



DEAD PUPPET SOCIETY

ARGUS

by the Dead Puppet Society
with an original score by John Babbage (Topology)



*Step into this whimsical wonderland where table tops grow grass and water bottles
become the depths of the ocean.*

Presenter's Information

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COMPANY PROFILE

Hell bent on bringing our own brand of magical entertainment to the world, our work is created for a wide variety of audiences. We shy away from conventional views of the world and seek to mythologise the modern experience through provoking curiosity and wonder. Focussed on visual theatre, and contemporary applications of puppetry, we believe that this ancient form, given new life can generate deeply imaginative experiences. We think that puppetry has been caught too long in the world of shallow entertainment and slapstick comedy and seek to innovate and educate in order to demonstrate the potential that non-human performers have, and advocate their use in mainstream theatre.

This is not puppet-theatre.
It's a Dead Puppet Society.

We create puppet-based, visual theatre that conjurs immersive worlds where the old school meets the technological. Our form of theater is eclectic, ignoring the boundaries between defined artistic practices to create performances that draw on a confluence of theatrical forms and technologies. Our works generally incorporate projection, live sound, and a solid dose of good old fashioned stage trickery; it's part digital, part analogue and all charm. In general we draw on existing puppet forms (including bunraku, shadow and object manipulation) but constantly reimagine what might be possible, and break the mold to create objects that suit our own needs. Everything that we put on stage is highly integrated and choreographed to allow for deep imaginative engagement and to evoke a sense of wonder.

History

Founded in 2009 by graduates of the Queensland University of Technology, the Dead Puppet Society has created a large repertoire of visual theatre works in our short history. Our first work, *little grey wolf*, was part of Brisbane Festival's UNDER THE RADAR and was then immediately picked up for The Garden of Unearthly Delights at Adelaide Fringe in 2010. Off the back of this we were invited to develop a new work at Metro Arts called *The Timely Death of Victor Blott* which enjoyed a completely sold out three week season. We then presented *The Harbinger* at La Boite Indie, Queensland's leading program for independent artists. The company then spent time in New York City working with Performance Space 122, a venture supported by the Australia Council for the Arts and the Ian Potter Foundation. We were then invited by the Artistic Director of La Boite Theatre Company to present a fuller and refreshed version of *The Harbinger* as a part of the company's mainstage season, and so returned to Australia. In 2013 we were commissioned to create a new work for young audiences and families by the Brisbane Powerhouse. The project, entitled *Argus*, received support from The Jim Henson Foundation and had a season in New York City in December 2013. Throughout this time we have created a large education

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program, and worked in over fifty schools and educational institutions delivering workshops and residencies on contemporary puppetry and visual theatre. In 2013 we received another grant from the Australia Council for the Arts to spend time working with Handspring Puppet Company, of *War Horse* fame, in South Africa. We are currently in New York City to develop a work for St. Ann's Warehouse and another new piece for The New Victory Theater. Additionally, next year we are working on commission for Queensland Theatre Company and will see two of our existing works tour nationally.

ABOUT THE SHOW

Show Synopsis

Argus is a tabletop puppet show for families and children about a tiny creature who finds himself sent on an unexpected adventure. Based loosely around elements and characters from ancient mythologies, the work reimagines the epic in a timeless world full of colour and whimsy. As he journeys over vast terrain and meets the other beings who populate his world, our little creature learns what it means to be alive, to fall in love, to feel fear and curiosity, and the importance of having a home. Working on principles of found objects and the transformative power of poetic visuals rather than speech, this quietly touching piece illustrates the evocative reactions of an overlooked little being in forty-five minutes of play, joy and laughter.

Created in order to maximise storytelling potential, the central character, made only of hands, is incredibly versatile as he has no fixed form and can be summoned, transformed and dismissed at will simply through the movements of the performers' bodies. The entire world in *Argus* is built from found objects and readily available materials that are given a new lease on life in the creation of symbolic, poetic environments. In the world of *Argus*, astro-turf becomes a rolling plain where pinwheel flowers spin in the fan-powered breeze and water bottles cast broken beams of light down onto an ocean floor where schools of fish swim through streams of rising soap bubbles. All of this is set on a giant rotating tabletop allowing the entire world to literally move beneath the characters' feet. In the creation of all things the source of the illusion is kept clear, welcoming the audience to see the mundanity at play, and ultimately appreciate the potential that lies in the little things and the magic they can create.

