

**TOTALLY
AMAZING**
BY CRAIG CHRISTIE



BOOK WEEK 2011

'ONE WORLD MANY STORIES'

Teacher Activity Pack

Contents:

- About the Company
- Teacher instructions
- Selection of activities suitable for either before or after the performance including details of the CBC Shortlisted Books as featured in *TOTALLY AMAZING!*
- Performance review form for your students – can also be completed online at our website
- *TOTALLY AMAZING!* Word Search and Crossword



ABOUT THE COMPANY

Perform! Educational Musicals is a multi award-winning theatrical producer and one of the largest touring theatre companies throughout Australia and New Zealand.

The company specialises in touring educational musicals for schools and has been operating in Australia for over ten years. In that time we have toured to over 150,000 students annually in schools across five states. In all, the company and its writers have toured our specialty educational musicals to over one million students across several countries including Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Papua New Guinea.

In Australia we tour an annual Book Week musical celebrating Children's Book Week and the annual Book Week theme. These productions feature a selection of the shortlisted books from the **Children's Book Council of Australia Annual Book Awards**. They promote literacy and reading by inspiring students with the limitless fun and possibilities offered by books and reading. Each production also deals with specific **personal development** issues such as Self-Esteem, Bullying, Anger Management and Co-operation. The performances, which take place within primary schools, are **highly interactive** for the students and feature action packed narratives, appealing, identifiable characters, loads of **comedy**, irresistible **songs** and high energy **dancing** that captivate and engage all audiences from ages 5 to 12 years (as well as their teachers). Question time at the conclusion of the performance reinforces the learning outcomes, and this specially designed Teacher Activity Pack available prior to the performance offers a comprehensive selection of classroom exercises for both before and after the show. We also mail out a free CD of the music in the production which is also a great tool to be utilised by the music department.

The Writer/Composer – Craig Christie www.craigchristie.com

Craig Christie is an award-winning writer, composer and qualified teacher. His unique Book Week musicals have played to over one million students throughout New Zealand, Australia, UK, USA and Asia. As a composer Craig has also created a number of commercial musicals including *Eurobeat* – *Almost Eurovision* which opened on the London West End in 2008. He also travels extensively around the world to lecture and run workshops in drama in education, community theatre and creative writing.

To find out more about *Perform! Educational Musicals* or to contact the company, please log onto our website at www.performmusicals.com



TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

- **ACTIVITY PACK:** Please copy and distribute to all relevant teachers **PRIOR** to the performance.
- **TABLE REQUEST:** The performance will require one table of medium size. Please preset a table in the performance space at least 30 minutes before the show.
- **PERFORMER ARRIVAL TIME:** Performers will arrive approximately 30 minutes before the scheduled performance start time.
- **STUDENT NUMBERS:** Please know **IN ADVANCE** the number of students attending and inform our Team Leader at the conclusion of the performance.
- **START TIME:** Please ensure students are lined up outside the performance space **5 minutes before** the commencement of the show to guarantee a prompt start. We are not able to work within your school bell times if the performance cannot start on time.
- **PERFORMANCE SPACE REQUIREMENTS:** The performers will arrange the audience into two long groups facing each other with an aisle down the centre in which to perform. This aisle needs to be approximately 3 metres wide by 6 metres long, with power point access nearby.
Please note: a small or medium sized room such as a multipurpose room or small hall is more effective acoustically and atmospherically than a large space such as a gym. Please make the performance area available at least **30 minutes** prior to the commencement of the show so that the performers can prepare the space.
- **SAFETY:** Please ensure the space is clean and clear for the safety and wellbeing of both your students and the performers.
- **CBC SHORTLISTED BOOKS** We recommend students are familiar with the four CBC shortlisted books we feature in the show. You will find the titles and story summaries included in this pack.
- **TEACHER PRESENCE:** We request teacher presence and support for the performers at all times during the show.
- **PRICE:** \$5.00 (+GST) per student (Your school may have already paid a deposit which will be deducted from the final invoice).
- **MINIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS:** 140 students are required per performance otherwise a flat fee of \$700 (+GST) applies per performance.
- **PAYMENT OF BALANCE:** A tax invoice for the balance will be forwarded to you the day *after* the performance, so please **do not prepare a cheque on the day**. We have instructed the performers not to handle any money or financial issues. These should all be directed to our office.



