



AIM: To interpret and respond to a dramatic text.



Score the performance out of 10.



Name 3 things you liked about the performance.

Is there anything you didn't like? Why?

Was there anything you didn't understand?

What was your 'aha' moment in the show? **Explain** why this was a significant moment for you?

Describe the performance in 3 words.

What was your favourite scene in the play?

Who was your favourite character?

Form pairs

Share your views and opinions of the production.

Discuss together what you liked most about the production, favourite moments, things you didn't like or didn't understand.

Share your opinions with the rest of the class.

Write a 50-100 word review of the production based on your class discussions and individual reflections.

Include comments about the:

- set design
- puppets
- dancer puppeteers
- costumes

STORM-BOY

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- music and sound
- lighting
- performances by the actors
- script

Write a short letter/email addressed to the Sydney Theatre Company telling them about your views on the production.

Post-Production Reflection:

How did you feel at the end of the show?

How did other audience members respond to the performance?

Would you recommend this show to other people? Why/why not?





AIM: To understand and appreciate the design concept and process in creating and performing the puppet characters.

The Witnesses

Witness one who sees or has personal knowledge of a thing
 one who gives evidence
 to see

List all the puppet characters in the play.

Who was your favourite puppet character? What did you like best about this character?

The performers inhabiting the puppet characters are both professional Aboriginal actors/dancers. What skills, experience and cultural knowledge do you think both dancers bring to the puppetry in the show?

What connections do the animal characters have to the Coorong? What is the significance of having Aboriginal performers play these roles?

The puppet characters take on the role of silent witnesses in the story and echo Fingerbone Bill's connections to the Coorong.

Give examples in the performance when we see these connections between Fingerbone Bill and the animals as belonging to the same ancient place.

Consider

Colour & Texture

Costume

Physical movement & body gesture

Sound

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The Puppet Design

Designer Michael Scott Mitchell's 14 year old daughter Claude drafted drawings of the puppets around key design principles he had established in collaboration with the *Storm-Boy* production team and she produced the drawings based on these discussions.

The design principles are as follows:

- That the puppets should be made out of (or look like they are made out of) natural materials that might be found in the Coorong including grasses, reeds, cane.
- That the main features of the pelicans including beak, gullet, neck, eyes, fringe of feathers at the back of the head, wings including the 'fingers' at the tips of the wings and feet should be the main part of the design.
- That the animals should be stylised (impressions) rather than completely real.
- That Mr Ponder and Mr Proud should be comic interpretations.
- That there would be an echo of the set design in the way the pelicans' details were expressed.

Michael Scott- Mitchell

Puppet Design Drawing #1. 'Mr Percival' , Claude Scott-Mitchell, 2012.



Puppet Design Drawing #2, 'Adult Pelican', Claude Scott-Mitchell, 2012.



Puppet Design Drawing #3, 'Baby pelicans in nest', Claude Scott-Mitchell, 2012.

