And The Horse You Rode In On
Created by Told by an Idiot

EDUCATION PACK
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SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The Company
Told by an Idiot

The Partners
Co-produced with Drum Theatre Plymouth
Commissioned by Barbican and Brighton Festival

What is Told by an Idiot?
Told by an Idiot is an anarchic, witty and inventive theatre company with a strong element of physicality

The Press on Told by an Idiot
★★★★★ The questioning intelligence they bring to their work is admirable and uncommonly powerful The Times
Told by an Idiot: a place where deep feelings lurk under comic surfaces Time Out
Their work is never less than sublime The Independent

The Story
Funny and deeply disturbing, AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON examines extreme acts of violence and the lengths people will go to for their beliefs. Inspired by surprising sources as eclectic as Bugs Bunny, Alfred Hitchcock, Dario Fo and iconic sitcom Are You Being Served? this sinister comedy of ineptitude looks at how powerless we are to stop people once they have reached a point of no return.

Related Events
Workshops and post-show events are available. Please contact Told by an Idiot or the relevant theatre to find out more.

The Performers
A cast of Told by an Idiot regulars including Annie Fitzmaurice, Jane Guernier, Martin Hyder, Nick Haverson (not Brighton), Javier Marzan (Brighton and part of London) and Bettrys Jones.

Recommended Age
12+

Performance Length
90 minutes without an interval
Schools
Most suitable for GCSE and A Level Drama, Year 10 upwards.

TESTIMONIALS

My groups really enjoyed the workshop. When we came back they all wanted to do the exercises in class as warm ups - they were so fired up about it. It made them think about how to create drama and how they work with one another. It really did open up their eyes to performing. I also found it very useful indeed, and have started to incorporate some of the ideas into my work. I thought it was excellent.

Drama Teacher, Plymouth College

We had a wonderful workshop with Told by an Idiot who whilst challenging the students physically, also made them feel safe in a relaxed and fun atmosphere. The show was intriguing and made more special by having had the workshop earlier. Students could spot the techniques learned in the workshop and have a greater understanding of process and performance.

Head of Drama, Bodmin College

The workshop was fun and made me think of different techniques I could use to help my performance, games seem to help and get real emotions out rather than forcing them, it was very helpful.

Sixth-form student

It was brilliant. I’d give it 10 out of 10. There’s too many words to describe it. I want to watch more

Joshua, aged 10

It was so funny I nearly fell out of my seat.

Chloe, year 7 at Christ College

If I could give you a mark out of 100, it would be 100.

Carmella, year 7 at Christ College
CREDITS

A Told by an Idiot and Drum Theatre Plymouth Production
Commissioned by the Barbican and Brighton Festival

And The Horse You Rode In On

Conceived by HAYLEY CARMICHAEL AND PAUL HUNTER
Created by TOLD BY AN IDIOT

Performed by ANNIE FITZMAURICE, MARTIN HYDER, JANE GUERNIER, NICK HAVERSON, BETTRY'S JONES, JAVIER MARZAN

Director PAUL HUNTER
Designer SOPHIA CLIST
Lighting Designer NATASHA CHIVERS
Sound Designer ADRIENNE QUARTLY
Associate Director HAYLEY CARMICHAEL
Assistant Director JUSTIN AUDIBERT

Additional creative input from: BEN BISHOP, RICHARD CLEWS, RHONA CROKER, LISA HAMMOND, STEPHEN HARPER, DUDLEY REES, SOPHIE RUSSELL, CAROLINE STEINBEIS, YOLANDA VAZQUEZ & SIAN WILLIAMS
SYNOPSIS

AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON: A Sequence of Serious Follies

A rather well known rabbit attempts to stop an alien blowing up the earth.

In a Berlin cafe a professor pleads with her student not to commit an atrocious act.

And in an infamous London department store the weirdest ever episode of *Are You Being Served?* is about to begin.

The show will be a riotous, anarchic, funny, and dark exploration of extreme political acts throughout history. These 'acts,' some invented, some real, will reveal how we are often powerless as a society to stop them and how as Marx said:

"History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce."

Inspired by surprising sources as eclectic as Bugs Bunny, Alfred Hitchcock, Dario Fo and iconic sitcom *Are You Being Served?* this sequence of serious follies takes Told by an Idiot's unique and distinctive style in an unsettling new direction where the human and the political collide.
INFLUENCES ON THE SHOW

SABOTAGE (Alfred Hitchcock film of 1936)
The English film-maker and producer, Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) was a pioneer in the genre of psychological thriller and a craftsman of suspense. Hitchcock had much success in the British silent movies and early ‘talkies’ before heading to Hollywood. His six decade career saw him direct more than fifty feature films and was credited first in 2007 by the Daily Telegraph film critics poll as "Unquestionably the greatest filmmaker to emerge from these islands, Hitchcock did more than any director to shape modern cinema, which would be utterly different without him. His flair was for narrative, cruelly withholding crucial information (from his characters and from us) and engaging the emotions of the audience like no one else."

