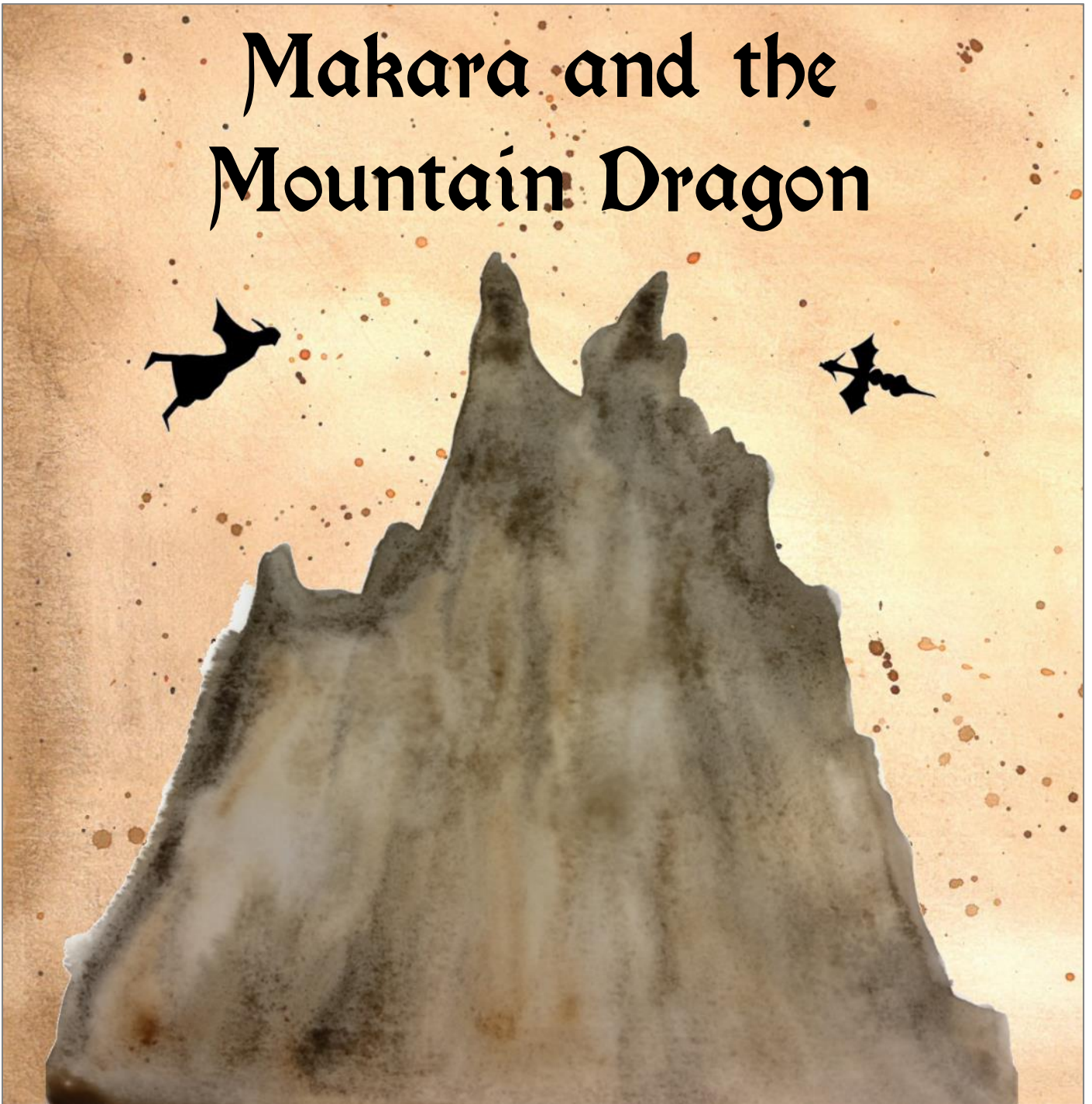


**bamboozle**

creating possibilities for disabled children

# Makara and the Mountain Dragon



**A Companion Pack for Teachers & Support Staff**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# Contents

This booklet is designed to give you some background information about the production and how it was devised along with some suggestions for further classroom work. You will also find information on the courses that Bamboozle runs to share its methodology and creative approach with schools.

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# The Bamboozle Approach

*Makara and the Mountain Dragon*, as with all Bamboozle productions, has been designed to put the audience at ease from the moment they first enter the performance space. The team of highly skilled performers will guide the students and staff through the production and ensure that they feel safe and comfortable. There is no right or wrong way to experience the show and, at various points during the piece, the performers will invite the audience to get involved. The performers will be sensitive to the students' reactions and will build on what they see; they are not looking for any particular response or result.

