elements to share community and cultural stories and engage an audience
- Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama.

English Foundation-Year 6 Curriculum

Foundation-Year 6

- Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They listen to, read, view and interpret spoken, written and multimodal texts in which the primary purpose is to entertain, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These encompass traditional oral texts, picture books, various types of print and digital stories, simple chapter books, rhyming verse, poetry, non-fiction, film, multimodal texts, dramatic performances and texts used by students as models for constructing their own work.
- Students create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts including narratives, procedures, performances, reports, reviews, poetry and expositions.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

School Curriculum and Standards Authority

The Arts Foundation-Year 6 Curriculum

Foundation-Year 2

- Performance skills (facing the audience) when sharing drama with peers
- Development of improvisation skills (accepting offers) to develop dramatic action
- Audience behaviour (being attentive, responding appropriately) when viewing drama
- Personal responses to drama they view and make
- Exploration and experimentation of four (4) elements of drama: voice, movement, role, situation
- Performance of drama to an audience demonstrating story structures to set the scene
- Reasons why people make drama

Year 3 and 4

- Improvised and devised drama based on narrative structures in selected drama styles
- Exploration and experimentation of eight (8) elements of drama: voice, movement, role, situation, space, character, time, relationships
- Performance skills and audience awareness (where the performers use focus and control) when performing drama styles
- Considered responses to, and respect for, the drama of others as performers and audience members
- Responses that involve identifying and reflecting on the meaning and purpose of their own and others' drama, using drama terminology

Year 5 and 6

- Dramatic structures to sequence how a story is opened, how events are presented (mood and tension elements) and key details to help the audience understand dramatic meaning
- Exploration and experimentation of eight (10) elements of drama: voice, movement, role, situation, space, character, time, relationships, tension, mood
- Improvisation skills (creating climax and drama dénouement) to enhance drama
- Performance skills and audience awareness (where the performers control the focus) to convey meaning to the audience
- Responses that explain the purpose of drama and how the elements of drama are used to communicate meaning, using drama terminology

English Pre-Primary-Year 6 Curriculum

Foundation-Year 6

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- Students create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts including narratives, procedures, performances, reports, reviews, poetry and expositions.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Australian Curriculum

The Arts Foundation-Year 6 Curriculum

Foundation-Year 2

- Explore role and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation and process drama
- Use voice, facial expression, movement and space to imagine and establish role and situation
- Present drama that communicates ideas, including stories from their community, to an audience
- Respond to drama and consider where and why people make drama, starting with Australian drama including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Year 3 and 4

- Explore ideas and narrative structures through roles and situations and use empathy in their own improvisations and devised drama
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QUEENSLAND

Australian Curriculum

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