Released in 1936, Hitchcock’s *Sabotage* was loosely based on the novel *The Secret Agent* by Joseph Conrad, a story of ‘urban terrorism’ which is dark in mood, gripping and full of suspense. Based around a plot to explode a bomb on an underground train, drama and tragedy ensue when the carrier of the bomb (an innocent, unsuspecting boy and his dog) gets delayed and the subsequent explosion on a London bus could not be more resonant today.

LOCAL ANAESTHETIC, a novel by Gunter Grass
Gunter Wilhelm Grass, born 1927 is a Nobel Prize winning author whose works often display a left wing, social democrat political dimension. Known for living by example of his own saying "The job of a citizen is to keep his mouth open" Grass is a hugely influential figure of post-war Germany.

From Polish-German parents Grass served in the military and became a prisoner of war under America. Upon release he began sculpting, writing poetry and playwriting, and becoming strongly active in politics, this showing itself in much of his work.
Local Anaesthetic written in 1970 is an example of this and highlights Grass' view of responsibilities of the intellectuals. Set against a backdrop of the Vietnam war, a young student contemplates a terrible act by way of protest and some of these ideas have influenced the development of this show.

**DARIO FO**

Dario Fo, born 1926 in Italy is a playwright, satirist, actor, composer and theatre director. 1997 Nobel Prize winner in literature, he was hailed as a man "who emulates the jesters of the Middle Ages in scourging authority and upholding the dignity of the downtrodden”

Fo currently runs his own theatre company with his wife, actress Franca Rame, and most of his works highlight topics such as political corruption, organised crime and political murders. Fo’s style of work has been heavily based in improvisation and the Italian art of commedia dell’ arte, with Fo encouraging directors to translate and adapt his work as they see fit.

In his book *Tricks of the Trade*, Fo recounts an episode where Louis 14th invites a celebrated Italian Commedia troupe to perform at his court in France. On the way, the group is taken hostage by a group of protestant terrorists who demand that the King release their comrades from prison or they will cut the Commedia troupes’ heads off. Such was the popularity and power of the troupe at the time that Louis agreed and released them. This story finds its way into *And The Horse You Rode In On* albeit with a different ending.

**BAADER-MEINHOF GROUP**

The Baader-Meinhof Group, which later became the Red Army Faction, shortened to RAF, was one of post–World War 2 Germany's most violent and prominent left wing terror groups. The RAF described itself as a communist and anti-imperialist "urban guerrilla" group engaged in armed resistance against what they deemed to be a fascist state. The RAF was founded in 1970 by Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Horst Mahler, and Ulrike Meinhof.
The Red Army Faction existed from 1970 to 1998, committing numerous operations, especially in the autumn of 1977, which led to a national crisis that became known as "German Autumn". It was held responsible for thirty-four deaths, including many secondary targets, such as chauffeurs and bodyguards, and many injuries in its almost thirty years of activity.

One of the Baader-Meinhof gang’s first acts of terrorism was to plant a bomb in a department store because they wanted to attack bourgeois complacency and this has inspired some of the threads in *And The Horse You Rode In On*.

**ARE YOU BEING SERVED? BBC television series**

The British sitcom set in a fictional clothing department store, Grace Brothers, *Are You Being Served?* had a 12-year run from 1972-1985. Written by Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft the show became a huge success laden with slapstick comedy, pantomime-style characters and was ripe with innuendos.

The show follows the over the top antics of the members of staff and was based upon David Cross’ own experience of department store work at Simpsons of Piccadilly in the 1950’s. It often generated audiences of over 20 million.

As the series aired on the BBC at the same time that the Baader-Meinhof gang were planting bombs in department stores we have tried juxtaposing these narratives so that the Grace Brothers department store becomes a comic metaphor for the establishment.

**MICHAEL HANEKE**

Michael Haneke (born 23 March 1942) is an Austrian filmmaker and writer best known for his bleak and disturbing style. His films often document problems and failures in modern society. Haneke has worked in television, theatre and cinema. He is also known for raising social issues in his work. An interesting point to note is that most of his films feature a stereotypical bourgeois couple.
"My films are intended as polemical statements against the American 'barrel down' cinema and its dis-empowerment of the spectator. They are an appeal for a cinema of insistent questions instead of false (because too quick) answers, for clarifying distance in place of violating closeness, for provocation and dialogue instead of consumption and consensus."

