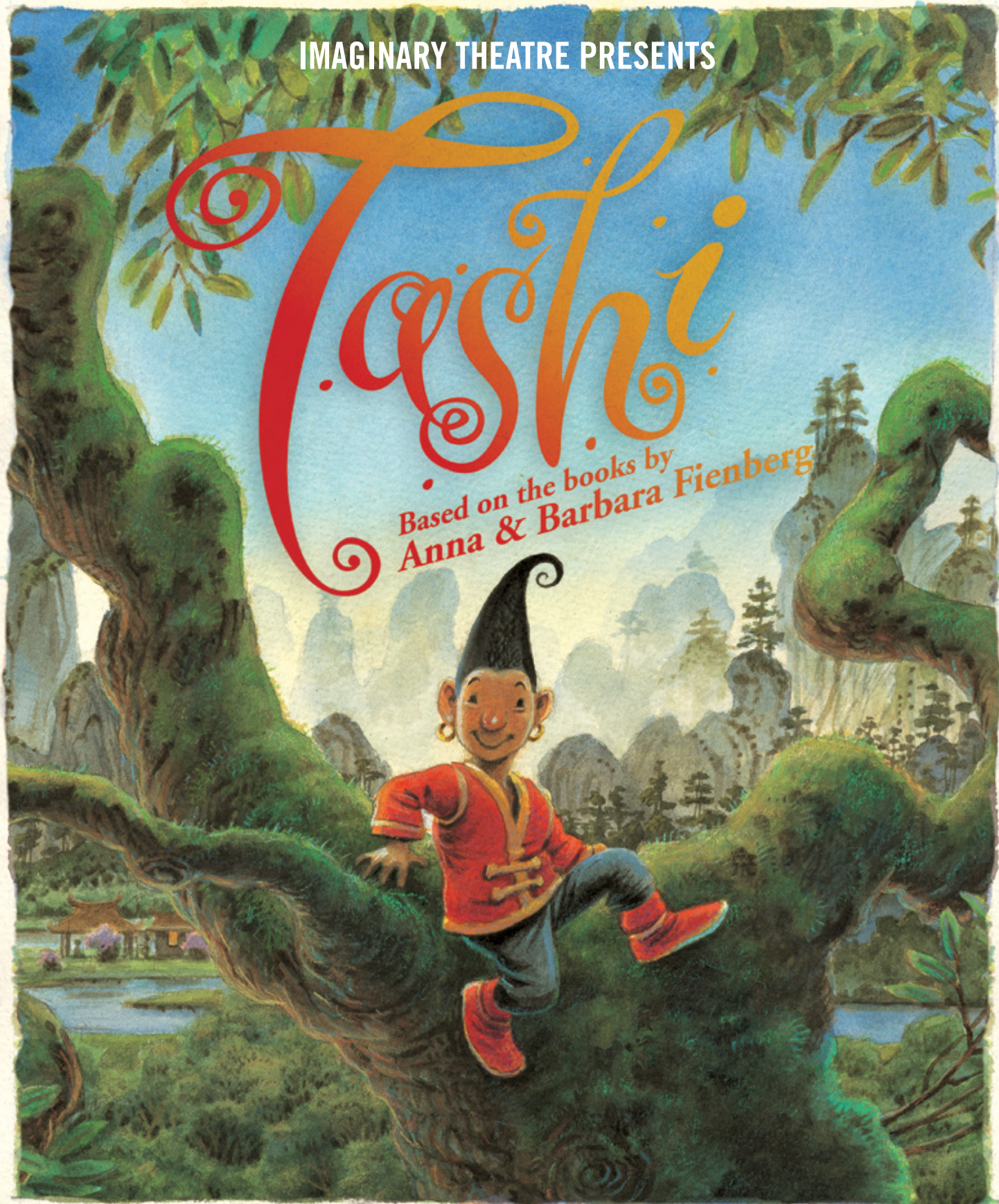


IMAGINARY THEATRE PRESENTS

Tashi

Based on the books by
Anna & Barbara Fienberg



PARENTS AND CARERS RESOURCE

To accompany Imaginary Theatre's presentations of
Tashi and the Mountain of White Tigers & Tashi: Lost in the City

A message from Imaginary Theatre's Artistic Director



Hi, and welcome to the magical world of Tashi!

As you probably know, Tashi is the hero of a series of Australian books very popular with young children.

