

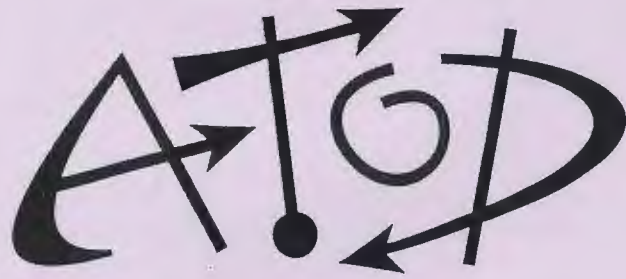
Australian Theatre of the Deaf

presents

JUKEBOX



TEACHER'S NOTES
1996



Australian Theatre of the Deaf



SYNOPSIS

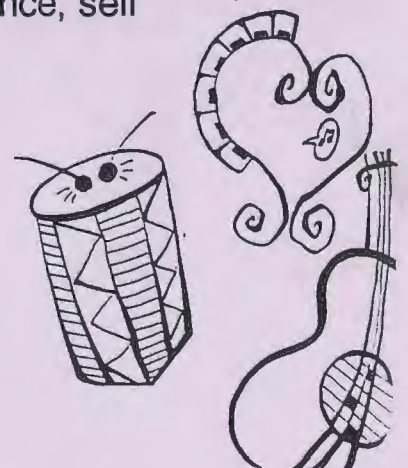
JUKEBOX

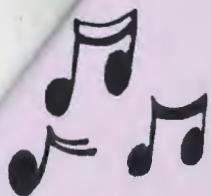
Jukebox continues the success Australian Theatre of the Deaf enjoys in schools and is aimed at both children and early teenagers. Using the dynamic form of sign singing as its foundation, **Jukebox** is relevant, entertaining and energetic theatre for young people.

Jukebox presents Deafness with a difference. Through the device of the jukebox the audience selects well known songs from a list which are performed by the Company using sign singing - the interpretation of songs into Australian Sign Language (AUSLAN). Between the songs the actors present their own stories about Deafness and life in the Deaf community. These stories are a personal and candid insight into their world and are performed using Theatre of the Deaf's visual style. The stories and skits give an overview of the community, the language, culture and people. **Jukebox** is a dynamic performance and one that will change young peoples views on Deafness forever.

Jukebox highlights audience participation and interaction with the actors and students learn a song in sign language. Sign singing is a form unique to Theatre of the Deaf and is an innovative way to cut across audience misconceptions about Deafness.

Jukebox brings together music, comedy, visual theatre and story telling in a unique way making it accessible to audiences of all ages. This is a unique performance, introducing discussion about difference, self esteem, communication and acceptance.





SIGN SINGING



Sign singing is an art form that has been used by the Australian Theatre of the Deaf (ATOD) for the past few years. **It is the art of sign language with music**, and is a specialised skill requiring a lot of practice, perseverance and patience.

To sign a song, a lot of preparation is involved. Firstly, a copy of the lyrics and song itself must be on hand in order to learn to sign the song. It should then be listened to a few times to become familiar with its rhythm, tempo and timing of the lyrics. Translation of the lyrics into Australian Sign Language (Auslan) is the next step. This is perhaps the most complicated and challenging part of the whole process. The signing of the lyrics is a bit different than signing in pure Auslan for conversations. Sign singing brings out the "artistic side" of Auslan and the end result is a poetic and musical form of signing. Translation can be difficult particularly matching the signing of the lyrics to the timing of the voice and music. Sometimes it takes a while to find the right sign and movement to match the timing. It is important to note that the lyrics are translated into sign language for concept and meaning, not word for word. Once all the signs are translated and confirmed, the next step is to practice, practice, practice! It is wise to demonstrate the signs to an experienced signer to make sure that the whole process makes sense to the audience, then listen to their feedback and adjust the signing if necessary.

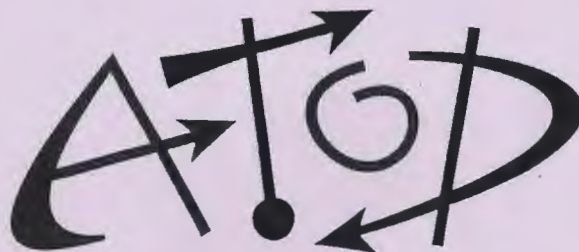
During the 1970's and 80's, sign singing was used in the USA, both socially and professionally. It was common practice in Deaf universities where students and groups would sign to songs at parties and functions. Some professional Deaf theatre companies used sign singing in their shows.

