

The Master Puppeteer

Peter Roberts describes what it is like to work in the world of puppet theatre and explains what is so special about this art form.

Watching wooden dolls come to life may not be one of the most popular forms of entertainment today, but with over twenty years' experience, talented puppeteer Peter Roberts has earned himself the title 'master puppeteer' due to his extraordinary ability to transform puppets into believable, almost living characters. "People are quite often surprised to hear what I do for a living and have little appreciation of puppetry as a form of entertainment. But while the exact origins of puppet theatre are unknown, it has been popular in many cultures and may have been the very first kind of theatre," he explains.

As Roberts writes his own scripts and musical scores, his shows are highly original. "A puppet show can involve anything from clowning to storytelling," he explains. Equally diverse is the audience he performs for. "Some come to be entranced with the puppets themselves, while others enjoy the catchy tunes and witty dialogue." Roberts believes that this form of entertainment crosses international boundaries and can be appreciated by people of all ages and cultures.

Roberts' fascination for puppets started when he received some beautiful glove puppets one Christmas. He started putting on shows with these for family and friends and then moved on to handmade Chinese string puppets. Learning mostly from books and personal experience, he continued with his 'hobby' while studying for a degree in architecture. "By the time I left university," he explains, "I was already spending most of my free time carving puppets and putting on shows in the community, so I hardly noticed the transition from student to full-time professional puppeteer. I realised I had long since abandoned all thoughts of pursuing any other career!"

The puppets are designed specifically for each show, which is extremely time-consuming. Each one is carved out of English limewood and then painted. According to Roberts: "Sometimes what you

anticipate and what you actually create in the end are two very different things, but I've made some of my best puppets 'accidentally', as it were." Some of his 'characters' then appear in exhibitions; others are used for puppeteering workshops. "They have to be strong enough to withstand a great deal," Roberts says, "as they are often thrown into boxes or dropped from a great height."

Anyone interested in puppetry can be trained to assist, and not just with the actual puppet making. Puppet theatre companies in the U.K. are usually small, but each one still needs writers, performers, musicians and even sound and lighting engineers. In China they can be huge, with literally hundreds involved, including a full orchestra!

An important sideline for Roberts is designing figures for the film industry, as there is relatively little money to be made in puppet making for theatre. This is a complicated and expensive business – it can take a whole day to perfect something, like a smile on a puppet's face, for example. Once captured on computer, however, it is there forever. Still, for Roberts it's traditional puppet shows that are his passion. "As the story is mainly communicated visually, it draws people in. The puppets come alive and immediately the audience are in a magical fantasyland. It's just so different from any other kind of theatre."

When most people hear the word 'puppetry', they more than likely think of *The Muppet Show* or the *Punch and Judy* show at the English seaside, or a way of keeping children entertained at birthday parties. Certainly the subject matter will be expected to be light-hearted rather than serious. However, Roberts is keen to point out that puppet theatre can often be used as an effective educational tool. "Through the mouths of puppets come serious messages sometimes," he says.

line 58

line 64

- 1 What do we learn about puppet theatre in the first paragraph?**
- A Its value as an art form is not fully recognised.
 - B It has always been highly valued as a form of entertainment.
 - C It is gaining popularity.
 - D It is a highly skilled art form.
- 2 In the second paragraph, we learn that Roberts believes that his shows**
- A are most suitable for a particular kind of audience.
 - B offer something for everyone.
 - C usually appeal to people with a good sense of humour.
 - D are mainly appreciated for their originality.
- 3 Roberts started working as a professional puppeteer**
- A after doing a puppetry course.
 - B after leaving university.
 - C while he was still a student.
 - D when he realised he didn't want to be an architect.
- 4 The puppets that Roberts designs**
- A are made using a variety of techniques.
 - B aren't made to last.
 - C sometimes turn out better than expected.
 - D usually appear in several different shows.
- 5 The writer informs those who might be interested in puppetry that**
- A they don't need any special skills to get involved.
 - B they would need to be able to work well in a team.
 - C there are more ways to get involved than you might think.
 - D theatres in the U.K. need more people to get involved.
- 6 What does 'this' refer to in line 58?**
- A capturing figures on computer
 - B Roberts' work for the film industry
 - C perfecting a detail of a puppet
 - D puppet making for theatre shows
- 7 Roberts says 'it draws people in' (line 64) to explain how puppet shows**
- A are enjoyed by everyone.
 - B bring characters to life.
 - C make an audience feel personally involved.
 - D attract large audiences.
- 8 What would Roberts like people to understand about puppet theatre?**
- A It can be educational as well as entertaining.
 - B It's not just a thing of the past.
 - C It should be kept light-hearted.
 - D Its main purpose should be to educate.