The show has been specifically designed so that members of the audience can engage with the different elements on offer in whatever way is appropriate for them. At the very beginning of the performance the company will meet the students informally, find out their names, and find out what the team can do to make each individual audience member's experience of the show as enjoyable as possible. The team will make sure they bring elements of the performance close to the students and give commentary on what's going on. They will use touch to convey the rhythms of the music and will offer a variety of sensory ways of experiencing the different parts of the show. They will always approach members of the audience sensitively and take the time necessary for everyone to feel comfortable.

## Some of the Techniques at Work in the Show

- The show's narrative is simple in structure and uses few words; the multi-sensory and interactive elements bring the story to life in meaningful ways and provide opportunities for engagement and interaction.
- Key words and phrases are accompanied by signs to give as many ways as possible of accessing the performance.
- Live music, songs and soundscapes help tell the story and add depth and atmosphere to the environment as well as providing insight into the feelings of the characters and the nature of the narrative at different moments throughout the piece.
- There are opportunities for sensory experiences and interaction throughout the show; students are free to access the performance in whatever way is meaningful for them. Their reactions may sometimes be unexpected but they will not be right or wrong e.g. shouting during a quiet moment is an opportunity for someone to make their voice heard, rejecting something offered is an opportunity for someone to exercise their freedom to choose.
- Opportunities for interaction are approached sensitively – if a student does not wish to get involved there is no pressure on them to do so – the team make invitations and offers without encouragement or direction so that the choice is always with the student. Where signs of communication are not obvious the team will seek the guidance of support staff.
- The performers use a technique called *hand under hand* with students who have limited movement in order to explore textures with touch – instead of placing a

student’s hand on an object they will place their hand under the student’s hand so that the student can feel the texture with their finger tips and the performers can feel any intention to move towards or away from the object – if it feels like the student wishes to explore the object the performer will remove their own hand.

- The performers will not praise or encourage students to get involved nor will they draw attention to students who choose not to be involved. This supports the principle that the students are free to engage in their own way because it communicates that they don’t have to achieve anything in order to earn praise and that they don’t need to avoid doing something for fear of “getting it wrong” or simply of being watched.

These are just some of the techniques we use at Bamboozle to enable students to engage with our performances. We explore these and other techniques in more detail through our training courses (see course information at the back of this document).

## Makara and the Mountain Dragon – The Journey

**Makara and the Mountain Dragon** is an interactive, multi-sensory performance which includes the music, sights, sounds and experiences of three characters relating an epic legend as they travel through their mountain homeland.

Welcome	The students and staff gather in the performance space. The company meets the audience, finds out everyone’s name and makes sure everyone is comfortable.
A song of greeting	The start of the performance is marked by the singing of the hello song. The company sings of dragons, mountains, fire and wings, they greet each member of the audience.
The Mountain Dance	The audience sees a girl wearing a cloak; her movements develop into a dance and the three characters sing the <i>Children of the Mountain</i> song. The audience feels the wind blow.
The legend begins	Dimitar and Aethon introduce themselves and invite the audience to listen to their story – they present Makara, a girl who is different, she has wings and hopes one day to learn to fly. She greets the audience and shows off her wings.
The wind blows from the mountain	Makara, perched on a rock, struggles against the wind – if she trusts herself, she will be safe.
The lights from the mountain	The characters hear a rumbling from the mountain – lights appear and move towards the audience; they circle around and drift towards the dragon egg.

The mysterious dragon egg	Makara brings the dragon egg to the audience – they can see the magical light within it, they can touch it.
The dragon hatches from the egg	Makara takes the dragon as it hatches from the egg. The Mountain People have been waiting for this for a thousand years. Makara names the dragon Volos and introduces him to the audience.
Makara is given a quest	Dimitar tells Makara that it is her destiny to take Volos to the Mountain Dragon before sunrise or all will be lost – it will be a dangerous journey. Only she can take Volos to the mountain dragon because she has wings. She must not let Volos out of her sight, but this will be difficult as he likes to fly away.
Volos takes flight	The fires of the mountain have awoken and Volos takes flight – he flies away.
The journey to the mountain	Makara knows that if she trusts herself, she'll reach the mountain. She scrambles over rocks and along ledges.
Volos flies across the moon	Makara sees Volos as he flies over the valley. The audience see the Volos, represented by a shadow puppet, fly across the moon as the company sing a song.
The mountain fires	Makara feels all alone, she is glad of the audience's company. Makara takes the audience with her to experience the light and heat of the mountain fires. When the audience has safely returned from the mountain the fire erupts and dances through the air to the fire song.
The quest has failed	Aethon and Dimitar decide to leave the mountain, dawn has almost come and Volos is still missing, the quest has failed.
Makara takes flight	Makara refuses to accept failure – she will fly – she is reunited with Volos.
The Old Mountain Dragon	We hear the sound of a storm – the Old Mountain Dragon is revealed and swoops down towards the audience. Volos and the Old Mountain Dragon finally meet and fly together.
Makara fulfils her destiny	Makara sends Volos to join the Mountain Dragon – she says goodbye as she watches him fly away.
The story ends	As the story ends the company sings a goodbye song to the audience.
Makara returns to the mountains	Now that she is free, Makara flies away into the red, red sky.