Tashi was introduced into my world through my children. In no time at all, we had our own growing collection of Tashi books, and when a new one came out, there was always fierce competition to see who could read it first.

They were also a favourite when it came to bedtime stories. Tashi reads aloud well – humour is mixed with dramatic tension, and an array of interesting characters just beg to be given scary or funny voices.

Tashi's co-writer, Anna Fienberg, regularly visits schools in her hometown of Sydney to read the stories to children. Sometimes her illustrator, Kim Gamble, will accompany her. He'll sketch a beautiful colour picture during Anna's reading of the story and afterwards they will share with the children some of their Tashi secrets. So she is an author who understands her readers well.

It was in 2004 that we first started turning the stories into plays, for Out of the Box, Brisbane's famous children's festival. They were an instant hit. Then in 2006 we founded Imaginary Theatre, to develop them further, and make other exciting theatre adventures for young audiences.

It wasn't long before we started to hear stories from parents about how their child, typically a 'reluctant reader', after seeing the Tashi performances, wanted Mum or Dad to read the stories to him or her (usually him), and in no time at all was excitedly reading through the whole series.

This set us thinking how we could help parents use their visit to the Tashi shows, to get children reading and to enjoy playing in the Tashi world in other ways. In this document you'll find some of our ideas.

If you've already developed your own, why not share them with other parents? Just email us, and where possible we'll incorporate them into our next edition of these Notes – fully crediting you of course!

Imaginary has now performed Tashi Australia-wide to over 45,000 children and their families. It's been an amazing experience to meet the children of this extraordinary country, and to share their enthusiasm for the stories.

Before and after each show, our performers make a point of trying to meet each child personally, and to chat about the stories, the shows, or what's going on in their lives.

What we find is that there's a universal quality in Tashi that appeals across different regions and cultures, and through the power of storytelling, affirms the uniqueness of every person's life-experience, whether adult or child.

We've met lots of young families for whom attending the Tashi performances remains a warm family memory that everyone loves to recollect. Although photography during the shows isn't permitted, we certainly encourage carers to take lots of pictures of their children with the performers either before or after the shows, to help add to those special memories.

For Imaginary, making theatre for young audiences is a labour of love, and you'll see that reflected in our care and respect for the children attending. For us, they aren't the audience of the future, they're the audience of now, and we want them to have the richest and most rewarding experience possible, on the edge of their seats, waiting to see 'what will happen next.'

The magic of theatre is that real people in front of your eyes make you see amazing things in your imagination. From the outset Imaginary's mission has been to transform the imaginative and creative lives of children and their families.

We hope children will continue to seek out other journeys into the imagination through reading, drawing, acting out and simply playing.

We warmly invite you to stay in touch with us after the show, through email or Facebook, and share with us some of your favourite Tashi moments.

All the best

Mark Radvan

About Tashi

Tashi Books

Written for 'emergent readers' between the ages of 5 and 10, the Tashi stories are hugely popular, both in Australia and overseas (they have been published in more than twenty other languages).

In 2009 Tashi was listed in the Sydney Morning Herald as being number four on the 'Top 10 Reads for children under 10'. The Tashi books are Allen and Unwin's second highest selling book for children, second only to the 'Harry Potter' series. When first released in 1995, the Children's Book Council of Australia awarded the first book in the Tashi series as an Honour Book for early readers. Since then another four books in the series have been recognized as notable books in the same category of the awards.

For more information, visit Allen and Unwin's website <http://www.tashibooks.com/home.html>

You can find Tashi Books at your local bookstore, or through a mail-order service like Fishpond.com.au.

Imaginary Theatre and Tashi

Imaginary Theatre is a professional Queensland arts-based organisation creating performances, workshops and arts experiences for children and young people. Based in Brisbane, our aim is to become an international leader in the creation of world-class theatre and arts events that have the power to transform the imaginative and creative lives of children and their families in Australia and elsewhere.

The development of the dramatic adaptations involves trialing the performances in selected schools and childcare centres to ensure optimum engagement and comprehension by the children. Though it is important that the performances are fun and entertaining, Imaginary believes it is critical they connect meaningfully with children's developmental levels and that they intelligently manipulate theme, dramatic tension and emotional expression while avoiding the common clichés of children's theatre.