His style rather than his themes have been an influence on the making of this show. There is a level of ambiguity in the way he presents seemingly mundane situations which also manage to unsettle and disturb the audience that particularly appealed to the company.
COMPANY HISTORY & FUTURE PLANS

Told by an Idiot was founded by Hayley Carmichael, Paul Hunter and John Wright in 1993 and is well known for producing work that is moving, comic and utterly theatrical. The company sets out to discover the epic in the most personal of stories, whilst treading a fine line between comedy and tragedy. Through devising and play, the company aims to tell stories using a wealth of imagery and a rich theatrical language, which is accessible to all.

Since Told by an Idiot’s first production, On the Verge of Exploding, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the company has built up an enviable reputation. It has collaborated with celebrated artists and organisations of national and international standing, including Carol Ann Duffy, West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Lyric Hammersmith (Casanova); Zoe Rahmen; Philip Pullman (The Firework-Maker’s Daughter); Richard Wilson and the Royal Court (Playing The Victim) and The Market Theatre Johannesburg.

The company’s highly-praised production of The Comedy of Errors in association with the RSC continues to run in Stratford-upon-Avon following sold-out performances at the Roundhouse, London. Told by an Idiot is currently enjoying a successful schools collaboration with the National Theatre on Six Seeds, a new adaptation of Greek myths written by Bryony Lavery. Later this year the company will be working with the Royal Exchange, Manchester on their Christmas show You Can’t Take It With You.

Told by an Idiot also recently launched TAUGHT BY AN IDIOT their new participation programme which will lie at the heart of the company’s identity. Offering a range of workshops to performances, post-show improvisations to professional development and long term residencies to spontaneous happenings TAUGHT BY AN IDIOT is fundamentally about collaboration, liberation and the pursuit of pleasure.
BIOGRAPHIES

Paul Hunter Director
Paul Hunter is Co-founder and Co-Artistic Director of Told by an Idiot with Hayley Carmichael. He has been involved as director/devisor/performer in all their work to date, including Six Seeds (with the National Theatre), The Dark Philosophers (with National Theatre Wales), The Comedy of Errors (with the RSC), The Fahrenheit Twins, and Beauty and the Beast. Other acting credits include: Troilus and Cressida and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (both Shakespeare’s Globe), Rapunzel (Kneehigh), and Les Enfants du Paradis (RSC). He was an Associate Director at the Octagon Theatre, Bolton, where he directed The Venetian Twins, The Beauty Queen of Leenane (winner of MEN Award - Best Production), and Accidental Death of An Anarchist. His other directing credits include: Low Pay, Don’t Pay (Salisbury Playhouse), and Senora Carrar’s Rifles (Young Vic).

Paul is a winner of the Jerwood Young Vic Award for Directing.

Acting credits for TV and Film include One Day for Focus Features, Trinity for Roughcut/ITV2, Mitchell and Kenyon and My Family for the BBC, Tunnel of Love and Hardware for Thames/ITV1 and After You’ve Gone for the BBC.

Annie Fitzmaurice Performer
Annie previously performed with Told by an Idiot in Shoot Me In The Heart directed by Paul Hunter and Hayley Carmichael. Other work includes Accidental Death of An Anarchist and Not With That Hand directed by Paul Hunter and Meeting Myself Coming Back and The Fragility of X directed by John Wright (Associate Director). Annie has also been involved in the development of this piece over the last two years collaborating with the company during periods of research and development.

Martin Hyder Performer
A Told by an Idiot veteran, this will be Martin's fifth performance with the company. Previous works include Casanova (Told by an Idiot/West Yorkshire Playhouse), The Firework-Maker's Daughter (Told by an Idiot/Sheffield Crucible), I Can't Wake Up (Told by an Idiot), Shoot Me In The Heart (Told by an Idiot/The Gate). Martin has also been involved in the development of this piece over the last two years collaborating with the company during periods of research and development.

Jane Guernier Performer
This is the third show Jane has done with the company. Previous performances include A Little Fantasy and Beauty and the Beast. Jane has also been involved in the development of this piece over the last two years collaborating with the company during periods of research and development.

Nick Haverson Performer
Nick previously worked with Told by an Idiot on Beauty and the Beast at the Lyric Hammersmith. He has also worked with Paul Hunter on his productions of Low Pay, Don’t Pay at Salisbury Playhouse and The Venetian Twins at the Bolton Octagon. Nick has also been involved in the development of this piece over the last two years collaborating with the company during periods of research and development.

Bettrys Jones Performer
This will be Bettrys’ second piece of work with Told by an Idiot having recently performed with the company in The Dark Philosophers as part of National Theatre Wales’ inaugural season 2010.