Themes

A strong environmental and recycling message.

About family, community, and personal journeys.

Explores transformation and potential through an innovative form of puppetry.

Acknowledgements

Producer: Nicholas Paine

Director and Designer: David Morton

Dramaturg: Richard Tulloch

Original Score: Topology

Lighting Design: Whitney Eglington

Performed by: Laura Hague, Liam Haworth, Benjamin Newth and Samuel Whatley

Creative consultant: Sandra Gattenhof

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS

Duration

50 minutes, no interval.

Suitable Venues

Suitable for proscenium arch venues, black box theatres, town halls and other cultural facilities.

Maximum Number of Performances Per Week

10 performances.

Minimum Break Between Performances

60 minutes.

Licencing Agreements

n/a

APRA Obligations

n/a

Touring Personnel

The touring party consists of 5 people, without Topology live.

David Morton Director/Stage Manager

Laura Hague Puppeteer

Liam Howarth Puppeteer

Benjamin Newth Puppeteer

Samuel Whatley Puppeteer

Performance History

2013 Visy Theatre, Brisbane Powerhouse 10 performances

2013 Dixon Place, New York City 1 performance

2014 IPAY, Pittsburgh, USA 1 performance

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Overview

In order to engage with local communities while on the tour the Dead Puppet Society is available to deliver workshops run by the performers introducing the art of puppetry with a particular focus on manipulation techniques and construction. These can be run with various demographics, including school groups (both secondary and primary), local artists, or interested adults. These workshops could be either packaged with the show or run independently if the community is interested.

The company can also provide professional development opportunities for local teachers to allow for a deeper engagement with the performance and facilitating the experience of their students if they come to see the show. Over the last five years DPS has provided similar workshops for teachers in regional and rural areas, through this tour we'd be able to connect with the large proportion of teachers whose school's couldn't normally afford to fly artists out for training and to work with their students.

Additionally, we will provide workshops introducing visual theatre practice for local artists and arts workers with a focus on both creating work and teaching workshops geared towards puppetry and visual dramaturgy practice. These will serve both artists who want to diversify their practice or local arts workers who could deliver workshops themselves once the company has moved on.

If Topology is touring with the production, they are also available for workshops. Topology is passionate about music education offering young musicians and teachers new insights into composition, performance and improvisation. Being able to work across multiple genres and art-forms, Topology can meet students in their own musical norms and extend them into new territories.

Additionally, artist talks will be organised to promote post-show discussion and offer an insight into the artistic practice of the company.

A full list of Dead Puppet Society's workshops can be viewed here:

<http://deadpuppetsociety.com.au/education/>

However, these can also be tailored to suit any context.

Cost

Workshops can be negotiated with the presenter as an 'add on' or incorporated into the weekly fee with a reduced number of performances.

MARKETING

Marketing Copy

One line:

Four performers, four pairs of hands and one little creature; the littlest of big adventures.

Short:

Step into this whimsical wonderland where table tops grow grass and water bottles become the depths of the ocean.

Making use of nothing but household objects and the performers' hands, *Argus* transcends from the simple to the sublime exploring the fragile attempts of this little creature to find a home in a world where he just doesn't fit in.

Working on principles of found objects and transformation, this quietly touching piece highlights the beauty of an impossible life; one that is full of playfulness, joy and laughter.

Argus will expand the imaginations of adults and children alike.

Marketing Summary

Media Quotes:

Greenroom:

"The 'puppet renaissance' has been busily playing itself out for a few years now with the Dead Puppet Society at its helm."

"Argus is so well put together and complete in itself."

XS Entertainment:

"Delightful characters and a story to win hearts all over the world."

"Argus is the real thing; it's old-school "analogue" magic in miniature, created from scratch."

4Change:

"A delightful hour of escapism."

"A unique world of fantasy and illusion."

Australian Stage:

"A funny, heartwarming production."

"Immediately charming and entertaining as it is profoundly ambitious and accomplished."

"It's sweet and hilarious regardless of your age."

"It's a testament to the power of imagination throughout."

Colleague Recommendations

Troy Armstrong
Producer, Brisbane Powerhouse
M 0418652900 | T 617 3358 8686
E TroyA@brisbanepowerhouse.org

Video Links

Promo: <http://vimeo.com/70005954>
Full: <http://vimeo.com/69944718>

Sponsorship and Other Acknowledgements

Developed with Brisbane Powerhouse.
This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.
Funding support for this project has been provided by The Jim Henson Foundation.