Upon my arrival in Australia in 1987 from the USA, I discovered that sign singing was almost unheard of. Through my involvement with Australian Theatre of the Deaf, sign singing has now become more recognised as an exciting new art form. This form is used in ATOD's shows and is also used outside the Company such as at launches, conferences, weddings and dance parties.

Sign singing makes songs seem three dimensional. The audience see words and concepts become a picture or a shape in the air. As choreographer, William Forsythe, mentioned, **"Sign singing brings out the soul of the song."**

Mike Canfield
Artistic Director





Australian Theatre of the Deaf

THE PRODUCTION

CAST: Caroline Conlon, Robert Farmer, Nina Mishriky
and Medina Sumovic

DIRECTOR: Mike Canfield

WRITER: Gillian Minervini

DESIGNER: Philippa Playford

CHOREOGRAPHER: William Forsyth

BEHIND THE SCENES

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: - Mike Canfield
Decides the artistic programme for the Company
and chooses the artistic personnel for each project.

ADMINISTRATOR: - Gillian Minervini
Responsible for the financial viability of the
Company. Plans and co-ordinates the Company's
activities with the Artistic Director.

**INTERPRETER/
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT** - Pam Spicer
Interprets for the Company from Auslan
(Australian Sign Language) to English and vice
versa. She also works in the office on Company
activities.

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEAF WORLD

DEAFNESS:

- * Give each child some cotton wool or earplugs to put in their ears, in order to muffle sounds. Keeping the classroom as quiet as possible, let them try to communicate without using their voices, either through lip reading or through body language. Talk about the experience afterwards.
- * With the class:
 - a) Discuss their ideas of 'deafness'. What does it mean to be deaf? How do deaf people communicate? How do people become deaf?
 - b) Discuss how they think a theatre production by deaf people may be different from any other theatre production.
 - c) Discuss how deaf people answer the phone, wake up in the morning, answer the door and watch television.

COMMUNICATION:

- * Video tape a television programme. Play the programme to the class with the volume off. Ask the class to write down or discuss what they think the programme was saying. Then replay the tape with the volume on. See how accurate the students were in their understanding. Or have the class divided into pairs and get them to try lipreading each other. One tries to mouth the words without voice (make sure no whispering is allowed) and the other tries to guess what the partner was saying. Switch partners and do the same.

Discuss lipreading. Is it an innate talent one is born with or a skill that needs to be learnt.
- * Ask each student to demonstrate one example of visual communication/body language used in every day life (i.e. police directing traffic, friends waving hello etc.). Find a way of listing these.
- * Write a list of simple words on the blackboard (i.e. drink, sleep, house, dog, eat etc). Ask the students to try to make up a sign for each word. Discuss why they think the word would be signed that way.
- * Ask the students to walk around the room, as they do so, call out an emotion to them (e.g. angry, sad, frightened). The students must attempt to express that emotion using their faces, bodies and hands. Try this with several different emotions.

POST PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

- * During **JUKEBOX** the cast will teach the audience how to sign the lyrics of the chorus of "ALL I WANNA DO" by Sheryl Crow. This was a very popular song throughout 1995. Have the children sign sing the chorus of this song after the performance so they remember some sign singing skills.

"ALL I WANNA DO" - Chorus

All I wanna do is have some fun
I got a feeling I'm not the only one
All I wanna do is have some fun
I got a feeling I'm not the only one
All I wanna do is have some fun
Until the sun comes up over Santa Monica Boulevard"

(Santa Monica Boulevard is a main road in Los Angeles)

- * Choose a simple song and work with the children to find gestures to the words in the song. You can make up gestures that seem to represent the words. There can be one simple gesture for a few words or a few gestures for one word. This is good for working on coordination of the hands with words and developing creativity.
- * Discuss vibrations. Are the students able to feel vibrations from various noises, such as planes, trucks, people walking, washing machine etc...? Can the students separate hearing a noise from feeling the vibrations made by that noise? Deaf people are very sensitive in picking up vibrations and this might give the children more understanding on how Deaf people can "sing" - by knowing the timing and rhythm of the songs then feeling the vibrations of the music. The vibrations are primarily from the drums and bass instruments.
- * Review pre-performance activity regarding deaf people answering phones, waking up, answering doors and watching television.



Appendix 1

DEAFNESS

More than ONE AND A HALF MILLION Australians have some sort of hearing loss. People with mild losses have difficulty hearing speech in noisy conditions. Moderate and severe losses result in people only being able to hear when the speaker is close by. All these sorts of losses can be greatly helped by hearing aids. A small number of people have profound hearing loss. Even with hearing aids these people hear only limited parts of speech. They may therefore need to communicate through lipreading and/or signing.