TEACHER INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES

CONTENTS

- Key Learning Areas
- Themes
- Synopsis
- Featured CBC Shortlisted Books
- Activities & Discussion topics based upon Featured CBC Books
- Activities and Discussion topics based upon Performance and Themes
- Student Feedback Form, Crossword and Word Finder

KEY LEARNING AREAS

- Literacy/English
- The Arts (Music, Drama, Dance)
- H & PE

THEMES

- Books and reading are invaluable tools for learning, adventure and fun.
- Books and reading can offer bridges of understanding that help us solve problems and understand ourselves and others.
- Obsession can create imbalance in our lives.
- Digital games and books have much in common but also some significant differences.
- Values: teamwork, resilience, courage and facing fears.

SYNOPSIS

The musical **TOTALLY AMAZING** takes audiences on a discovery of 'One World, Many Stories' as part of the celebrations for 2011 Children's Book Week. The idea of finding amazing stories attached to seemingly ordinary items that may have come from anywhere around us is the central theme to the story. More importantly this production takes on the challenge of 'boredom' and shows audiences that if they take the right approach then nothing should ever really 'boring'.

The story takes place largely in a storeroom full of paraphernalia that Claire's grandfather has accumulated. It's school holidays and Claire, who has been at home while many of her friends have gone away with their families on holiday trips, has agreed to go to visit her Grandpa and help him clear out his old storeroom. Grandpa has a tendency to be a bit grumpy and Claire doesn't really want to be there so there doesn't seem to be much to look forward to, especially as Claire seems to be in the grip of a feeling of boredom so profound that she can't seem to take much interest in anything. Suddenly Claire finds she is not alone in the room but has been joined by the enigmatic Random, a character who doesn't adhere to any of the laws of reality or reason. Though it's not quite clear who he is or why he has come to spend time with Claire she soon finds herself swept up into some crazy



situations. Typically though Random is never there when Grandpa comes into the room and he seems to only get grumpier as Claire appears to be making little progress with the tidying of his store room.

Objects that seemed inane start to take on more significance and grab Claire's attention and imagination, objects such as an old atlas with an inscription in it. And then there is a box of books, each of which gain a special significance as the story progresses. Guided by Random, Claire finds she is able to break through the boredom that has been preventing her from really enjoying herself so she is then able to help Grandpa out of his grumpy state. Together they then explore the final objects and Grandpa is able to show how he used to travel the world. Even though he may be alone in his room they are able to look forward to shared adventures in the future.

So in the end the production is a literal interpretation of 'One World, Many Stories' in using the atlas and books as a springboard for the many stories both real and imaged that the world provides.

FEATURED CBC SHORTLISTED BOOKS

We recommend students are familiar with the following books prior to the performance.

The books featured in varying degrees are taken from the 2011 Children's Book Council's Short List from the Younger Reader, Early Childhood and Picture Book categories.

TWO PEAS IN A POD by Chris McKimmie

A whimsical telling of the story of two friends, Violet and Marvin who, after spending all their time together close as 'two peas in a pod', are separated when Violet's family moves interstate. Things seem very bleak until Marvin is surprised by a plane ticket from his mother enabling him to go and visit Violet. Reunited, they find that their friendship is as strong as ever. The idiosyncratic illustrations and design of the book reflect the whimsy and imagination of the stories two main characters and each page provides unexpected and evocative details.