# Engaging the Senses

The setting for **Makara and the Mountain Dragon** provides opportunities for multi-sensory experiences and exploration. The show is visually engaging and rich in its use of different sounds and sensory stimulus.

- The design for **Makara and the Mountain Dragon** is inspired by the texture of drums, mountains and natural animal hides. There are animal hides stretched out on frames which mimic drum skins, and the floor echoes these textures as well. The design plays with the translucency of fabric and drum skins which we use as shadow screens, and incorporate colour changing lights throughout the story. The costumes are designed to be very bold and bright, in contrast with the landscape. It is winter time, so many of the fur and suede textures from the set are also included in the costumes. The designer researched clothing from Eastern European Roma communities to develop the costume design.
- The lighting is used to define the space, give focus to the action and create different atmospheres. Smaller lights are used within the show for particular purposes. Lights come from the mountain and are brought to the audience so that they can be experienced close at hand, they then draw focus to the dragon egg. The dragon egg itself is a plasma ball which is brought to the audience so that everyone can have a chance to look at and touch it. There are also lights in the mountain fires. When Volos flies in front of the moon the characters bring a bodhrán (a large flat drum) which acts as a miniature shadow puppet theatre to each member of the audience – the lights behind the drum draw attention to the action within it.
- The three characters have distinctive audio identifiers when they introduce themselves to the audience: Aethon stamps his feet, Dimitar strums his guitar and Makara taps her tambourine. They describe themselves and what they're wearing. Throughout the show there are sections of narration which describe the action and, when Volos meets each member of the audience, Aethon describes what is happening.
- As well as audio description and narration quite a lot of the piece is underscored with atmospheric soundscapes. Sometimes these are sound effects like wind and thunder, sometimes a drone is used to create an unsettling atmosphere and sometimes music or rhythms are played.
- Along with recorded soundscapes the show includes a lot of live music and song. The songs vary in pace and dynamics to suit the action and atmosphere. The hello song is upbeat and is followed soon after by an energetic and strongly rhythmic song which then becomes a dance. Makara's song is slower and has a tentative quality as she tries to muster the courage to fly. When the fire erupts from the mountain the accompanying song is loud and powerful and then everything calms down again as Volos flies across the moon. The song words are often quite simple and verses are repeated which allows the audience to become familiar with them. Live music is also useful because it can accompany action and pieces can be shortened or lengthened to suit the interactions taking place. Different instruments are also used, the guitar is joined by a mandolin and tambourine in the opening song. Volos' theme tune is

played on the dulcimer. Bodhráns of various sizes are used throughout the piece particularly for the dragon's heartbeat.

- As well as having audio identifiers the three characters have an olfactory identifier – the members of the cast carry fabric infused with essential oils, the oils are not added to the costumes so that the scented fabric can be removed if it is not suitable for any audience members. Aethon's scent is geranium, Makara's is cedar wood and Dimitar's is mandarin – three very distinct scents. When the mountain fires erupt the fabric that makes the ring of fire is scented with lapsang souchong tea which has a distinctive spicy and smoky smell.
- The puppets bring a new dimension to the performance – they are unusual and other-worldly. Volos is the baby dragon and is operated by one company member. He spends a lot of time with Makara and they form a bond which is at the heart of the story. Volos comes to the audience and each person has time to meet and interact with him. The Old Mountain Dragon is huge in size and is operated by three members of the company. The scale and nature of the Old Mountain Dragon are in sharp contrast to those of the endearing baby dragon – it presents a surprising spectacle for the audience with its skeletal figure and fiery red eyes – it approaches the audience but, unlike Volos, doesn't make direct contact. The shadow puppet is tiny in comparison and provides a way of representing Volos' flight across the moon at the same time as offering an individual experience for each audience member.
- There are various other sensory experiences during the performance from the stomping of the dance to the tactile fur blankets given out to keep everyone warm in the snow; from the wind generated by the cloaks to the heat from the mountain fires.

## Ideas for further Exploration

All of Bamboozle's work, whether in performance or workshop, has a strong legacy element – we aim to share our methodology with as many people as possible with a view to reaching as many children and young people as possible. Many of the sensory experiences from the show can be broken down and replicated in the classroom. We hope that you have seen some ideas in the show that you might be able to use in your own learning environment.

The performance itself provides many opportunities for capturing evidence of the seven aspects of engagement. Elements of the show fulfil many curriculum areas for students described as having complex needs in terms of responsiveness, curiosity, discovery, anticipation, persistence, initiation and investigation. The show also provides opportunities for interaction and sustained engagement. In addition, the setting of the show provides a way of exploring and experiencing elements of a different cultural and social context.