Javier Marzan Performer
Javier Marzan has performed with the company many times on both research projects and shows including I’m So Big, Aladdin and Beauty and the Beast.
Javier has also been involved in the development of this piece over the last two years collaborating with the company during periods of research and development.

Sophia Clist Designer
From a background of sculpture Sophia creates installations, sets and objects for performers and audiences to inhabit, manipulate and transform. Much of her work is collaborative and interactive, working with artists in dance, theatre, music, film, and with the general public. As Associate Artist of Theatre-Rites 1998-2007 Sophia designed many touring and site-specific productions including *The Thought That Counts* (barbicanbite05 and Young Vic), *Hospitalworks* (Polka Theatre/Teater der Welt), *Finders Keepers* (Unicorn Theatre), *Shopworks* (LIFT / Wiener Festwochen), *Cellarworks* (LIFT), *In One Ear, Catch Your Breath* (Lyric Hammersmith), *The Lost and Moated Land* and *Sleep Tight*. In 2007 she co-created the company’s first middle-scale dance theatre production *Mischief* (Sadler’s Wells & Dance Touring Partnership). Sophia designed *Cinderella* directed by Melly Still (Lyric Hammersmith) in 2008. Her installation and performance work *Stretch* (Crying Out Loud) continues to evolve, showing nationally and internationally at festivals, theatres and in public spaces. At Port Eliot Literary Festival 2010 she created Purl II, a participatory time-based sculpture.

**NATASHA CHIVERS Lighting Designer**

Natasha lives in London and creates lighting for Dance, Theatre and Opera in Britain and abroad. She has worked with Told by an Idiot once before on *Beauty and The Beast* at The Lyric Theatre Hammersmith.

Other work includes-


**ADRIENNE QUARTLY Sound Designer**

Previous sound design projects include Katie Mitchell at the Schaubühne (*Miss Julie*), Frantic Assembly (*Stockholm*), Young Vic (*The Container*), National Theatre of Scotland (*365*), the Royal Court (*93.2FM*), Hampstead (*Fastest Clock in the Universe*), Drum Plymouth (*Grand Guignol/Chekov in Hell*) and St. Anns Warehouse New York (*Woyzeck*).
Composer for RSC (Thomas Hobbes/Mary Spindler) and Stage on Screen at Greenwich (Faustus/Duchess of Malfi).
INTERVIEW WITH PAUL HUNTER
Co-Artistic Director, Told by an Idiot

And The Horse You Rode In On is a potentially dark piece, what initially attracted you to such a theme and how did it develop?

Hayley and I were drawn to the idea of dealing with quite overt, political material as we have never done it before. It was partly as a response to a lot of British work that seemed to deal with that subject matter and that tended to predominantly be shown in a particular style – psychological realism or naturalism and we thought why is it never presented in a more theatrical way? There are contradictions to that such as Enron - but we wanted to see what it would be like if our style met that sort of content. That was the starting point. We were also very keen to see where you could find humour in that area, and that is what drew it to us in the beginning.

How do you think pupils will react to such dark matter being explored?

People’s reactions to the piece I am sure will vary. We’re not setting out to be deliberately provocative or controversial. We are not trying to be explicit or deal with a particular issue. None of the piece takes place in the present day and almost all of the material is fictitious, so we’re not a verbatim piece where we explore climate change for example, it’s all about invention for us. There may be some people that react to some of the juxtapositions and clashes that we make, but all we can do is make what we think is a vibrant, dynamic, funny, but provocative (in the right sense) piece of theatre and see what happens.

So do you want questions to arise from it?

I hope it poses questions, and for us as we’re making it we are asking lots of questions of ourselves. One of our starting points was ‘can we stop something happening, if someone has set their mind on it?’ which in a way feels quite a bleak message. It’s not that there is a message that we’re wanting to push rather to explore this idea of ‘are we powerless?’ without being too specific.

We also want to find the humour, I keep coming back to comedy, but this element is very important to us. Also, to try and find ways in which our style might illuminate certain questions - but we are certainly not trying to preach anything or put across a certain argument, and in many ways we are more interested in people’s responses to it rather than explaining what the

‘We are certainly not trying to preach anything or put across a certain argument’
thing is. One of the influences on the making of the piece and its style are Michael Haneke’s films. We’re not trying to be like them thematically but we are very interested in the way he creates very unsettling and disturbing situations which initially appear quite mundane. There’s a level of ambiguity going on which appeals to us – it won’t necessarily have one clear meaning but people can take from it what they will.

You touched upon the influences of the piece; can you tell us a little bit more about those?