FAMILY FOREST by Kim Kane. Illustrations by Lucia Masciullo

The central character of this story about families belongs to quite an interesting one. Her parents are divorced but rather than break the family up entirely her family is extended to include an older sister, a younger step sister an older step brother and two sets of parents, all of whom get on very well. With humorous illustrations in which terms are taken literally before they are explained, we see that instead of a normal family tree, this girl is part of a 'family forest'

MAUDIE AND BEAR by Jan Ormerod. Illustrations by Freya Blackwood.

A gentle and lovely book about the relationship between the little girl Maudie and Bear, her large and loving protector. A series of short chapters explores their relationship and each time shows that Maudie's child like perception of the world is nurtured and she is safe because Bear is always at hand to support and protect her.



MIRROR by Jeannie Baker

A quite exceptional work of art, Mirror relates the story of two families, one in Australia the other in Morocco. Through a series of collages the lives of each family are reflected in a manner that allows both the parallels and the differences between them are displayed and can be compared. A carpet is woven by the Moroccan family that finds its way to the home of the Australians. The proceeds from the sale of the carpet enable the Moroccans to buy a computer and gain access to the world, providing a window on where their carpet has ended up. The artistry of the book is enhanced by its brilliant design, opening from the centre outwards so we can compare each stage of the story and as there is no text it is accessible to anyone to enhance their understanding of how vastly different cultures and lifestyles still share elements of family, love and endeavour which shows how essentially similar we are as human beings. Beautiful!

ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION TOPICS BASED ON FEATURED BOOKS

TWO PEAS IN A POD

- Violet sees 'cottonwool castles and marshmallow kingdoms' when she looks at the clouds while Marvin only sees 'cauliflowers'. Go outside and see if you can see different pictures made of clouds in the sky
- At the start of the story Marvin says that he and Violet go together like 'fish and chips' or 'salt and pepper'. Create a list of all different things that go together .
- Marvin uses exaggeration at times to tell his story. Look through the book and see if you can detect which parts are illustrating how things really are and which illustrations show things exaggerated or imagined things.
- How does Violet's new place differ from where she used to live when near to Marvin?
- See if you can work out all the different art techniques used to illustrate the book

FAMILY FOREST

- How many people in total belong to the extended family shown in Family Forest?
- Some of the jokes in the illustrations come from taking the text of the book literally. See if you can pick where in the book this happens. Try taking a saying e.g. I've got her hooked and drawing a literal meaning of that saying.
- Draw a family tree of your family and if there are some branches that don't quite fit see if you can draw your own family forest

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- If this story just illustrates the mums, dads and kids of the family, see if you can work out how many grandparents there might be.
- From looking at the illustrations can you figure out what some of the interests of the members of the family might be?

MAUDIE AND BEAR

- Describe some of the ways that Bear shows that he cares for Maudie in the book.
- Is there someone in your life who is like Bear is to Maudie? Who is it and why do you think that?
- What famous story is the chapter 'Home Sweet Home' based on?
- Is there anything in the book that shows that perhaps Bear spoils Maudie a little? What things does Maudie do or say that might make someone think that?
- Sometimes the illustrations show things that are taking place more in Maudie's imagination than in real life. Can you pick out examples of this?
- On the back cover of the book are the words 'Love is inexhaustible'. What does this mean and what things in the story illustrate this?

MIRROR

- They say 'A picture paints a thousand words'. Choose one page from the book and attempt to describe every detail in it so that someone who hasn't seen the picture would recognise it after hearing your description.
- Imagine that Jeannie Baker wanted to add some words to her book. Choose ten words that come to mind looking at the pictures and then give those ten words to a partner to see if they can place them in appropriate places on the pages of the book
- What are some of the similarities that are shown with the family from Morocco and the family from Australia? What are some of the differences?
- Choose a place some another country and see if you can create a collage picture of your own to illustrate that place
- It's a view that can be easily missed but open up the book and put it cover up on a table to admire how each side is a reflection of the other in the different country