# Activities for the Classroom

Creating a setting and giving it atmosphere are effective ways of enabling and supporting engagement and focus; they provide a way of facilitating an immersive, shared experience that can capture all of the senses. Here are some suggestions for classroom activities:

## 1. Create a multi-sensory dragon mountain exploration

There are many ways to create the atmosphere of the dragon mountain using some simple resources for exploration within a simple setting and soundscape. Clear desks etc. to the edge of the classroom. Use earthy coloured fabrics draped over desks and shelves to change the look and feel of the room. Alter the lighting if possible – perhaps using battery operated tea lights, lanterns, fairy lights, sensory lamps etc. with desk lamps to light different areas of the room where the resources are placed. Use background music or a drone to create a soundscape (there are many available on the internet). Essential oils in warm water or an atomiser can add an olfactory dimension – each of the characters in the piece is associated with a different scented oil as an extra marker of their identity.

Lay out a selection of resources in different areas of the room for the students to explore. The students could gather outside the classroom and you could narrate their journey into the mountain lands – giving commentary for the whole group as they move around the different exploration areas. Resources might include things like:

- Earthy natural resources - plants, twigs, herbs, turf - real or artificial (artificial grass could be put in the freezer so there are contrasts in the tactile temperature experience), soil etc.
- Cold resources like ice cubes for feeling and rattling around in containers, cold water for immersing hands and feet and for pouring to make sounds in different containers, magic snow for squeezing and scrunching, foil, silvery metallic objects and containers, etc.
- Heat resources – covered hot water bottles, heated wheat bags, warm pebbles, lava lamps, foil blankets, fans with red, yellow and orange ribbons attached to create the look of a fire - the children can experience the feel of the air flow and the sensation of the ribbons, fan heaters for warm air, fake fur fabrics for experiencing different textures etc.
- Sound & music – a range of percussion instruments (drums, tambourines, shakers, cymbals, stringed instruments) or resources that have auditory qualities as well as interesting textures to explore.
- Stones, rocks & wood – different textures, sizes and weights to explore – perhaps buried in sand or soil.

A whole morning or afternoon session – could be spent exploring the different elements of the Dragon Mountain.



## 2. A campfire talking circle

For this activity clear a space, lower the lighting and create a central focus point – a simple “campfire” can be created using logs and sticks, red, orange and yellow fabric or ribbon and some battery-operated lights. The teacher announces that it’s campfire time and everyone, staff and students, gathers together in a tight circle around the campfire. After the announcement the staff don’t say any more words – the only sounds they make are to match the students’ vocalisations or movements. After a little while, when everyone has had chance to get used to the situation, the staff move their chairs back and move the students closer together. The staff are now silent but they remain on the periphery of the circle to observe the students’ reactions. The students are free to relax and observe or to vocalise or to move or to make contact with each other in their own way. After a suitable period of time (allow at least 20 minutes) the teacher announces the end of campfire time and there is a slow and quiet transition out of the activity.

When we have run these sessions in the past we have found that, at first, the students constantly look round for staff and seek their attention. But, with repetition, the students understand that this is a time for them to spend with their peers, they forget about the staff and they begin to reach out to, and communicate with, each other. Some schools we’ve worked in have weekly circle time sessions where students get the opportunity to communicate with their friends without any staff intervention and without distraction or interruption. The staff are always watching quietly from the periphery to see what happens.

## 3. Playing with shadows

The miniature shadow puppet theatre in the show is created using a bodhrán which has had a mountain scene and moon added to the drum skin and is backlit with a torch – the miniature Volos is separate and can move around the drum over the mountains and across the moon. The drum can be brought to each individual member of the audience so they can experience the light and movement of the characters.



We have often found that students respond to shadow play. For this activity place a strong light facing a blank wall so there's enough of a gap to get in between the light and the wall and move around. Bring students into the gap facing the wall so that they can see it and, standing with them, make movements and shapes against the wall – describing what's happening and the movements that can be seen in the shadows. If students are using wheelchairs angle the chairs so that any movements the students make can be seen - describe the movements that are happening. Using shadows is a way of amplifying and projecting movement – it can be difficult for students to know how much of an effect they're having on the world around them but, when movements are amplified and projected, it can lead to further exploration of movement potential – especially when we recognise and describe what's happening.

#### 4. **Create a storm**

This could be a musical activity using voice, percussion and other instruments - as well as any other resources with auditory potential - to make (and possibly record) a soundscape. The soundscape can build to a crescendo or vary in its intensity at different times as well as concentrating on different sounds at different moments. The storm could also be animated with movement and represented by various resources such as swathes of fabric, large sheets of paper, plastic bags and rubbish sacks, water sprayers and other materials. Spend time exploring the sound possibilities of different resources with the group and then blend the different sounds together for the soundscape - perhaps adding movement to go with the sounds.

For a sound workshop in the classroom gather together a collection of mundane objects that have sound making potential and tactile exploration qualities (plastic boxes and elastic bands, metal trays and bowls, pots and pans, plastic bottles, ping pong balls, biscuit tins, cardboard boxes, wooden spoons, newspaper for tearing, crinkly foil blankets, dried pasta, physio balls – anything at all that has noise-making potential).

