



Information Pack 2018

Mumblecrust
THEATRE



Introduction

“Deep in the vaults of an ancient priory a hideous creature awakens...”

'The Tale of the Cockatrice' is based on a legend from British Folklore. Combining myth and history, two muddle-headed storytellers use puppetry, object theatre and live original music to conjure up a sophisticated piece of family theatre for all ages.

“It is hard to find shows that work so well for children and adults alike” - Niki McCretton, *Stuff and Nonsense*

For ages 4 and up, 'The Tale of the Cockatrice' fills a niche in family theatre with a focus on engaging 7-12 year olds in a smart, funny, scary and atmospheric adventure which younger siblings, parents and even grandparents will enjoy as well.

Show Info

Running Time: 60 min (not inc. optional interval)
Target Age Range: 7-12 year olds
Suitability: Ages 4+ / Family Audiences

[Click here to watch a full-length video](#)



Synopsis

Two nameless, amnesiac storytellers wonder in an eternal limbo. Together they pull a cart, laden with bric-a-brac collected on their endless journey. They stumble upon an old standard lamp. They decide to switch it on... and discover an audience waiting in the darkness! The storytellers, falteringly at first, begin to recount The Tale of the Cockatrice. Utilising an umbrella, a paper crown and a mop, we meet the evil Elfrida, who marries King Edgar only to murder her husband and become an all-powerful Queen! Years later, wracked with guilt, Elfrida builds Wherwell Priory to atone for her sins. Meanwhile, a farmer finds a strange egg. Elfrida hides it beneath the priory. A hundred years pass by...

The storytellers - realising they need someone to play the main character - decide to make a puppet onstage. Using the standard lamp and a discarded doll, after furiously sawing and hammering beneath a sheet, they unveil Sister Mary Ann, a quiet young nun. The other nuns of the priory, played by wooden spoons, send Mary Ann to the cellar to fetch some wine. Clutching a green-glass goblet, Mary Ann begins exploring the Crypt and comes face to face with the cockatrice - hatched from Elfrida's egg!

Startled, the cockatrice escapes into Wherwell, wreaking destruction with its deadly eyes upon livestock and villagers alike! Panic ensues. A knight comes to the rescue but fails miserably.

Mary Ann recalls that when she met the cockatrice in the crypt she was clutching the green-glass goblet close to her face. She also remembers the other nuns, watching the monster through a stained glass window, were strangely unharmed. Then she realises what she must do and formulates a plan to fake the Cockatrices's demise. Knowing the villagers need proof that the cockatrice is no more, she evacuates the other nuns and burns the priory down! Secretly, she leads the cockatrice into the woods. We see the cockatrice is now wearing goggles made of green glass. It wanders off to live peacefully and harmlessly in the woods.

Praise & Reviews

Awards



The Tale of the Cockatrice has won two awards to date:

'Voice's Best Newcomer to Brighton Fringe' and 'IYAF Best of Brighton Fringe: Children and Families Award'.



Press Reviews / Quotes

The Voice - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"a genuine work of art"

"anything less than five stars would be criminal."

"Mumblecrust Theatre have created a superb and magical play which had both children and adults captivated throughout."

"The play was sincere, funny and inventive, and, with just a dab of social commentary, is a genuine work of art."

Broadway Baby - ★ ★ ★ ★

"smart and innovative"

"The puppets were beautiful"

"a wonderful introduction to the magical world of puppets and object theatre."

"The Tale of the Cockatrice evokes thoughts about good and evil, killing and life and raises a lot of questions about the nature of humankind."

Fringe Review - HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

"A superior piece of children's theatre"

"I loved every minute of it"

Primary Times

"a fascinating world of intrigue, mystique and fantasy"

"quirky, clever and thoroughly enjoyable"

The Fountain

"ingenious use of props and plenty of laughs"

"This show from Mumblecrust Theatre has a lot to love"

Audience Feedback

"Cleverly choreographed with wit and humour to capture the imagination and enslave the senses."

- Jemma McIntyre (Edinburgh Fringe)

"Full of character and whimsy, the range of imaginatively-created puppets and lovely harmony-filled songs accompanying the performance were thoroughly captivating and entertaining.