THEMATIC ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION

- Do a survey on the class of the number of students who admit to being bored. Compile a list of what the class thinks are really boring things then create a list of possible ways to overcome the boredom.
- What kind of relationship do Claire and her Grandpa seem to have at the start of the story? How has it changed by the end and what are the reasons for the change?
- People use the phrase 'That was random' quite a lot. What exactly does it mean? Who has had 'random' things happen to them or their family? Create a list of these to exchange with other classes.
- Write a story about something everyday you might be doing and how it changes when Random makes an appearance
- Have a 'special objects' day in which each member of the class brings something from home and then explains to the class the story behind the object.
- Grab an atlas and open it up without looking at the pages. Choose a location from the page it opens up on then find out all you can about the location you have chosen and present it to the class.
- Write a story about going to the 'random location' you have researched.
- There are many shows about old objects that end up being worth a lot of money e.g. Antiques Roadshow and Bargain Hunt. Are there any heirlooms in your family? Where are they from and what is their history?
- Objects can be very precious but still not worth a lot of money. Compile a class list of each student's most precious thing. What do people think may become of that object fifty years from now?
- Grandpa tells Claire that when her mum was very young she used to call him 'Big Bear'. Are there any nicknames in your family? What are some of the funny names that people have for each other?
- Get the class to create a book of ways of 'Busting the Big B' (How to overcome boredom)
- Imagine that you found a magic carpet. Write or even make up a play about what adventures take place



GENERAL ACTIVITIES

- Although you have seen **TOTALLY AMAZING** as a play it might also make a good story book. Divide the story up into parts and the class can put the story into their own words and illustrations.
- Imagine if **TOTALLY AMAZING** was already a book. Design a cover for the book and include a short summary on the back 'cover' that might encourage someone who didn't know the play to read the book.
- Here's a fun way to recap on the play. In groups of three choose a favourite moment and make a statue or 'freeze frame' of that moment – as if someone had taken a photograph or pushed the pause button on the video. Show the rest of the class and see if they can recognise what part of the play you have shown.
- In the show during the song 'My People All Like To Party' Charlie shows a few steps that everybody joins in on. Create your own steps to the song and teach them to the rest of the class
- Have you ever found yourself with nothing to do during the holidays? Brainstorm with the class of new and interesting things you may do even if you have to do them by yourself
- Design a new poster for **TOTALLY AMAZING** or, if it had been made into a movie, design a movie poster or DVD cover.
- What is your favourite song from **TOTALLY AMAZING**? Take a survey in the class and see what is the Number One favourite song. Perhaps you could even make up a music video of that song
- Write a review of **TOTALLY AMAZING**. If you would like to send your reviews into the office we can promise the class will get a response!
- Write a story about being your own encounter with Random. Where does it take place and what sort of things happen?
- Look through all of the books that have been shortlisted for Book Week 2011 and take a vote as to which one is the class favourite. Collect results from other classes in the school and see how they compare.
- Who is your favourite character from a book? Draw a picture, write a story or act out a scene which shows you meeting them.

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Reviews mailed to the following address will all receive a reply!

**Perform! Educational Musicals
1 Surrey Street
Bentleigh East VIC 3165
AUSTRALIA**

Student reviews can also be completed on our website by going to
<http://www.performmusicals.com/Feedback/Student/>

Teachers can also provide feedback on our website by going to
<http://www.performmusicals.com/Feedback/Teacher/>

If any of your students would like to write to us or find out more details about our company please visit our website:

Perform! Educational Musicals www.performmusicals.com



STUDENT REVIEW

YOU CAN ALSO COMPLETE THIS ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE
WWW.PERFORMMUSICALS.COM

By.....

Of.....Primary School

What I liked best about the performance was _____

My favourite character was _____
This is because _____

My favourite book in the show was _____
Why? _____

What else would you include in the show _____

Please turn over to see a picture of my favourite part of the show!