Explore the objects with the students and build on any sounds they make whether matching their vocalisations or building on their engagement with the resources. We don't have to focus on making sounds in conventional ways. Where there is limited movement we might make a game out of wrapping a student's arms or legs in the foil blankets. We might build a tower of cardboard boxes and enjoy the sound they make when we knock the tower down. We can test out the auditory qualities of different pots and pans with a wooden spoon. We might drop dried pasta onto a metal tray or throw ping pong balls into a bucket.

When we use musical instruments, we can become self-conscious about "playing" them and often have pre-conceived ideas about how they should be played. With mundane objects we can't get anything "right" or "wrong" – there is no correct way to interact with a cardboard box. When we let go of the need to get a particular

result we are free to explore with the students and can build on and develop any engagement that we observe.

## Tips for Getting the Most out of Your Sessions

- Allow plenty of time – take a whole morning or afternoon so that everyone has time to explore at their own pace.
- Let go of expectations - if we go into an exploration session with no expectations and simply see what happens we are able to look at what interests each student and build on *their* engagement and responses rather than trying to get a particular result.
- Say as little as possible – even if you’re the facilitator – this will give the students the space to explore on their own terms. [Some schools that we work with run exploratory sessions in which no adult in the room is allowed to speak!]
- The teacher or facilitator can narrate what’s going on in the room so that everyone can be involved in the whole experience and be kept up to date with what’s going on with others in the room. A single voice giving commentary is easier to focus on than multiple voices – particularly for students with visual impairments.
- Students can be exploring different stimuli in different ways at the same time – it isn’t necessary for everyone to explore everything in turn – if a student doesn’t wish to engage with a particular resource try something else.
- Accept any response – if a student pushes a resource away, try bringing another resource to see if that is pushed away too and build it into a game, if they scatter resources try finding something for the resources to fall into so that they make a sound and then explore the different sounds.
- When we create an atmospheric environment and set aside time to explore it we communicate to the students that something special is going on and that they are worth everything we have done to make it as rich as possible. Our efforts and our attention are strong indicators of how much we value our students.

# Where Makara and the Mountain Dragon Began

The concept for *Makara and the Mountain Dragon* was developed by Christopher Davies and Sue Pycroft, the show's director and puppet designer. They had wanted to create a story about dragons for some time and wanted to use a large-scale dragon puppet. This was partly inspired by their work on *War Horse* with the National Theatre - they reflected on the impact that the enormous puppets had on children with complex needs when they were able to experience the horses up close. They wanted new audiences to experience this sense of scale and a dragon puppet would enable them to do that.

Christopher and Sue wanted the story to have a particular cultural feel that was outside of what we typically experience in the UK. One of the actors, Victoria Agache, is from Moldova so the team decided to set the story in the Balkan region and give the music and songs an Eastern European feel.

During early research and development sessions the creative team brought dragon stories from various myths and legends and, using those influences, they wrote their own stories and explored the images from them. Two images were particularly intriguing from these early ideas - a girl who had wings, and a person standing on the edge of a cliff looking out; these two ideas have become the opening image of the play.

Giving a girl wings and making her very obviously different acknowledges that each person is unique and each one of us is different. Another early idea emerged when the company noted that a character with a cloak beating the cloak backwards and forwards created considerable air turbulence which, for the audience, gives a kinaesthetic experience – this motif is used in various ways throughout the show.

## The Music of Makara and the Mountain Dragon

The people in our story *Makara and the Mountain Dragon* are a travelling people. Their music would be about the places they travelled through, and what they encountered on their journeys:

The Mountains, the Skies, the Earth.

The Wind, Rain and Fire.

Legends, Magic and Dragons.

We felt that the music that could best evoke these things was the music of the Travelling people of Eastern Europe. "I, like many others, have found myself drawn to, and moved by this haunting and joyful Music. I've played similar music in Bands and whilst travelling around Europe so it was a treat to be asked to create the Music for this project." *Steno, Composer and Musical Director.*

# The Touring Company

## Victoria Agache – Makara

Victoria Agache is a Moldavian actress with experience in street theatre, comedy, physical performances and Shakespeare. She also co-runs a theatre company called Provisional Act which focuses mainly on work for and about LGBTQ+ communities. Her performance is informed by two university degrees in theatre and performance, firstly at the leading drama school in Bucharest and latterly at Worcester University, graduating with honours from both institutions. As an overseas artist, she comes with a rich cultural background and many stories to tell. She is passionate about investing in the development of the local artistic community and being involved in the progression of live theatre, meaningful ideas and expression. She is currently collaborating with Bamboozle Theatre Company and absolutely loves it!