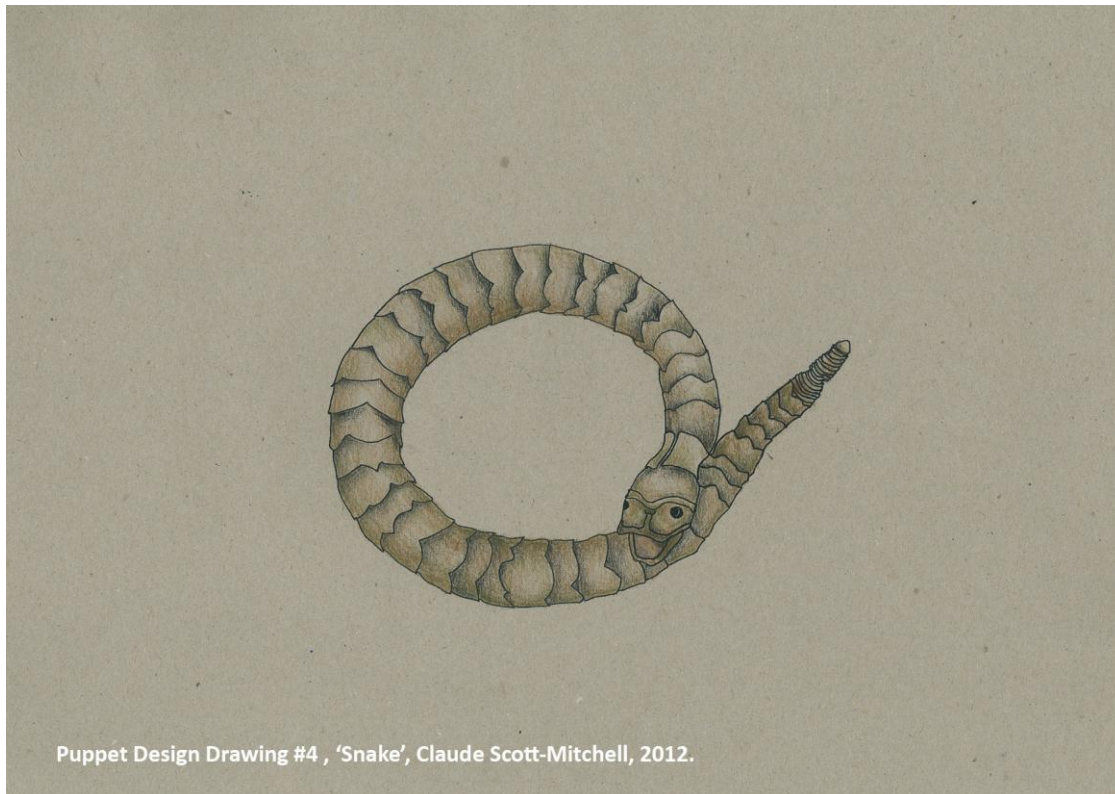


Puppet Design Drawing #4 , 'Flying Pelican', Claude Scott-Mitchell, 2012.



Puppet Design Drawing #4 , 'Flying Pelican', Claude Scott-Mitchell, 2012.

Puppet Design Drawing #4 , 'Snake', Claude Scott-Mitchell, 2012.



Read & Discuss the design principles.

Give examples from the production where there is a clear link between the principles and what you can see on stage.

Consider

What are the puppets made out of?

How are features of the pelicans incorporated into the main part of the set design?

Are the animals completely real or more stylized impressions?

Do you think Mr Ponder and Mr Proud are funny? What aspects of these puppet characters made you laugh?

Compare & Contrast the drawings with the finished onstage puppets. What has changed or been further developed from the drawings?

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Photocopy drawing/s on to acetate and project onto a large wall covered with a large sheet of canvas, cloth or paper as a drawing surface (OR have students draw directly onto the wall).

Trace the selected drawing/s on to the drawing surface.

Colour/Paint the traced image.

OR

Collage the drawing/s using natural materials - grasses, twigs, bark, leaves, petals, shells, feathers etc.

OR

Build up the drawing/s to make a 3D object. For example, you could make the nest for the Pelican chicks.

+ Extension:

Look at the work of Australian artist, Rosalie Gascoigne's work with feathers, found natural objects and wood.

Photocopy & Enlarge the drawing/s and put the animals into a different setting.

Draw/Paint a new and contrasting background - an urban landscape, rainforest, desert, cityscape, your own backyard or a place of your own choosing.

Note: These activities can be done as a whole class to make a large communal art work or individual/small groups of collective works.





AIM: To explore and examine the differences between the novel and stage adaptation of *Storm-Boy*.

Storm Boy was originally a novel written by Colin Thiele. The book was adapted into a film and has now been developed into a stage play by Tom Holloway.

The main difference between a novel and a stage play is that a novel is intended to be read and a play to be seen and heard by a live audience. In a novel the writer focuses on describing the details of the story, the environment and the thoughts and feelings of the characters. In a drama the focus is on presenting the story and the characters through dialogue and stage directions to be acted out by the actors.

Compare & Contrast the opening scene in the novel to the opening scene in the play.

The novel excerpt:

Storm Boy lived with his father, Hideaway Tom, in a humpy on the beach. The only other person who lived near them was Fingerbone Bill, an Aboriginal man, who was their friend.