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Totally Amazing Wordsearch

G M I R R O R S H A C W J J G
D I B I K E O E P A R T N E R
W R C W Q O U O Q L C N F S A
J K V T V G M A U D I E A H N
S J T X Z C Z B Y K O U M B D
C R X M X L H M A S R I I X P
P A Y M C O P J O R T B L J A
F N R U L U X V L E P O Y X E
X D V P G D M V V T R O R J P
E O W F E S N L S R N K D Y X
N M Y B Z T B K N S Z B A Q Q
E E Z W M K B H D O Y S X N Y
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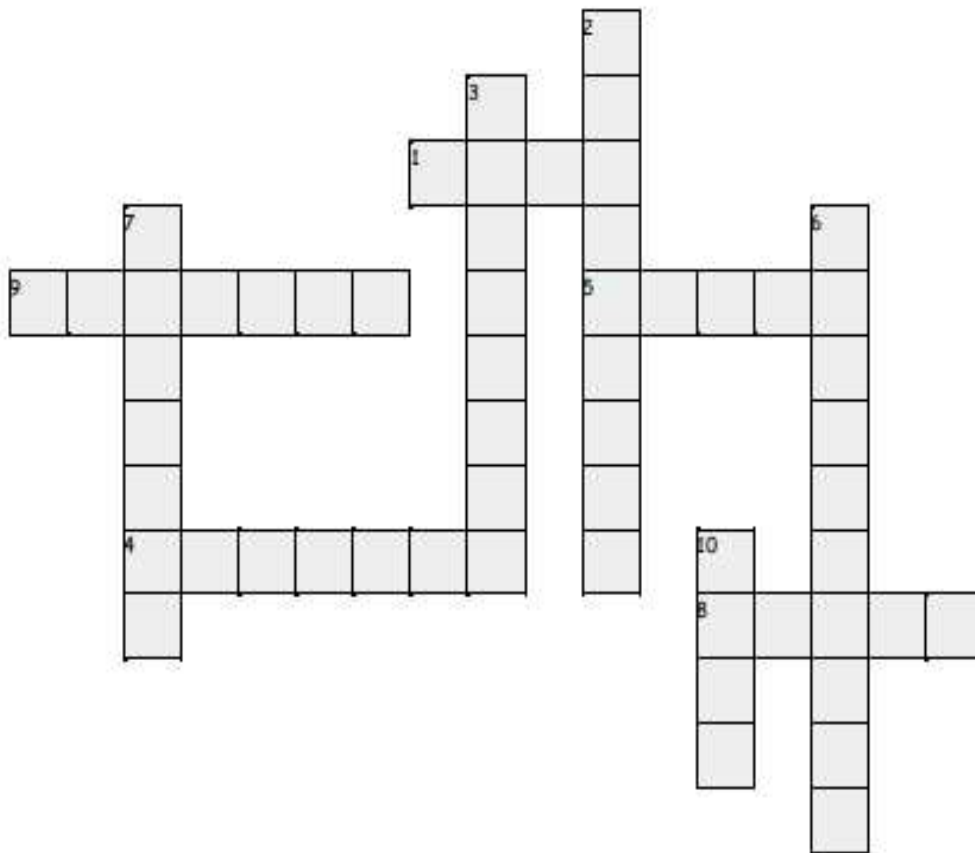
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|-----------|-----------|----------|
| • RANDOM | • DANCING | • MAUDIE |
| • GRANDPA | • FAMILY | • BIKE |
| • STORY | • CLOUDS | • CARPET |
| • PARTNER | • VIOLET | • MIRROR |
-

TOTALLY AMAZING

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Totally Amazing Crossword

Using your knowledge of the books and characters featured in Totally Amazing, complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across:

1. Violet tells Marvin she is moving to the ____
4. Charlie's job in the book Family Forest.
5. The name of the boy's half sister in Family Forest.
8. Claire receives this book as a present at the end of the show.
9. What does the B in big B stand for in the show?

Down:

2. What flower does Maudie pick in Maudie and Bear?
3. When the Moroccan family sell a carpet in Mirror, they use the money to buy a ____
6. Violet's nickname for Marvin in Two Peas in a Pod.
7. Claire has to clean the storeroom for her ____
10. To stop Bear from going to sleep, Maudie take him on a ____