The main narrative and starting point for the piece and where we are going at the moment – it may change! – is to fuse five different narratives and clash them together in some way to create a multi-layered narrative, a reference would be Pulp Fiction, although it is not this. So in no particular order; a fictitious German episode of Are You Being Served?

writing; we chose Are You Being Served? because our strands is inspired by the Baader-Meinhoff gang in Germany and one of their first acts of terrorism was to plant a bomb in a rather prominent department store in Berlin because they wanted to attack bourgeois complacency and this department store somehow stood for that. So we thought what about if we take that idea but we make our department store Grace Brothers - as the sitcom was running at the same time on the BBC - that is why we are doing the episode of Are You Being Served? All the other stories are related to Grace Brothers so hopefully it becomes a kind of metaphor for the establishment, things that people are re-acting against, but in a more comic metaphorical way for us.

We also take two tiny episodes in a novel by Gunter Grass which is his satirical response to a lot of political unrest in the late 60’s early 70’s. We look at Hitchcock’s film Sabotage, which in itself is a version of Joseph Conrad’s Secret Agent, so we play around with some elements of that. The only influence that is sort of based on fact – although it is via Dario Fo know whether completely true about an Italian troupe, who greatest family day and were perform in the court of Louis the 14th, but on their way to France were taken hostage by a group of protestant terrorists who said to the king, unless you free our comrades who you are holding hostage we shall cut off the heads of this family, and so powerful were this troupe at the time that Louis agreed and released them. What we are interested in
is not that ending but a more ludicrous one in which so annoying are this commedia troupe they basically drive their captors to suicide.

So this multi-layered narrative draws on many references, one other being a Bugs Bunny cartoon where an alien is trying to blow up the earth and Bugs is trying to stop him. They come from a wide range of ideas all looking at extreme acts, and this eclectic starting point is what we wanted.

**Explain how the creative process of this piece developed and how you would explain this way of working?**

The starting point, once we have these influences is a period of research and development and this is very important to us. So for this piece we were very lucky and had four weeks of research and development spread over 18 months which we kept returning to with different groups of performers, and the whole journey of this is to explore how these things would fit together without the pressure of it being a final rehearsal. We started to clash them together but there’s no script so we’re playing around with ways to evolve a script through improvising. On the third period of research and development our designer Sophia Clist came in and started to play with the idea of what it might look like visually.

On the fourth period we started to present some work in front of an audience in Brighton (as they have commissioned the show along with the Barbican and our co-producer Drum Theatre Plymouth) so all of that is crucial and is where we start to get the language and design going. When we come into the five week rehearsal period, we are still being as open as possible but we have more of a structure. I created the idea of our overall rehearsal script, but when I say script it’s not the type you would recognise as a play script – some scenes have no dialogue at all, they’re much more provocations for the actors really. Sophia came up with a wonderful, theatrical version of Grace Brothers, which with our main co-producer Plymouth we built and means we now have in our rehearsal room for week three which some people think is extraordinary, as with most rehearsals you rehearse without the set and then you head into the theatre. Because we work so physically, we wouldn’t be able to find our language if we only had it at the end, so the set itself becomes a writing tool.
Collaboration is a key word here, because even though we all have our roles, for example I may be a Director and I'm setting up the rehearsal and the provocations, but everyone has a voice in the room whatever they are doing, be it the sound, the stage manager or the lights, if it's a healthy process it should be emerging very organically.

**Are the audience are a key feature in how Told by an Idiot works and what impact do you think this makes on your decisions and performance?**
The audience are crucial; they are the only reason to do anything. For us, if you're going to do a piece of theatre it is about the effect you have on the audience, so we are very conscious of them, we have a very open rehearsal room where people are constantly coming in and out and we are very aware of that. There is a level of engagement with the audience over the course of the piece, obviously at certain points you're very much involved in the creation of the material but like I say, we tend to share the work extremely early in rehearsal and I think that's very healthy, so it's developed very much with an audience in mind and practically with an audience in the room sometimes.

**What are the thoughts behind the title, And The Horse You Rode In On?**
Yes we get that a lot! We wanted something that reflects the idea of people who reach the point of no return, who don't care about themselves or their families, that they believe in something so strongly you can't reason with them. We also wanted something that connects with us, in a playful way, so we found this joke in which the punch line is 'and the horse you rode in on' and it felt very provocative in a playful way so it comes from that. But because it is a strange title, as part of the prologue of the show we will somehow set that explanation up because we don't want the audience going for an hour and a half 'why have they called it that?'

**What does a Told by an Idiot workshop involve and what do you think the pupils get out of it?**
It is completely practical first off. We offer a variety of workshops, but a general one about the work of the company such as *Bigger than Life* would unlock in the students a real sense of spontaneity and playfulness, it should be fun most importantly, it should feel like they go away from it having had a really good time and we value that immensely, that's how we work in the room. It's about pleasure, having a sense of fun a
sense of play, all our work is rooted in play. It also connects in terms of any work they are doing in devised theatre, on any programme or module you would care to mention, our workshops would tap into that completely. It covers the idea of devising in the widest sense, whether you’re adapting a story that exists – which we’ve done in the past - or starting from scratch, it provides them with tools of how they would write collaboratively. It also gives an insight into there being different ways of making theatre, and it’s not just about language, it can be approached in a lot of different ways.