Directed by Mark Radvan (former Artistic Director of QPAC's Out of the Box Festival for 3-8 year olds, 2005 - 2008 and Senior Lecturer in Drama at Queensland University of Technology), TASHI is performed by four talented performers, on one set with a simple yet visually stunning design by Maria Cleary, exquisite lighting design by Matthew Strachan and a detailed sound score composed by Thom Browning and Jeremy Neideck. The combination of these elements provides young children with a complete theatrical experience in an environment tailored to their needs.

For more information please visit www.imaginarytheatre.org

The Tashi Stories You Will See

Tashi and The Mountain of White Tigers

"...only someone as bold as Tashi would go all the way along an underground passage to the Mountain of White Tigers."

The Wicked Baron is up to his old tricks again. This time he's trying to cheat Tashi's Aunty Li Tam out of the home she has lived in her whole life, and he'll stop at nothing. Tashi knows he has to do something, but what? As usual he thinks of a clever idea, but it means he will have to face his worst fear. However, if he can do it he might be able to help not just his favourite aunty, but the whole village as well!

"Tashi always has a cunning plan, and he has daring adventures too."

Tashi: Lost in the City

'I raced up and down the street looking in doorways and behind stalls. But there was no Grandma.'

Poor Jack is really worried when he and Tashi find themselves stuck in an elevator, but it reminds Tashi of one of his amazing adventures when he was lost in the city back in his old country. The big city is a really exciting place, but it's very different to Tashi's old village, Tashi tells of the characters he met and how he used his wit and ingenuity to escape a sticky situation.

'Clever Tashi always knows what to do - stay calm, think hard and move fast.'

Preparing Your Children to See a Tashi Performance

Read the stories aloud

One of the best ways to prepare children for a Tashi performance is to read aloud to them one of the *Tashi* stories. It doesn't matter too much which one, but ideally it will be one of the stories they are coming to see. Reading the story helps prepare children for what to expect and in the case of the younger children will help them follow the story line and the characters they will meet.

If you have time, you could introduce your children to the Tashi concepts and various characters by reading the very first in the Tashi series – either the picture book 'There once was a boy called Tashi', or the first of the book series 'Tashi and the Swan'.

Explaining the theatre

For children who have never been to the theatre before, it is a good idea to give them some idea of what to expect, particularly if they are young children (ages 4-6). Here are some answers that might help you to deal with questions the children might have:

What's a theatre?

It's a bit like going to the movies, but instead of watching a movie you watch real people instead. It's a bit like going to a concert, but instead of people singing or playing musical instruments, there are people called actors or performers, who will act out a story for you.

Is the theatre scary?

No, there are lots of other children there, and the actors who are going to act out a Tashi story for you are very friendly and they will make sure you are all right.

Can I talk to the actors?

Yes, you can talk to them before the show and after the show, but not during the show.

What do I have to do in the theatre?

Once the show is ready to begin you put on your best listening ears and your best watching eyes and you sit facing the actors ready for the story

Can you talk during the show?

No, that would distract the other children.

Is the story real or 'pretend'?

It's just pretending, but sometimes it seems so real that you forget that it's pretending, but then you remember again.

Do you clap at the end?

Yes, if you enjoyed the story you can show your appreciation by clapping. You will know it is the end because the performers will tell you that the story is finished.

Will I sit on the floor or on a seat?

In some theatres you will be able to sit on a mat very close to the performers, in others you will sit on a seat a bit further away. (Ask your local theatre what the set up will be)

Can a child younger than 4 or older than 10 come to the performance?

The Tashi shows can be appreciated by children younger than 4 years old, but it is at the discretion of parents to decide if their child is ready or not. Children over 10 usually enjoy the shows even though they may feel that they are a bit old for them. Adults generally love the shows as much as the children.

If a Child is Anxious

Before the show starts the performers will introduce themselves to the children and explain how the lights and sound will be used. This is to help the children understand what they are about to experience and to reduce any anxiety some of them might be feeling. Now and again though, a child can feel stressed and will want to leave. It is absolutely OK for an adult guardian to take them outside and let them calm down. Sometimes this is all they need and they can come back in a few minutes to watch the rest of the show.

After the show!

Here are some activities that your children will enjoy doing at home.

Adventure Map

Draw and colour in an Adventure map that shows where Tashi went in each of the stories.

Materials:

Paper and coloured pencils/markers

Activity:

Use guiding questions to identify key characters, places, and moments of action.

Where did Tashi start his adventure?

Where did Tashi go on his Adventure?