Our group (ranging from 7yrs to 66) loved it." - Clare Littlemore (Brighton Fringe)

"A great performance, highly original. My 8 year old boy adored it and has been re-enacting it ever since!"

- Natasha Pester (Theatre Shop, Clevedon)



About the Company

Mumblecrust Theatre is an award-winning theatre company based in the South West of England. Co-Artistic Directors Katie Underhay and Anthony Burbridge came together to fill a niche in children's theatre, where slightly older children often get left out. From this collaboration, *The Tale of the Cockatrice* was born.

Katie is an actor, puppeteer and designer. Since graduating from Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama she has toured the UK in children's theatre, created bespoke puppets and taught puppetry to all ages. Her other work includes touring with Stuff and Nonsense Theatre Company in *The Three Little Pigs*, performing in Theatre in Education, and costuming puppets for Three Half Pints and Broken Puppet Theatre Company.

Anthony is a performer, composer and director. His work includes appearing as Davey in Civic Player's acclaimed rural outreach production *Jerusalem*, performing as actor/musician in Kickline's *Merlin's Apprentice*, and composing soundtracks for Perceptive Creation's short films *Murder Plot* and *Walking Shadow*.

The pair have collaborated on a number of other projects, including: satirical music video *Tawdry Child*, Pinecone Penguin's *King Kong the Musical*, puppeteering the Mermaid in Luc Mollinger's creature feature short *The Mermaid of Mevagissey* and co-directing (and creating puppets for) new musical *Heartwood*.

Credits

Created & Performed by:	Anthony Burbridge & Katie Underhay
R&D Support:	Niki McCretton & the Lyric Theatre, Bridport
Assistant Directors:	Jonathan Leach & Adam Smith
Costume Assistant:	Janet Saunders
Set Assistants:	Anne Mowbray & Jonathan Leach
Lighting Consultants:	Matt Jones & Jon Terry

Creation & Development

Work on *The Tale of the Cockatrice* began in 2016, culminating in a 45 minute performance at Dartington Hall's Midsummer Dreams Festival in July. After this initial performance, the team began work on extending the show to an hour-long production - adding songs, new puppets and characters and reworking the script - in an R&D period at The Lyric Theatre in Bridport, with the support of Niki McCretton (Stuff and Nonsense Theatre Company). The R&D ended with a Scratch Performance of the extended show for an audience of children and adults, whose feedback was invaluable in creating a polished production ready for Brighton Fringe 2017.

"We are very proud to have supported the progression of this important work and I would highly recommend this new and exciting company" - Niki McCretton



Technical & Marketing

Basic Tech Requirements

Stage Dimensions:

4.5m x 4.5m x 2.5m in height

Get in/Out:

Minimum 3hr Get In - 1hr Get Out

Technical Staff:

We operate our own sound, and require 1 member of in-house staff to operate lighting

For more details, specs and plans, please contact Anthony at admin@mumblecrust.com

Marketing

We can provide:

- Show Copy of varying word counts
- High-Quality Production Photographs
- Show and Company Logos
- Press Release
- A3/A4 Posters
- A6 Flyers
- **Promotional Teaser Trailer** (customised to venue)
- Full marketing support pack for venues
- Web presence including: Company website, Facebook and Twitter
- Post-show Q&A and interviews with the company on request



For more info & to request marketing pack, please contact Katie at admin@mumblecrust.com

Outreach & Accessibility

Relaxed Performances

A version of the show specifically designed for audiences with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other sensory difficulties is available on request. We can provide an information sheet for audiences to familiarise themselves with the characters and puppets, and to explain to them what will happen when we start the performance. We also begin Relaxed Performances with an introduction from Katie and Anthony.

Workshops

A 'Puppet and Object Manipulation' workshop can be provided upon request, which can be 1 or 2 hours long, and is suitable for all ages and abilities. Through a series of exercises and games, we teach puppeteering techniques, explore the principals of puppetry and teach how to bring a puppet to life using everyday objects and puppets from the show.

Post-Show Audience Interaction

A post-show Q&A or 'Meet the Puppets' style session can be arranged on request.

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