If there are any teachers out there that are slightly hesitant about letting their pupils take part in a workshop linked to a piece looking at a slightly anarchic theme, what would you say to them?

I would say I think we live in a time where young people are slightly more politicised than they have been for a generation, you only have to look at the amount of people protesting against the universities and the cuts. When they do a young person’s question time it’s really vocal and interesting, so I think that it is a perfect time for people to engage with a piece. I stress that is fun and comic, but taps into political issues because I think young people are very passionate about political issues, more so as I say than they ever have been. I think it would be the perfect thing to bring your group to!
THE TOUR

Tour Schedule 2011
Drum Theatre Plymouth | 24 Feb - 12 Mar | www.theatreroyal.com |
Warwick Arts Centre | 15 – 19 Mar | www.warwickartscentre.co.uk |
unitytheatre, Liverpool | 22 – 26 Mar | www.unitytheatreliverpool.co.uk |
West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds | 29 Mar – 2 Apr | www.wyp.org.uk |
Northern Stage, Newcastle | 19 – 21 April | www.northernstage.co.uk |
Brighton Festival | 7 – 21 May | www.brightonfestival.org |
PHOTOS

‘Mrs Slocombe and the terrorist’

‘The Explosion’

‘The Trampolini family’
CONTACT US

We’d love to hear what you think or for you and your group to join us for a workshop, please get in contact with Lucia or Rachel in the office:

info@toldbyanidiot.org
www.toldbyanidiot.org
020 7407 4123

Watch some clips of AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON in rehearsal on our website, as well as Paul Hunter talking about the show:

http://www.toldbyanidiot.org/productions/detail/and_the_horse_you_rode_in_on/

Also join us on our face book page to get a private view of what’s going on in the Idiots world.
WORKSHOP WARM UP EXERCISES AND GAMES

Devised by Hayley Carmichael and Paul Hunter

Tennis ball warm up
Games and play 1
Games and play 2

Tennis ball warm up

to warm up the body, and to improve co-ordination, team building and physical precision & perception and for fun! The exercises follow on from one another.

EXERCISE ONE - tennis ball warm up 1

1. Using one tennis ball per person, stand in circle facing each other.
2. Place ball under right foot.
3. Rub foot on ball to warm foot up - rapidly rub ball backwards and forwards.
4. Make sure you breathe and keep other leg slightly bent.
5. Stop - then repeat rapid rub again, on the same foot.
6. Then roll a ball around outside edge of foot, first one way then the other.
7. Then rub rapidly again.
8. Place tennis ball just behind ball of foot - breathe out and apply pressure, first to ball of foot, then roll ball along each toe, breathing and pushing ball onto underside of each toe on each out breath.
9. Do the same exercise back the other way, from little toe to big toe.
10. Then rub rigorously again.
11. Spread toes and try to pick ball off floor with toes.
12. Rub vigorously
13. Notice difference between two. Walk round for a minute or so.
15. Repeat numbers 2 to 12.

EXERCISE TWO - tennis ball warm up 2
1 Shift weight from left to right foot - repeat 10 times to loosen knees and hips.
2 Place ball between shoulder and ear on right side.
3 Place left arm behind waist.
4 Bend knees and roll arm (right) in circles - keep changing directions then trace figure of 8 and change direction of figure of eight.
5 Return to circling arm.
6 Slowly bring to stop, remove ball and become aware of changes by turning head gently side to side look at different.
7 Repeat numbers 2 to 6 on left side.
8 Place chin down on chest slowly, take head round, drop jaw slack and back other way.
9 Walk around, change direction - get eye contact - don’t miss anyone out. Does it feel different looking with a relaxed neck and shoulders?

EXERCISE THREE - tennis ball warm up 3

1 With knees bent, pass ball from left hand to right hand, swinging arms to and fro.
2 Then throw and catch ball rather than passing it from hand to hand. Movement is as if your hand is wrapping over the ball.
3 Keep breathing - remember it’s more about movement than catching ball.
4 Do same movement but without ball - really imagine you can see ball.
5 Then go back to catching ball - extend reach.
6 Then make movement smaller - how small can you make movement?
7 Open out again to medium size.