Images



Images by Dylan Evans. High res versions are available through the producer.

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CONTACT

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Argus- By Dead Puppet Society
Touring Technical Specification A V1
Live Musicians Option



Touring Company

4 Cast Members

4 Musicians

1 Stage Manager

1 Sound Engineer

Equipment with Touring Company

Set Transport Freighted- TBC

Set

- 1x 4m Circle Truss (in 4 arcs)
- 12x plywood set cladding
- 12x steel arms w/scaff clamp
- 6x cladding joins
- 2x 1000mm roller legs
- 2x 3000mm steel roller legs
- 4x short cross brace pipe

- 3x 2500mm 48 OD Steel pipe
- 3x 2000mm 48 OD Steel Pipe
- 2x 3200mm 48 OD Steel Pipe
- 2x 3900mm 48 OD Steel Pipe
- 2x Cross brace length
- 6x Fixed (90 Degree) scaff clamps
- 27x Swivel scaff clamps

Costume and Props 1x Small props road case

Lighting 3x LED par
(Venue to supply if available)

4x Festoon lengths

5x BC pendant bulb fittings

Sound 1x In ear monitor with amp

3x instrument mics (Violin, Saxophone, Double Bass)

Performance

Running time of 45 minutes, no interval

Pre-rig and set up

Lighting

- Lighting to be rigged, coloured and patched prior to companies arrival as per venue issued lighting plan
- Floor Electrics to be prepped and circuits to be run- however will be placed following the set build

- Lighting to be focussed during company bump in

Staging

- Scaff pipe and scaff clamps or wheel structure may be provided by the venue- TBC in liaison with the venue

Risk Assessments and Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) Available prior to bump in

Bump In

- 2x Lighting technicians for 7 hours

-1x Staging for 4 hours

- 1x Sound technician for 7 hours

(Expecting that the venue has pre-rigged lighting, and PA is currently installed in standard position)

Performance	- 1x Lighting Operator -1x Sound Technician
Bump Out	- 2x Staging for 3 hours - 1x Lighting for 3 hours -1x Sound for 3 hours
Dimensions	Black Box set Up Proscenium Set Up Minimum 8m usable stage width Stage Depth min 6m Floor to Grid Height Minimum 4m
General Storage	Storage space is required in the theatre for any excess touring equipment not used. 2-3 cubic metres if possible.
Set	Standard set drawings supplied- venue specific drawings to be provided prior to bump in
Lighting	Venue specific plans and paperwork to be provided closer to date. Generic plan, patch sheets and focus notes to come.
Audio and Talkback	Venue to Supply: FOH audio set up (+ subs, if possible) to be provided by venue 2x condenser mics on short stands DS of wheel- Performers vocal 1x Choir mic, hung in centre of circle- Performers vocal 3x Foldback Wedges Mixing console (w/ at least 6 auxiliary (prefader) sends for in-ears/reverb) 2 KMs mics with tall boom stands (piano) 1 reverb & delay unit (PCM 60, 81, 91 or similar)- Or provision for this in digital console

(Sound cont.)

Grand Piano with adjustable bench (To be delivered prior to companies arrival- tuning required before first performance)

3 Music Stands

4 Sconces

3x Talkback headsets (2x control position, 1x stage level)

Dressing Rooms

1x dressing room for cast members

1x dressing room for musicians

Wardrobe/Laundry

Access to washing machine and dryer + ironing/steaming facilities

1 Clothes rack in each dressing room

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Standard Production Schedule A (Live Musicians Option)

Time	Activity	Required
0800	Load into venue Set Position, venue induction etc	SM, Venue Crew
0830	Begin Set construction	SM Staging x 1
1230	Sound Set Up Props bump in LX Prac Rig	1x Sound SM, Cast 2x LX
1330	Sound Check	Topology, 1x Sound
1430	LX Focus Commence	SM, 2x LX
1630	LX plot Fix Ups	
1730	DINNER	All
1830	Tech/ Dress	Cast, Topology, SM, Touring SND, Venue SND, LX
2030	FINISH	ALL

|Crew Summary: |1x Staging (4hrs), 2x LX (7hrs), 1x SND (7hrs) |

Whitney Eglinton
0419585511

Argus- By Dead Puppet Society
Touring Technical Specification B V1
Music Playback Option