Something's Cooking

Chris Armstrong is a successful London chef who has recently opened his second restaurant. He tells us all about his journey to the top.

My childhood wasn't easy. Both of my parents were in the army and consequently we never lived anywhere for more than a year or two. It was very difficult for me to settle into the different schools I went to, so I didn't try as hard as I should have and I often wasn't very well-behaved. When I was sixteen, I left school and signed up for a career in the army.

I enjoyed the army training and really thought that I had made the right career choice. But then one day my whole world came crashing down when I fell awkwardly and badly injured my ankle.

9 I spent many months feeling sorry for myself until I realised that, during this time, I had become quite the amateur chef!

You see, during my recovery I'd started leafing through some of my mum's cookbooks in the kitchen. I tried out a few of the simpler recipes, just to occupy my time really, but then I started becoming more adventurous. I began substituting and adding my own ingredients and even making up entire new recipes. Then a friend jokingly suggested that I should train to be a chef.

10 Before I had time to change my mind, I enrolled myself on a course at a local catering college.

I gained a lot of valuable experience in my first few jobs after leaving college and had the opportunity to work alongside some very talented chefs. 11 I was offered the chance to train under the head chef at a very distinguished restaurant in Paris. Needless to say, I didn't agonise over my reply.

The time spent working as a sous-chef was a wonderful learning experience. 12 When you're working under top chefs, you can expect to be on the receiving end of their world famous bad tempers a lot more often than you would like! Once, Mr Duvalier threw a saucepan at me because I let a dish go out to a customer cold. Still, however 'heated' it got in the kitchen, I still thrived on working hard as part of a team.

After four years in Paris, I decided to take the plunge and try opening up my own restaurant.

13 There was one point when the building was found to have major structural problems and I thought I would lose all my money. Fortunately, I was able to get the necessary repairs done without delaying the opening too long. Finally, about a year after I'd first had the idea, 'A Cappella' was open for business!

The restaurant was successful beyond my wildest dreams. There were some difficulties at first, but I was determined to overcome them. 14 Soon, I had made enough profit to start thinking about opening a second 'A Cappella' in Edinburgh.

I was recently approached by a TV company about the possibility of filming a 'fly on the wall' television documentary about the London restaurant.

15 This business certainly isn't easy, but if you are prepared to give it everything you've got, the world really is your oyster.

A I managed to get a loan from a bank and for six months, a design team worked on my idea to turn an old building in East London into a brand new, stylish restaurant.

B Well, I just couldn't get the idea out of my head!

C After a couple more years, I returned to London and became head chef at a newly opened restaurant.

D I haven't decided whether to go ahead with that or not, but the whole thing has just made me realise how far I've come.

E Within three years, the restaurant had started to win awards and appeared in various good food guides.

F I was informed that I would never be fit enough for active duty.

G It certainly had its share of difficult moments, though.

Accident prone

According to a recent study, personality could determine how likely you are to be (0) in an accident. In fact, it could be the most important (1) behind around a quarter of all mishaps.

The (2) have found that there are three key personality traits that may make some people more accident prone than others. Firstly, (3) levels of aggressiveness or selfishness may (4) people more at risk of having accidents as individuals with these characteristics are often highly competitive and therefore more likely to not follow instructions and to (5) rules. It also seems that those who have very open personalities may also have more accidents as these (6) of people can be dreamy and (7) concentration. Finally, people who aren't very dependable or (8) may also be more at risk.

Not everyone, (9) , agrees with the study's (10) A spokesperson for an accident prevention organisation said: "We must (11) responsibility for our actions and educate people to prevent accidents (12) blaming our personalities."