EXERCISE FOUR - partner tennis ball exercise

1 Keep ball and find partner. Do same rhythm and same movement - but with a partner, face to face.
2 Try to find movement together - as you get going look at partner’s movement.
3 Develop the exercise so that no one is leading.
4 Keep going if someone drops ball - other to catch up.
EXERCISE FIVE - movement and ball - solo

1 Solo
2 With ball in right hand, swing arm back and watch it move - let head join in movement.
3 Breathe out when arm is down, breathe in when arm is up.
4 When hand goes forward swap ball over from one hand to the other.
5 Develop this so movement is smooth and facilitates passing of ball from one hand to another.
6 Then move so that when ball is passed it is thrown from into air, caught by same hand and then movement goes down.
7 Bend knees make movement bigger.

EXERCISE SIX - movement and ball - partners

1 Do same as exercise five, but with a partner.
2 Come up and go down together.
3 Breathe together.
4 Move to throwing ball for each other during movement - don’t break swing.

EXERCISE SEVEN - one hand catch

1 Bend left leg and push through right leg.
2 Place right arm under leg with ball let ball, go and catch with same hand - through leg!

EXERCISE EIGHT - rhythm and catch

1 Standing straight, throw ball so spins off fingers - throw and catch.
2 Throw ball so it doesn’t spin - flick off hand.
3 Return to spinning.
4 Hold right wrist with left hand - throw ball and shake right hand whilst ball is in air - shoulders should be relaxed.
5 Throw ball and clap as many times as you can before you catch it.
6 Throw ball, sit on floor and catch it.
7 Throw ball, sit down stand up and catch it.
8 Throw ball, run away and come back and catch it - be light on feet! Keep going further her away from ball.
EXERCISE NINE - back relaxation with ball

1 Kneel on hands and knees.
2 Place ball on base of spine. See if you can roll it up and down spine slowly and delicately.

EXERCISE TEN – stretching

1 Push with right foot into floor and stretch up right arm.
2 Move to left and do same.
3 Let go - bend knees and hang down - relax - move head around.
4 Slowly curl up - head should be last thing up.
5 Hang down again but stretch further with arms - keep shoulders down.
6 Go onto all fours - take weight onto hands - then move up again.
7 Give face a rub/massage.
8 Yawn - big attitude (felt in full body - repeat this twice).

EXERCISE ELEVEN – massage

1 In pairs - one to bend down, the other to give them a massage - on back - arms - bum - all over - and give good rub down. (Obviously, please use your discretion about how much body you ask each pair to touch! This exercise was taken from rehearsals with adults.)
2 Come up slowly, head last
3 Swap over - let voice out whilst being rubbed.

GAME ONE - number games

1 Stand in circle
2 As a group try to count to 20. No-one speaks at same time, and no-one says two numbers consecutively.

GAME TWO - name, movement and ball game

1 Say someone else in circle’s name - remember whose name you said and who said your name. No name should be repeated - everyone should be included.
2 Repeat names in order, a few times.
3 Repeat exercises but with movement. Look at someone, make eye contact, walk towards them. As you walk towards them, they look at someone else and move away from where they were standing. You fill the gap where they were standing. Repeat until everyone in the circle is included and you return to the beginning. Remember who you walked to and who walked to you.

4 Repeat movement, a few times.

5 Start name exercise. Once it is established, add the movement exercise at the same time.

6 If your group is up for it, add a ball sequence on top of name and movement sequence.

Games and play 1

To encourage play and creativity within the group, and potentially to find qualities of performance.

GAME ONE - wink murder

1 Group lines up against the wall making lots of noise. Leader taps 'murderer' on back.

2 Walk around the room. Keep eye contact with everyone you pass. If the murderer winks at you, die horrid death after 5 seconds.

3 At point of ‘death’, all in group stop and look at dying one, then at each other - and carry on walking.

4 If you guess who is murderer, whisper to leader. If you are wrong, you die.

5 Play again, with the instruction that murderer is to get as many out as quickly as possible.

GAME TWO - song murder

1 Divide group in two. Half of group to play and half to create a protective circle around the players.

2 Half who are playing to think of a song from which they can repeat a couple of lines.

3 One by one whisper to leader what your song is.

4 Leader to say what murderer's song is.

5 Group to close eyes and sing their song very quietly and walk around the space (protected from harm by other half of the group) and listen for murderer's song.

6 Murderer can catch people as they go past. Everyone else tries to avoid murderers song with eyes shut.
If they are having trouble catching everyone, you might want to pause and allow murderer to sing alone so the group can locate him/her.

Swap over.

Watchers to notice how people move - could progress this by drawing character work from people's movement and voice/attitudes when they are thinking about something else - e.g. the murderer catching them!