Who did Tashi meet on his adventure?

What problems did Tashi face in his adventure?

How did Tashi solve the problem?

Once the map is complete you can make a Tashi cut-out to re-tell the story in your own words, moving the cut-out along the map as you go.



Write a letter to the actors or to Tashi

The actors always love receiving letters from children, along with their drawings.

Materials:

Paper, coloured pencils and markers

Activity:

Write a letter or draw a picture for Tashi, take a scan or a photo of it, and email it to info@imaginarytheatre.org

What you could write about:

- Who is your favourite character in the Tashi stories?
- What was your favourite part in the show?
- What would you like Tashi to know about you?

Get Reading!

Seeing the Tashi shows is often a good way to get your child interested enough in the Tashi adventures that they want to read them for themselves. Start with the books of the stories they've just seen and read them aloud the same night. Have fun and see if you can give the characters the voices that the actors used.

If you are after specific tips on how to encourage children to read, Google 'how to get children reading' and you will find a whole range of ideas, including Oprah Winfrey's Top Ten Tips.

Some of our favourites are:

- Visit your local library and sign up your child with their very own borrowing card. Then visit once a week to return old books and find new ones. It's a good way to find what your child responds to. Try some CDs of audiobooks.
- Back home, set up a reader's corner, with a display area for your favourite books. This makes reading a bit special.
- Read aloud each night to your child, once they are in bed. (But don't be surprised if you fall asleep before they do!)
- Find a time each day when your child can read to you. If you own the book, mark with a Gold Star the page they reached at the end of the session.
- Give the older children the job of reading to the younger one. They can show off their skills and be practicing at the same time.
- Encourage your family and friends to give your children books at Christmas or birthdays.

Happy reading!

Fun in the Kitchen

Ghost Pies

Cook savoury or sweet ghost pies just like the ones Tashi uses to walk through boulders!

Sweet Ghost Pies



Ingredients:

- 5 egg whites
- 340 gr white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Melted chocolate or sweets for ghost eyes and mouths

Step 1

Preheat the oven 80°C.

Separate the egg yolks from the whites. Set egg yolks aside. In a bowl, beat egg whites until stiff, adding little by little some sugar (170 gr).

Step 2

When they have doubled in volume, keep beating with the electric mixer and slowly add 85 gr white sugar and vanilla extract.

Step 3

Drizzle the rest of the white sugar over the mixture and mix again. The batter should be stiff.



Step 4

Fit a piping bag with a 3/8-inch (1 cm) round tip. Pipe the batter onto a baking sheet covered with wax paper.

Step 5

Bake for 2 hours.

Step 6

Add eyes and mouths using sweets or melted chocolate!

Based on recipe at <http://www.bestoffrenchfood.com/recipes/2935-french-meringue.html>

Savoury Ghost Pies



Ingredients

- Mashed potato (potatoes, butter, milk, salt and pepper)
- Black sesame seeds for ghost eyes!

Step 1:

Make mashed potato!

Step 2:

Place mashed potato into a pastry bag or snip the end of a ziploc.

Step 3:

Pipe the mashed potato into a ghost shape

Step 4:

For the ghost eyes, use either black sesame seeds or tomato sauce

Based on recipe at <http://saluslifestyles.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/season-of-sugar-halloween-part-i.html>

What next?

- Take your Ghost Pies and a rug outside for a picnic.
- Serve Ghost Pies at a Tashi Themed party
- Keep your eyes peeled for more strange foods in other Tashi books. Maybe you can try some Dragon Egg Sandwiches?
- Or some of Jack's Dad's Pancakes or Jack's Mum's Muffins.
- What about crispy, dragon-breath-roasted pig?

Finger Puppets

Materials:

Assorted craft/collage materials, paper, marker pens, sticky tape

Activity:

Make your own finger puppets of all the Tashi characters. Get Mum or Dad to take a photo of you wearing your puppets.



What next?

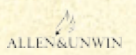
- Use your finger puppets to re-create your favourite scene from the Tashi shows (or create a new one!)
- Make tickets for your show and give them to your friends.

Photos of the Show





Photos by Marisa Cuzzolaro featuring Thom Browning, Joanna Smith, Cameron Hurry, Courtney Stewart



The 2014 Tour of Tashi was tour managed and coordinated by ArTour, an initiative supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

info@imaginarytheatre.org www.imaginarytheatre.org

Image by Kim Gamble