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|-------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 A factor | B point | C item | D detail |
| 2 A investigators | B inventors | C explorers | D researchers |
| 3 A steep | B wide | C high | D top |
| 4 A put | B bring | C carry | D make |
| 5 A refuse | B ignore | C reject | D deny |
| 6 A portions | B kinds | C forms | D varieties |
| 7 A lose | B need | C lack | D miss |
| 8 A responsible | B acceptable | C appropriate | D suitable |
| 9 A therefore | B however | C nevertheless | D moreover |
| 10 A solutions | B discoveries | C findings | D answers |
| 11 A accept | B receive | C draw | D have |
| 12 A other than | B apart from | C more than | D instead of |

Lessons in Happiness

A (0) was held at Cromwell Secondary School last Tuesday in order to discuss the (25) of 'Happiness' lessons in September. Head teacher Russell Groves believes that this idea may help to fight a (26) rise in (27) and anti-social behaviour among the pupils at the school. "21st century (28) has many new pressures and there is a growing (29) to cope with them. We need to find new ways to help our teenagers with this problem," says Groves.

Three teachers from the school travelled to America last term to receive (30) on how to teach the new lessons. Aims include building up self-esteem, challenging negative ways of thinking and learning how to express thoughts clearly. Trials have shown that these things can improve class (31) and exam results.

Pupils will also be taught special (32) exercises to keep them calm when their parents are arguing and stop them from blaming themselves for (33) that they can't control, such as their parents getting divorced. If the lessons are (34), the classes could become part of the regular school timetable.

MEET
INTRODUCE

CONSIDER
DEPRESS
LIVE
ABLE

TRAIN

PERFORM

BREATH

SITUATE
SUCCESS

35 I first met Sarah two years ago.

YEARS

It I first met Sarah.

36 The food was excellent and good value for money, too.

ONLY

Not, it was good value for money, too.

37 Sally went to work despite feeling ill.

THE

Sally went to work she was feeling ill.

38 The police are investigating the cause of the explosion.

LOOKED

The cause of the explosion by the police.

39 The travel agent hasn't called me yet.

FOR

I am still..... from the travel agent.

40 Pete had to work very hard to pass the exam.

DID

Only after a lot of pass the exam.

41 I found it difficult to settle down to work.

TROUBLE

I down to work.

42 Because of the rain, not many people turned up at the picnic.

SMALL

Because of the rain, only turned up at the picnic.

411. I gave my wife a gold ... for Christmas.	LIGHT
412. This bank loan is in five years as far as I know.	REPAY
413. Years ago, lung diseases used to be ... among miners.	PREVAIL
414. The hotel has a large ... car park.	BASE
415. The beauty of your wife seems	AGE
416. It's sheer ... to leave harbour in such bad weather.	IDIOT
417. I can't understand your atypical	PASSIVE
418. He became a target of his mates' ... after that stupid mistake.	DERIDE
419. He took the ... of locking all the firm documents in the safe.	CAUTION
420. My little sister is not very good at	ADD
421. He ... observed the smallest details.	PERTAIN
422. I've heard she has got an ... son.	LEGITIMATE
423. The Christians worship the ... of God.	DIVINE
424. I was amazed at the ... of some of the drivers in such weather.	FOOL
425. The modernization of the ... is a major problem in big cities.	SEWER
426. His criticism has always been ... so far.	CONSTRUCT
427. On hearing the end of the joke she gave a loud ... laugh.	VIVACITY
428. His words are not ... in front of ladies.	REPEAT
429. You'd better remember that ... is better than cure.	PREVENT
430. It is very ... today for this part of October.	SUMMER
431. Did you listen to the weather forecast on the ... ?	WIRE
432. He will have to find a ... for his gardener.	REPLACE
433. I regret to have to tell you that you are a really ... orator.	PATHOS
434. Is the subject of this sentence animate or ... ?	ANIMATE
435. Given the circumstances, the ... of her studies is vital to her.	CONTINUE
436. The boy was surprised at the ... of his pony.	DOCILE
437. He was glad to serve his ... with that local firm.	APPRENTICE
438. I'm on a friendly ... with all my neighbours.	FOOT
439. Monkeys are known to be ... animals.	IMITATE
440. The ... of your papers took me several hours.	CORRECT
441. Time and space are	LIMIT