Touring Company

4 Cast Members

1x SM

Equipment with Touring Company

Set	1x 4m Circle Truss (in 4 arcs)
	12x plywood set cladding
	12x steel arms w/scaff clamp
	6x cladding joins
	2x 1000mm roller legs
	2x 3000mm steel roller legs
	4x short cross brace pipe
	3x 2500mm 48 OD Steel pipe
	3x 2000mm 48 OD Steel Pipe
	2x 3200mm 48 OD Steel Pipe
	2x 3900mm 48 OD Steel Pipe
	2x Cross brace length
	6x Fixed (90 Degree) scaff clamps
	27x Swivel scaff clamps
Costume and Props	2x Small props road case
Lighting	3x LED par (Venue to supply if available)
	4x Festoon lengths
	5x BC pendant bulb fittings

Sound 1x Macbook Pro with QLab playback system

Performance

Running time of 45 minutes, no interval

Pre-rig and set up

Lighting

- Lighting to be rigged, coloured and patched prior to companies arrival as per venue issued lighting plan
- Floor Electrics to be prepped and circuits to be run- however will be placed following the set build
- Lighting to be focussed during company bump in
- Show file is in both ION format and MA format- Please advise on venue console

Staging

- Scaff pipe and scaff clamps for wheel structure may be provided by the venue- TBC in liaison with the venue

Risk Assessments and Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) Available prior to bump in

Bump In

- 2x Lighting technicians for 5 hours

- 1x Staging for 4 hours

- 1x Sound technician for 3 hours (Or minimum call)

(Expecting that the venue has pre-rigged lighting, and PA is currently installed in standard position)

Performance

- **1x Sound Operator**
- **1x Lighting Operator**

Bump Out

- 1x Staging for 3 hours (Or minimum call)

- 1x Lighting for 3 hours (Or minimum call)

- 1x Sound for 3 hours (Or minimum call)

Dimensions	Black Box set Up Proscenium Set Up Minimum 5m usable stage width Stage Depth min 6m Floor to Grid Height Minimum 4m
General Storage	Storage space is required in the theatre for any excess touring equipment not used. 2-3 cubic metres if possible.
Lighting	Venue specific plans and paperwork to be provided closer to date. Generic plan, patch sheets and focus notes to come.
Audio and Talkback	Venue to Supply: 1x mixing console with facility for stereo input from computer FOH audio set up (+ subs, if possible) 2x condenser mics on short stands DS of wheel-Performers vocal 1x Choir mic, hung in centre of circle- Performers vocal 3x Talkback headsets (2x control position, 1x stage level)
Dressing Rooms	1x dressing room for cast members 1x production dressing room
Wardrobe/Laundry	Access to washing machine and dryer + ironing/steaming facilities 1 Clothes rack in performer dressing room

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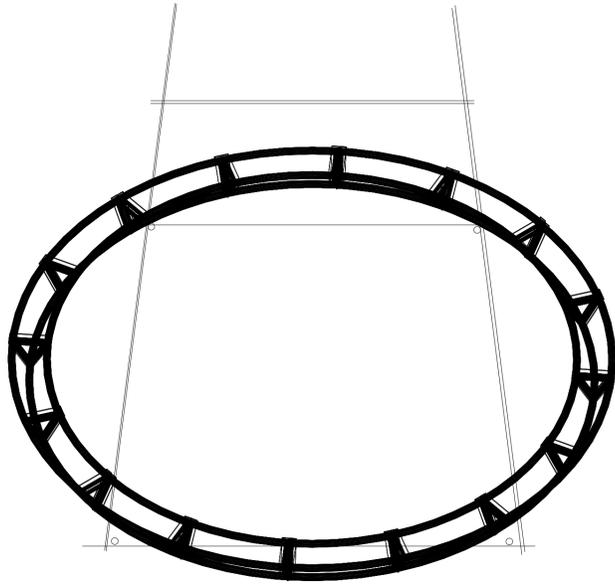
By Dead Puppet Society

Standard Production Schedule B (Music Playback Option)