Some distance from the place where Hideaway and Fingerbone had built their humpies, a whole stretch of land had been turned into a sanctuary. No one was allowed to hurt the birds there. No shooters were allowed, no hunters with nets, or wire traps, not even a dog.

But sometimes Storm Boy saw things that made him sad. In spite of the warnings and notices some people did hurt the birds.

One morning Storm Boy found everything in uproar and confusion. Three or four young men had gone into the sanctuary. They had found some pelican nests—wide, rough nests of sticks, grass, and pelican feathers as big as turkey quills—and they had killed two of the big birds nesting there. After that they had scattered everything wildly with their boots, kicking and shouting and

STORM-BOY

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picking up the white eggs and throwing them about until they were all broken. Then they had gone off laughing.

Storm Boy crept forward in fear and anger. From behind a tussock he looked round sadly at the ruin and destruction then, just as he was about to run back to tell Fingerbone to fill his blunderbuss with salt, he heard a faint rustling and crying, and there under the sticks and grass of the broken nests were three tiny pelicans—still alive. Storm Boy picked them up carefully and hurried back to Hideaway with them. Two of the baby pelicans were fairly strong, but the third was desperately sick. He was bruised and hurt and helpless. He was so weak that he couldn't even hold up his head to feed; he just let it drop back flat on the ground as soon as Storm Boy or Hideaway let go of it.

"I don't think he'll live," said Hideaway. "He's too small and sick."

Even old Fingerbone shook his head. "Dem bad fellows kill big pelican. Don't think little fellow stay alive now."

"He mustn't die," Storm Boy said desperately. "He mustn't! He mustn't!"

He wrapped up the tiny bruised body in one of Hideaway's scarves, and put it by the fire. All day long he watched it lying there, sometimes moving feebly or opening its beak to give a noiseless little cry. Every now and then he poured out a drop of cod-liver oil from the bottle that Hideaway had once bought for him, and tried to trickle it down the baby bird's throat.

Night came on, and still Storm Boy watched the sick little fellow hour after hour, until Hideaway spoke firmly about bed and sleep. But Storm Boy couldn't sleep. Again and again through the night he slipped out of bed and tip-toed across the dirt floor to the fireplace to make sure the baby pelican was warm enough.

And in the morning it was still living.

Excerpt from the play:

It's night. We hear a great storm. The screeching of wind. The crashing of waves. The pounding of rain.

The storm subsides. Birds call. Slowly the sun comes up. We can hear the slow lap of the ocean. It's a warm, late-summer's morning.

We see a huge, wild beach, now calmed after the storm. There is a small, ramshackle shack in amongst the sand dunes. There is a large 'lookout pole' sticking out of the ground, near the shack. Spread all around is fishing equipment and other belongings that the storm has spread all over the place. It looks like a bit of a disaster site.

Once the sun has slowly risen, and we've got to see this scene of carnage for a few moments, HIDEAWAY TOM comes out of the shack and looks over the scene. He quietly goes about cleaning up the mess. This goes on for quite a while.

After a while STORM-BOY comes out of the shack as well, bleary-eyed. He sees the carnage and automatically starts helping with the clean up. This is something they've both clearly done before. They both know where things go... how to unravel ropes and nets etc. Every now and then one of them motions for help with something from the other. It is a well-oiled machine.

While helping clear up, STORM-BOY is obviously keen to hit the beach and see what the storm has washed up. HIDEAWAY, although still without saying anything, makes it clear he can't go until everything is back in order.

Once everything is back in order, STORM-BOY looks to HIDEAWAY for permission to go.

HT: What about breakfast?

SB: Dad...

STORM-BOY

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HT: You've got to eat boy.

SB: I will.

HT: You always forget and then get grouchy later.

SB: I won't, I promise.

HT: Of course you will.

SB: But there's going to be lots of cool stuff washed up!

HT: It will only take a minute.

SB: But Dad...

HT: Wait there.

HIDEAWAY goes in to the cabin. STORM-BOY waits. He gets a bucket though, so he's ready to go treasure hunting.