## Louisa Ashton - Makara



Louisa is an actor, puppeteer and theatre maker who trained in Musical Theatre at The Urdang Academy in London. After discovering a love for puppetry and movement, she soon found herself working with a variety of companies from the Little Angel Theatre to the RSC. Itching to make her own work, Louisa also co-founded the theatre company 'Sparkle and Dark', which has been touring fantastical, highly physical plays for the last ten years. Most recently, she has also begun to undertake the long and intensive training to become a Clown Doctor with Theodora's Children's Charity. A few years ago, she had the incredible opportunity to work with Bamboozle on their show 'Meadow Land', and she is now delighted to be back on a new adventure!

### **Craig Byrne - Dimitar**

Craig is an Actor, Musician and Composer. Studying Drama at The University of Manchester and at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. He has gone on to work particularly with Devising Theatre companies and in the last decade he toured the UK and Europe as a Street Theatre double act with Strangelings. He has also worked extensively with Contemporary Circus performers and companies as a Composer and Sound Designer. Most recently Craig has created two comic shows celebrating his (and Bamboozle's!) hometown of Leicester (Dead Leicester, Dead Leicester Chronicles). For the past few years since encountering Bamboozle, he has performed in five of their shows throughout the UK and in China, Egypt and Australia. He is delighted to be once again devising and performing in a brand new Bamboozle show!



### **Ben Forgham – Aethon**



Ben studied acting for three years at London's East 15 Acting School. And promptly forgot it all. After working for ten years in mainstream touring theatre and the West End he decided to take a break, and accidentally discovered Bamboozle where he's worked for the last 12 years and loved it!

### **Jessica Thanki – Stage Manager**

With a BA in Theatre Production, Jessica has been stage managing for the last 10 years on an array of productions, some of which include: *Maybe Father* (Talawa/Young Vic), *Behna* (Kali/Birmingham Rep), *It Hasn't Happened Yet* (Liz Carr, Tour), *Squid* (Theatre Royal Stratford East, Tour), *Brixton Rocks* (Tara Arts, Tour), *Sports Play* (Just a Must, UK and International Tour), *Dea* by Edward Bond (Sutton Theatres), *Now You See Me, Now You Don't* (Immediate Theatre, Tour), *The Ruck* (Lawrence Batley Theatre, Tour), *Tales of Birbal* (Mashi, Tour), *Clockwork Canaries* (TRP, The Drum), *Cathy* (Cardboard Citizens, Tour), *Gentle Giant*, (Bamboozle, Melbourne), *Muddy Choir* (Theatre Centre, Tour), *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, (Kenny Wax, UK and International Tour). Jessica has been shortlisted for Stage Manager of the year in 2011, 2018 and Stage Management Team of the Year 2019.



# The Company Behind the Scenes

## Christopher Davies - Director

Christopher Davies is a teacher, trainer and theatre director and author of two books: *Creating Multi-Sensory Environments*, *Practical Ideas for Teaching and Learning* and *Dramatic Starts*.

He co-founded Bamboozle in 1994. As Artistic Director, he writes and directs many of the company's touring shows, leads the training programme and continually seeks ways in which we can improve our methods of communication with young people for whom making themselves understood is a daily and life-long challenge.



Christopher runs Bamboozle training courses and workshops nationally and internationally: including for the National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe, New York University, Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Arts Centre, Singapore, Shanghai Children's Art Theatre and for Assitej in Sweden.

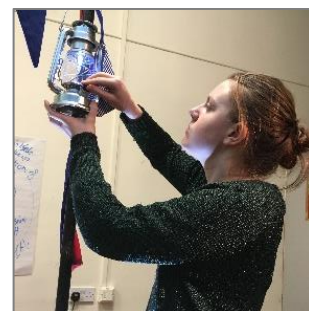
## Sue Pyecroft – Puppet Designer & Puppetry Direction



Sue Pyecroft co-founded Bamboozle Theatre Company in 1994. As well as being the lead theatre designer for Bamboozle's highly acclaimed touring shows for many years, she has also developed the use of puppetry as a way of connecting to students in performances. Sue was involved with development of Bamboozle's programme of work with students on the Autistic spectrum and continues to be fascinated in this area of Bamboozle's work. Recently Sue has been more involved in the production side of Bamboozle's touring shows.

## Hannah Boothman – Designer

Hannah works as a theatre designer, maker and costume supervisor. As well as working with Bamboozle, she's also designed shows for other companies like Youth Music Theatre, Oldham Theatre Workshop, and Haringey Shed, and is now working on the costumes for a contemporary dance production about rave culture in Britain, called Wasteland.



### **Steno Vitale – Composer & Musical Director**



Steno is a composer and performer. He is the Musical Director of **Makara and the Mountain Dragon** and also wrote the songs and music. He has worked with Bamboozle for almost 18 years. Steno is a member of the Carnival Band, they play music from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the present day. The Carnival Band use modern and medieval instruments and mix them up together. Steno plays Guitars and the Renaissance Cittern.