**EXERCISE ONE - ball movement exercise**

1. Walk round space.
2. Get eye contact.
3. Leader adds ball.
4. Keep it passing from person to person as you walk - don't hold onto ball.
5. Introduce second ball - and a third.
6. Ask group to jog and keep passing ball.
7. Could add as many balls as there are people.

**EXERCISE TWO - ball movement performance exercise**

1. In pairs with a tennis ball.
2. A - throws ball up into air and runs away. B runs to catch ball.
3. B catches ball, throws up into the air then runs - A catches.
4. Repeat.
5. Now, when you catch ball, look at leader - clock him/her. Moment is suspended somehow.
6. Ask group to sit and be an audience.
7. Pairs chosen to show work. As they throw and catch they clock audience.
8. Repeat but this time, they have to tell a story, but they only tell story when holding ball. Leader to give them a title: e.g. “the gun fight”. Start game just with balls and then add story once balls are established.

**EXERCISE THREE - partner ball forehead exercise**

1. In pairs. Place tennis ball between foreheads.
2. Move around space with no one leading.
3 Find a moment of stillness, then see if you can move again without anyone leading.
4 Don't allow ball to drop.
5 See if you can sit on the floor and come up again.
6 Add - talk about what happened after leaving school/college last night (or something else that isn't taxing!).
7 Ask group to sit and be an audience.
8 Pairs chosen to show work. Add “no you didn’t”- contradict story by provoking it - other person to try and placate contradicter. (e.g. 'I went home on the bus', 'no you didn't!', 'oh yes! You're right - I forgot. I walked home because I didn't have money for the bus fare.', 'no you didn't!'" ... etc.)
9 Repeat the exercise with another pair but remove ball - show power of a character. Encourage them to play with space and see how they can be intimidating. Are the pair equals or is one more intimidating than the other?

GAME THREE - FOUR SQUARE

1 Mark out floor with chalk or tape as in diagram:

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4 1
3 2
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2 Play with a football. Try to knock King (standing in square 4) out.
3 People’s status is raised as they stay in. Ball has to bounce in a square or you're out. Aim is to knock King out - by hitting the ball to him/her so he/she can’t return it. Other team members form a line by square 1 and join in as soon as someone is knocked out and everyone moves up a square.
4 A different version: ball has to touch 2 hands, then 2 feet. When it touches feet it doesn't have to bounce).
5 Another version: pass ball from foot to hand to foot to hand.

Games and Play 2

to encourage play and creativity within the group, and potentially to find qualities of performance.

These games followed a general warm up session - finding new and inventive ways of warming up our bodies and voice. The warm up session ended with an all over body massage in pairs, where the voice was released.
GAME ONE - cat and mouse

1 Groups of 3. Link arms.
2 1 person nominated as cat. Another as mouse.
3 Cat chases mouse until mouse links arms with a group of 3. As they link, the person on the other end of the chain becomes the mouse.
4 Ask cat and mouse to think about tactics - who is in control?
5 Version 2: when link on, immediately change role. So mouse becomes cat and begins chasing. This provides a very entertaining moment of confusion where the cat wonders if they're a mouse or a cat!

GAME TWO - name tag

1 As usual name tag. Out if you get tagged 3 times.
2 Version 2. Swap names within the group - repeat names a few times first.
3 Version 3. Use the names of the characters you are playing.

Grandma footsteps - and extensions

1 One person is on one side of the room facing away from the rest of the group who are standing in a line.
2 They are to imagine that the person on the other side of the room is the ‘grandma’ or ‘granddad.’
3 The large group then try to creep up on the ‘grandma’, who turns occasionally to try and catch them moving. If anyone is spotted moving then they have to start again.
4 The first person to touch ‘grandma’ on her shoulder is the next ‘grandma.’
5 This activity can be extended to getting the group to creep and go down on all fours and up again before they are allowed to touch ‘grandma.’
6 Also another extension is to not actually have a ‘grandma’ but a imaginary one, and the line/group have to be focused and really work together as a group and freeze all together when the ‘imaginary grandma’ turns.

EXERCISE ONE - bamboo sticks (need a range of sticks or pieces of wood about 2 foot long for this exercise)
1 everyone in group walks around the room.
2 Sticks are introduced one at a time by leader, and thrown from hand to hand as group walk. Gentle pace. Eye contact vital. Add more sticks if you think the group can stand it!
3 Everyone in circle. Pass sticks to neighbour on right, all on same beat.
4 Add reversal - leader says 'change!' - all group pass to left.
5 Add extra stick. Leader stands in centre of circle passing a stick to someone after saying their name. so - 'Paul' - then stick is thrown to Paul, Paul catches it and passes it back to leader - at the same time as passing other sticks around circle.
6 Variation. In a small circle, hold stick out to right. Throw it to right and run to left with eye contact. No sticks to drop!
Told by an Idiot