HIDEAWAY comes back with a bowl of cereal.

HT: Eat it.

SB: But

HT: Eat it up and then you can go. Briefly. There's work to be done.

He hands STORM-BOY the bowl. STORM-BOY sits down and starts shovelling the cereal in his mouth as quickly as he can.

STORM-BOY

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Hey, slow down piglet. Try chewing for a second, will you?

STORM-BOY keeps ploughing through the cereal.

Eat like that and you won't be going anywhere.

He slows down.

The treasures aren't going to run off on you or anything.

STORM-BOY eats. HIDEAWAY sits down with him.

What do you notice about the two texts? How are they different? How are they the same?

What is the difference between 'presenting' and 'describing' a story to an audience?

Consider

Point of view – who is speaking?

Use of language – is it written in prose to be read or as dialogue intended to be spoken aloud and listened to?

Story structure – what happens when?

Stage directions vs. describing the action?

Reflection Question:

Do you prefer the novel or the stage production? Why/why not?

What are the differences between reading a book and watching a play?

+

Extension:

Compare & Contrast the opening scene of the novel and play script with the opening scene in the 1976 film version.

STORM-BOY

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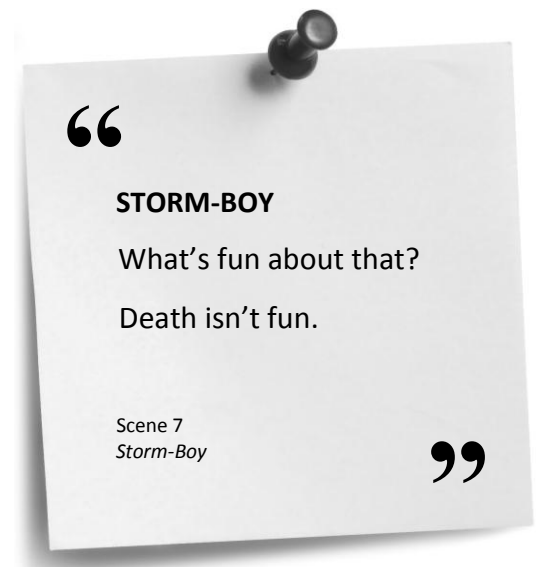
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Post-Performance Reflection:

Are there new things you have learned about Colin Thiele's novel from seeing this production?





AIM: To explore and examine character point of view in the play.

A wonderful bird is the Pelican.
 His beak can hold more than his belly can.
 He can hold in his beak
 Enough food for a week!
 But I'll be darned if I know how the hellican?

Dixon Lanier Merritt



Read this poem by Dixon Lanier Merritt aloud.

Say the truncated word 'hellican' very slowly.

What does it sound like?

Fill in the missing word – hell ... can.

What do you notice about the words at the end of each line of the poem?

What is the verse form?

Form small groups of 3-5.

Drawing on what you know about the pelican from your research in the pre-production activities

Write the next verse of the poem.

Collate all the verses and read aloud as a class.

Reflection Question:

Check out the *Storm-Boy* page on Barking Gecko's website.

<http://www.barkinggecko.com.au/show/storm-boy>

Why do you think Lanier Merritt's poem is quoted on the page?

What does the poem say about the pelican that is important for an audience to think about before seeing the show?

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Re-tell/Re-write the story of *Storm-Boy* from the point of view of one of the puppet characters
- Mr Percival, Mr Ponder, Mr Proud or Snake.



Imagine a conversation between the puppet characters. What would they say?

What would they sound like?

Write & Perform a 1 minute dialogue between 2 or more puppet characters.

Imagine it is 20 years from now and Storm-Boy is grown-up with a son or daughter of his own.

What is Storm-Boy's real name? Will he still call himself 'Storm-Boy' or will he have a new 'adult' name?

He tells the story of Mr Percival and the Coorong to his son or daughter.

Continue the story beginning with:

I lived my father, Hideaway Tom, in a humpy on the beach.

The only other person who lived near them was

Fingerbone Bill, an Aboriginal man, who was our friend.....

