

Contents

Acknowledgements, x

Foreword by Sir Cameron Mackintosh, xii

Introduction, xiv

Part 1 Theatre for Children: A Unique Art Form, 1

What an audience! Why do children need their own theatre?
The quest for quality. Pioneers and practitioners. Raising our standards.

Part 2 The Nature of the Beasts: What Children *En Masse* Respond to, 13

The Dynamics of a Children's Audience, 15

How Children Differ. A Children's Audience – Common Characteristics.

Stories and Themes that Children Love: Ideas that Work on the Stage, 30

Fantasy within Reality. Myths and Legends. Old Wine in New Bottles. Tales of the Anthropomorphic. The Quest. Toys and Inanimate Objects. Real Life. Contemporary Themes. Fairy tales.

Suddenlies and Other Ingredients of Good Theatre for Children, 38

Suddenlies. Humour. Characters. Life or Death Situations. Language. Silence. Audience Participation. Scale. Puppetry. Magic within the Plot. Colourful Look on Stage. Lighting. Sound. Music. Mime and Movement. Climaxes and Cliff-hangers. Justice and Fairness. Taboos.

Part 3 Writing Original Plays, 63

The Craft of Writing an Original Play, 65

Writing a Synopsis. Nine Steps towards a Synopsis. Steps towards a Synopsis for *The Gingerbread Man*. Synopsis for *The Gingerbread Man*. Subsequent Changes to the Synopsis. Steps towards a Synopsis for *The See-Saw Tree*. Synopsis for *The See-Saw Tree*. Subsequent Changes to the Synopsis. The Writing of the Play.

Part 4 Adaptation, 123

From Page to Stage: Adapting a Children's Book, 125

Writing a Synopsis. Four Steps towards a Synopsis. Steps towards a Synopsis for *The BFG*. Synopsis for *The BFG*. Subsequent Changes to the Synopsis.

Part 5 Directing and the Production Team, 153

The Challenge, 155

Section 1: Pre-Production, 155

Sets and Costumes – Designer. Choreographer/
Movement Person. Composer/Musical Supervisor.

Sound Designer. Lighting Designer.

Production Manager/Stage Management.

Casting. Director's Homework

Section 2: Rehearsals, 172

Blocking and Focus. Pace. Respect for the Play
and the Audience.

The Script: Interpretation and Clarity.

Sincerity. Characterization.

Directing Suddenlies. Directing Climaxes. Positive Negative.

Humour. Audience Participation.

The Technical Rehearsal. The Dress Rehearsal.

Section 3: The Opening Performance and Beyond, 200
Different Types of Audience.
After the Opening Performance.
Interpreting Audience Reaction.

Part 6 Acting in Children's Theatre, 219

Twice as Difficult, Twice as Rewarding, 221
Skills. Attitude. Cynicism. Actors' Pitfalls. Characterization.
Audience Participation. The First Performance.

Part 7 The Business Side, 237

The Market, 239
Sources of Information. Professional Children's Theatre
Companies. Amateur Theatre Companies.
Acquiring the Rights to Adapt a Book in Copyright.
Getting the Play Published.

Afterword, 249