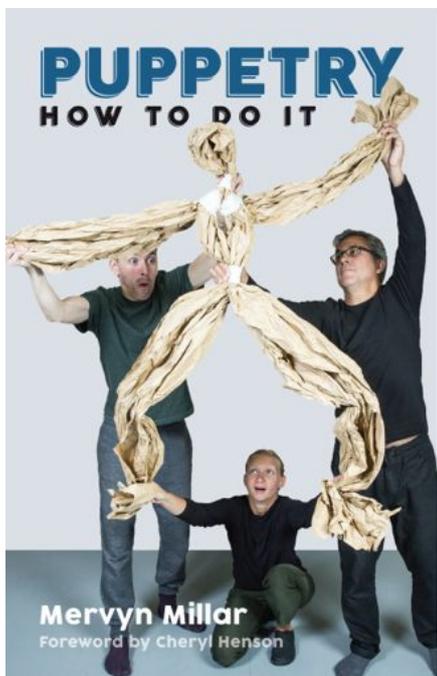


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Getting to grips with puppets

press release 12/07/2018



Puppetry: How to Do It

by Mervyn Millar

A practical, accessible and inspiring guide to using puppetry in theatre – the perfect entry point for anyone looking to use puppets in their productions, to explore what puppets can do, or to develop their puppetry skills.

ISBN: 978 1 84842 546 0

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Written by an experienced theatre and puppetry director, *Puppetry: How to Do It* focuses on the performer and the craft of bringing any puppet to life. No puppet-making is required to use this book: starting just with simple objects, it lays out the skills required to unlock a puppet's limitless potential for expression and connection with an audience.

Inside you'll discover fifty practical, easy-to-follow exercises – for use in a group or on your own – to develop elements of the craft, build confidence and help you improve your puppetry through play and improvisation. Also included are sections on different types of puppet, thinking about how the puppeteer is presented on stage and how to direct and devise puppet performances.

Ideal for actors and performers, for directors and designers, and for teachers and students of all ages and levels of experience, this book will demystify the art of puppetry, and help you become more confident and creative with all kinds of puppets and objects on stage.

'This is a superb guide to puppet manipulation by one of the world's most experienced puppetry directors and teachers at a time when many actors are seeing puppetry as the twenty-first century's evocative and powerful new performance medium' Basil Jones, Handspring Puppet Company

'Mervyn Millar has a unique perspective on the meteoric rise of puppetry in British theatre having witnessed it from the inside. He was resident at the Puppet Centre Trust at BAC when Improbable Theatre were exploding theatrical form in *70 Hill Lane* and *Animo*. He was studying with Handspring when they created the exquisite and game-changing giraffe puppet in *Tall Horse*. He was present from the earliest experiments at the National Theatre Studio in which puppetry and "poor theatre" were combined to create the performance language of *War Horse*. There is no one better placed to reveal the techniques of puppetry which made these changes and these shows possible.' Tom Morris, Artistic Director of Bristol Old Vic, and Co-director of *War Horse*

[CONTINUED OVERLEAF ON PAGE 2]

‘This book captures Mervyn’s playful and accessible process for working with actors to develop their puppetry skills – it’s like having him in the room’ Lucy Skilbeck, Director of Actor Training at RADA

‘More and more contemporary actors are adding puppetry to their arsenal of performance techniques. Here is a very timely guide to what is required from the actor to give life to the performed object as developed from Mervyn Millar’s own deep practical experience’ Adrian Kohler, Handspring Puppet Company

‘Based on the workshops he developed for training performers for *War Horse*, Mervyn has written this book to share his craft... the exercises are clear and easily reproducible for many different types of participants... a wonderful gift to the field of puppetry. I hope that it will be used widely to introduce adventurous spirits to this dynamic art form’ Cheryl Henson, President of the Jim Henson Foundation, from her Foreword

About the author



Photo by Nick Arthur Daniel

Mervyn Millar is a theatre and puppetry director, and director of Significant Object.

He was involved in the creative team of the National Theatre’s *War Horse* from its first workshop, also appearing in the show at the National Theatre and directing casts in London, New York, Toronto and Berlin. Other puppet design and direction includes *Circus 1903* (international tour) and work for Sir Paul McCartney, Residenztheater Munich, the National Theatre of Scotland and National Theatre of Great Britain, Handspring UK, Opéra National du Rhin, Birmingham Rep, Schauspielhaus Zürich, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal Opera House, the Royal Court, Lyric Hammersmith, Bristol Old Vic, West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Young Vic. He is Chair of the Puppet Centre Trust.

He was Director at the Finborough Theatre between 1998 and 2000, and has directed productions at theatres including the National Theatre, BAC, Theatre Royal Plymouth and Bloomsbury Festival.

His teaching includes sessions and workshops with organisations including the O’Neill National Puppetry Conference, the Arvon Foundation, the Curious School of Puppetry, RADA, Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, the University of East Anglia, the National Theatre, the Royal Court, London International Mime Festival, Puppet Animation Scotland and The Actor’s Guild.

His books include *Puppetry: How to Do It*, *The Horse’s Mouth* and *Journey of the Tall Horse*. He was awarded an Arts Foundation Fellowship for his work in puppetry.

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