There are two types of hearing loss :

CONDUCTIVE HEARING LOSS: This is due to damage to the eardrum or the small bones of the middle ear. This sort of hearing loss is common in young children following ear infections and can also result from illness or accident. Conductive hearing losses can often be treated by doctors.

SENSORINEURAL HEARING LOSS (or Nerve Deafness): This type of hearing loss is due to damage to some or all of the 'hair cells' - the numerous nerve endings on each ear's single nerve of hearing. Damage to the nerve of hearing cannot be treated. Sensorineural hearing loss can be caused by a number of factors: old age, loud noise (several rock musicians have hearing losses caused by noise) or the effects of illnesses such as Rubella and Meningitis. Sensorineural hearing loss can also be inherited, though the factors are not yet determined.

In Australia, more than two children in 1,000 are born with hearing impairment. This means that most schools have no more than one or two children who require hearing aids. Because hearing deteriorates, however, one in four (25%) of people over 65 years of age need hearing aids.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Paul Cameron, Assistant Manager, Australian Hearing Services, Victoria.

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For further information on :

Resources: **DEAFNESS RESOURCES AUSTRALIA,**
33 Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW, 2150
Telephone: (02) 893 8139, Fax: (02) 893 8172

Sign Language: **ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE FOR DEAF & HEARING
IMPAIRED PERSONS,**
PO Box 500, Strathfield, NSW, 2135
Telephone: (02) 764 4600, Fax: (02) 746 8426

What is Auslan (Australian sign language)?

'Auslan' is the name given to the sign language of the Australian deaf community. The language is used by deaf children and adults to communicate with each other at school or at work, and with their families and friends. It is used as the medium of instruction in some schools and classrooms with deaf students. With the aid of sign language interpreters, Auslan is used to convey course content in tertiary education (TAFE and universities) and to facilitate the participation of deaf students in tutorials and classes; it is also used to enable deaf people to access and participate equally in a wide range of work related activities (eg, meetings, conferences, training sessions, etc.) and social situations and services (eg, political, legal, medical, and religious).

There is no one world sign language used by all deaf people. Different countries and different deaf communities have different sign languages. The local sign language has grown and developed over the past two hundred years from three main varieties of sign language brought to Australia from the British isles by teachers, members of religious communities and deaf people. Like users of British Sign Language (BSL), most Auslan signers use a two-handed manual alphabet for fingerspelling, though some older signers with a Catholic or Irish Catholic background use a one-handed manual alphabet. Two varieties of BSL—one a northern (Edinburgh-based) variety and one a southern (London-based) variety—have more or less merged in Australia, but they still account for some regional differences, especially those between Sydney-based and Melbourne-based signers.

Besides fingerspelling, which deaf people use to spell out English words and names using different handshapes or different hand gestures to represent each of the 26 letters of the English alphabet, Auslan consists of a rich system of gestures and signs to represent concepts, ideas and things, just as English speakers use spoken and written words to represent concepts, ideas and things.

The signs of Auslan are put together in sentences in ways that are often quite different from English sentences. This simply means that there is not a simple one-to-one match of Auslan signs to English words. There is nothing unusual about this—the same thing applies to the words of one spoken language and the words of another spoken language. They never match exactly and they are arranged in sentences in different ways (ie, languages have different grammars).

One interesting thing about the grammar of Auslan is that it makes use of facial expression and lots of different sign modifications involving movement and space to convey different types of meaning. With facial expression, for example, when you ask a question you usually have a quizzical look on your face (ie, you open your eyes wide and lift up your eyebrows) as well as use a question sign (such as 'who', 'where', 'when', etc.) if needed. With movement, for example, you can repeat the movement in a sign to show that something happens again and again, or change the direction in a sign to show who does an action and who or what is affected by it.

Also many Auslan signs are iconic. That is, they 'look like' or are obviously connected to the concept, idea, or thing they represent. (Just like some English words 'sound like' what they mean—like 'bang', 'cock-a-doodle-do', or 'whoosh'). However, in the vast majority of signs the connection is not obvious at all and people need to be told the connection in order to learn the sign correctly. Indeed, in many signs there is no connection between form and meaning—just as there is no necessary connection with the English word 'rock', and a rock.

In summary, Auslan is a visual-gestural language unlike English which is primarily an auditory-oral language. It is the language of the Australian deaf community and is different from other deaf sign languages around the world (of which there are many). It is different from English.

THE FINGERSPELT ALPHABET:

For 'H' and 'J' the right hand only moves in the direction of the arrow.
Left handers reverse all formations.