### **Laura Guthrie – Family Sessions Director**

Having trained as a Theatre Designer Laura went on to facilitate arts workshops, performing nationally in an integrated dance company and training staff and volunteers in arts facilitation and Disability Equality. Laura is an Artistic Director of Meander Theatre, creating professional level theatre making opportunities for learning disabled adults. She has been with Bamboozle since 2000 creating immersive experiences for families in her role as Senior Associate Artist and Family Development Co-ordinator.





# Makara and the Mountain Dragon – Producing the Show

Producing *Makara and the Mountain Dragon* involves a whole team of Bamboozlers led by the Director and supported by administrators at Bamboozle HQ who make sure that the show gets out on the road and into schools once it is ready.

The research and development team spent a few days at Bamboozle HQ working on various concepts for the show. They then workshopped their ideas with families to explore the central narrative, try out different multi-sensory experiences and look at how these could be incorporated into a performance piece. The designers came up with the setting and props and the composer wrote the songs and music. During the rehearsal period the directors and performers honed the ideas into the final production which included taking elements of the show into local schools to see how the students responded to it. The final version of the show was previewed at a local school and then sent out on the road where it spends a number of weeks visiting schools up and down the country.

Each day the stage manager and performers unload the van and put up the set in a new school. They get ready for the performances with physical and vocal warm-ups. These are important for reducing the risk of injury, for making sure that the performers are comfortable on stage and for protecting the performers' voices as they are on tour for quite a long time. The show is performed four times a day in each school and, at the end of the day, the stage manager and performers take down the set, re-pack the van and drive to the next venue ready for the next day's performances.

Director	Christopher Davies
Puppet Designer & Puppetry Direction	Sue Pyecroft
Composer & Musical Director	Steno Vitale
Dance & Movement Director	Pete Shenton
Designer	Hannah Boothman
Design Assistant	Connie Burley
Family Sessions Director	Laura Guthrie
Stage Manager	Jessica Thanki
Tour co-ordinator	Jade Frost
Teachers' Companion Pack	Nicole Arkless
Makara	Victoria Agache/Louisa Ashton
Aethon	Ben Forgham
Dimitar	Craig Byrne

*Makara and the Mountain Dragon* was devised by the company.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the families who gave their time to come along and explore with us during the research and development phase of *Makara and the Mountain Dragon*.

We would also like to thank the students at Ash Field Academy in Leicester for letting us explore elements of the show with them during the initial rehearsal phase, and Ashmount School in Loughborough, where we performed the show in the final stages of rehearsal before the tour.

Finally, we would like to thank Hawthorn Lighting (<https://www.hawthorn.biz/>) who provided us with lighting and sound equipment along with technical support. They always make a special effort to ensure that we have everything we need to create the best possible experience for our audiences.

# Bamboozle Training Courses

## An Introduction to the Bamboozle Approach

### Practical training courses for staff in using Bamboozle's Approach with students

Bamboozle produces interactive, multi-sensory theatrical experiences exclusively for children and young people with learning disabilities. All of Bamboozle's work, whether performance or workshop based, is underpinned by an approach that we share, as far as possible, with the schools that we visit. The Bamboozle Approach is a series of behavioural and linguistic strategies that are designed to put students at ease and enable them to engage comfortably and meaningfully with the world around them. Fundamental to our way of working is the use of creative ways to engage students. These techniques can be used in any setting whether it's in the classroom, in the drama studio or out in the world.

We offer training courses for staff to explore the strategies in more detail. These courses are available in a variety of different formats from staff INSET days to workshops with students where staff observe the techniques in practice and then analyse them with Bamboozle facilitators afterwards.

#### Each course incorporates:

- An explanation of the fundamental principles of Bamboozle's Approach and the thinking behind it
- Practical demonstrations of the strategies at work
- Techniques that you can begin using in the classroom straight away
- Practical demonstrations and group exploration of creative ways to engage students

#### Course formats include:

- Whole or part school introductory INSET training days **from £795**
- Three-day workshops which include an introduction/planning day with staff and then two days of contact time with students in the mornings and staff in the afternoons **from £2,500**
- Week-long residencies where Bamboozle works with a group of students and their teachers and support staff for the whole week on an immersive drama-based experience **from £6,950**
- Bespoke long-term culture change projects where Bamboozle works with a school at regular intervals throughout the year to embed The Bamboozle Approach along with a creative process of teaching and learning **from £10,000**

All of Bamboozle's courses are tailored specifically to the needs of the school and its students. We have delivered this training to meet a variety of needs including: **working with challenging behaviour, engaging students described as being at the hard-to-reach end of the autistic spectrum, seeking greater engagement with students described as having PMLD, adopting a creative approach to teaching and learning,** and many more.

## Multi-Sensory Environments

### Practical Courses for Staff on Creating and Using Multi-Sensory Environments

Staff in special schools know the power and value of Multi-Sensory Environments; the trouble is that there's not enough time to set one up and never enough budget to acquire the necessary materials. Bamboozle's courses explore how environments can be created quickly, easily and cheaply and how they might serve to deepen the impact of the story or theme you are exploring to make it more meaningful to the students you are working with.