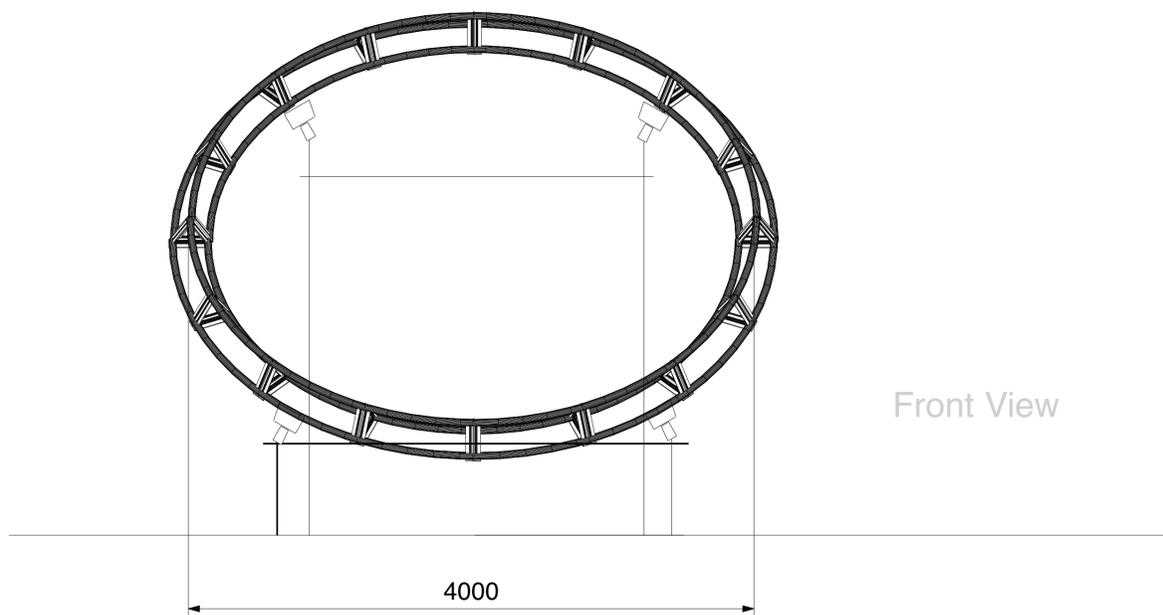
Time	Activity	Required
0800	Load into venue Set Position, venue induction etc	SM, Venue Crew
0830	Begin Set construction	SM Staging x 1
1230	Sound Set Up Props bump in LX Prac Rig	1x Sound SM, Cast 2x LX
1330	LX Focus Commence	SM, 2x LX
1530	LX Plot/ Fixups	SM , 2x LX
1730	DINNER	All

|Crew Summary: |1x Staging (4hrs), 2x LX (5hrs), 1x SND (4hrs) |

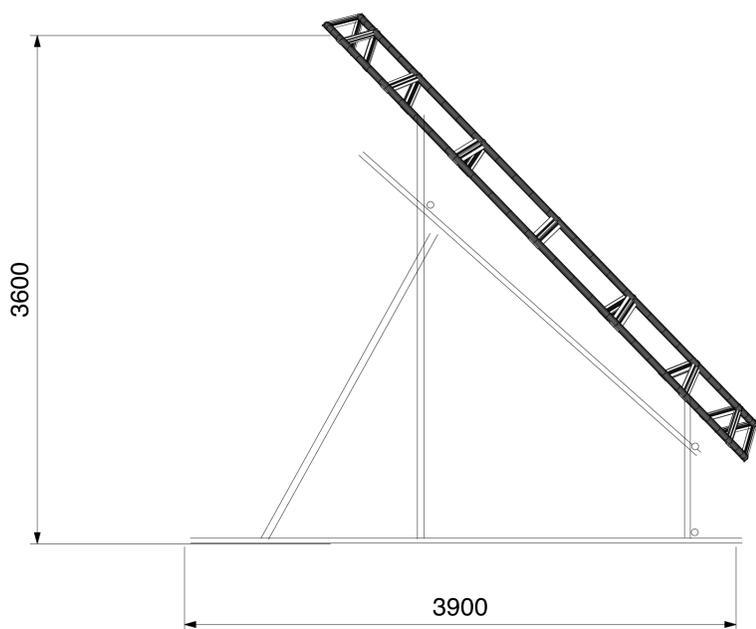
Please note this is a sample schedule- actual schedule to be issued prior to bump in subject to venue specific needs.



Top View



Front View



Side View- Opposite Prompt

Notes:

- Drawings do not depict plywood cladding- bare truss only
- Dimensions are subject to change
- All pipe is 48 OD- Steel
- Build drawing only- Venue specific plans to be issued prior to bump in

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SET DRAWING V1
1:25 @ A1

As at 5 July 2013
Drawn By Whitney Eglington