#### The courses include:

- Looking at different materials, building strategies and where and how environments can be set up in your school
- Practical sessions where you can create your own multi-sensory environment with ways to stimulate all the sensory channels – auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory
- How to get the most out of your multi-sensory environment and create stimulating and meaningful learning opportunities for your students

#### Course formats include:

- Whole or part school introductory INSET training day **From £795**
- Design consultation and gathering of materials on a theme defined by the school followed by INSET training day **From £2,200**

#### Also available:

##### ***Creating Multi-sensory Environments*** by Christopher Davies

This highly practical guide to creating and using multi-sensory environments is packed full of ideas for low-cost, easy to assemble multi-sensory environments, accompanied with suggestions for use with clear learning outcomes linked to the P Levels for children with special educational needs.

The book is available from our website ([www.bamboozletheatre.co.uk](http://www.bamboozletheatre.co.uk)) **priced at £18.99**

##### **Multi-sensory Environments created for you by a Bamboozle designer**

Following a period of consultation, a Bamboozle designer comes into your school each half term, or term - as required, and creates a new multi-sensory environment tailored to your needs.

**Price variable according to requirements.**

## Engagement for Learning

### Creative ways to engage students working outside a subject-specific curriculum

One of the fundamental aspects of Bamboozle's work - whether in a performance, in a workshop, or in the classroom - is the focus we place on engaging the children we work with. Once we have hooked a child's interest and nurtured their engagement we have the potential to open up a world of possibilities. All of Bamboozle's education projects use creative engagement as the foundation for learning. We facilitate creative learning sessions, explore what the children choose to engage with and then build their learning around that.

In 2020 the Government will roll out a new statutory assessment programme for pupils with the most complex needs – this will replace P scales 1-4 and will be based on the “7 aspects of engagement” (awareness, curiosity, investigation, discovery, anticipation, persistence and initiation).

Bamboozle will be running courses in the summer term 2020 and a summer school during the holidays looking specifically at creative ways to engage pupils who are described as having complex needs and for those who are on the autistic spectrum and described as being hard-to-reach.

The courses will cover:

- Creative approaches to facilitating immersive and engaging learning sessions
- How to hook interest and develop engagement
- Using characters, multi-sensory environments and narrative scenarios to sustain engagement
- Behavioural and linguistic strategies that promote child-initiated learning
- Developing learning scenarios to enable sustained engagement and deepen experiential learning
- Techniques for group focus
- Enhancing observation skills
- Developing differentiated learning pathways

The courses have not yet been advertised but to register your early interest, please email [nicole@bamboozletheatre.co.uk](mailto:nicole@bamboozletheatre.co.uk).

## Storytelling and Building Original Narrative

### A Practical Course for Staff to explore a creative, multi-sensory approach to storytelling and building original narrative

Many of the storybook packages available to schools offer a few props or flash cards to accompany a particular story but what they don't do is give advice on how to enhance the storytelling or how to explore the story in more depth. The more students engage with a story the more they will get out of it. Bamboozle has a wealth of experience in working creatively with existing stories and devising and developing original narrative. This course will give you an insight into Bamboozle's way of working and provide you with practical tools for continuing your work with students.

#### These courses include:

##### Using existing stories

- Choosing a story or elements of a story to explore
- Bringing a story to life and hooking the students' interest
- Exploring creative ways of developing the story and devising practical activities to accompany it

##### Creating an original narrative

- Starting points for a narrative
- Using a person in role as a character in the narrative
- Ways to develop the narrative and keep the students engaged and invested in it
- Practical activities inspired by the narrative

#### Course formats include:

- Whole or part school introductory INSET training days **from £795**
- Three-day workshops which include an introduction/planning day with staff and then two days of contact time with students followed by discussion sessions with staff **from £2,500**
- Week-long residencies where Bamboozle works with a group of students and their teachers and support staff for the whole week on an immersive drama-based experience **from £6,950**

#### Also available:

##### ***The Bamboozle Book of Dramatic Starts*** by Christopher Davies

This simple, practical book guides teachers through creative ways of beginning a narrative and encouraging students to engage with it. The book covers a number of different activities and gives:

- A clear explanation of how to put each activity into practice with students

- An explanation of how each element of the activity works and the thinking behind it
- Examples of how Bamboozle has used each activity in practice

The book is available from our website ([www.bamboozletheatre.co.uk](http://www.bamboozletheatre.co.uk)) **priced at £14.95**

# Contacts

More resources for *Makara and the Mountain Dragon* are available for download from Bamboozle's website:

<https://www.bamboozletheatre.co.uk/resources-for-dragons/>

If you would like any more information about the show or on any of the courses mentioned in this booklet please do not hesitate to contact us.

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