

The Amazing Story Machine

By Doppelskope

Co-Produced by Sandglass Theater and Doppelskope



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The Amazing Story Machine

“ENDLESSLY INVENTIVE”- NY TIMES



The Grimm family is on the verge of unveiling their amazing new Story Machine, which runs on steam and dreams and promises to revolutionize how stories are told and how people connect. But when their fabulous contraption malfunctions, they have to invent a new way of storytelling on the spot, using puppets and help from the audience. The Grimms explore some of their favorite fairy tales, including The Hare and the Hedgehog, Hansel and Gretel, and The Brave Little Tailor.

The show features many styles of puppetry, including tabletop puppetry, object theatre, and shadow puppetry, as well as live music and theatrical clown.

The run time of the show is 45 minutes. Geared towards ages 4 and up.

This project is a recipient of The Jim Henson Foundation Family Grant and individual donors.

Sandglass Theater is eligible for touring subsidy support through the New England Foundation for the Arts NEST grant!



Program Credits

Created by **Ora Fruchter and Stoph Scheer**

Performed by **Shoshana Bass, Mackenzie Doss & Stoph Scheer**

Musical accompaniment by **Ben Hemmendinger**

Puppets made by **Ora Fruchter**

Set designed by **Jacob Graham**

Original Composition by **Eleonore Weill**

Original Devising Partners: **Caroline Lux** and **Tim Carmello**



The History of *The Amazing Story Machine*



In 2018, Ora Fruchter and Stoph Scheer of Doppelskope received a Family Grant from the Jim Henson Foundation to develop *The Amazing Story Machine*. After a developmental residency at the Jim Henson Carriage House, Doppelskope went on to present the full show at The Tank and Symphony Space in New York City, and at Puppet Showplace in Brookline, MA.

Amidst the first outbreaks of Covid 19, all production activity ceased and the Machine went to rest in Stoph's parents' garage for a few years. Ora and Stoph moved to different areas of the country and Doppelskope transitioned from a production company to a creative collaboration.

Then, in 2022, Sandglass Theater Artistic Director Shoshana Bass reconnected with Stoph at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. They restarted conversations about bringing *The Amazing Story Machine* to Sandglass (a topic they had broached during the Machine's first touring period.) Since Doppelskope was no longer an active producing company, Stoph proposed a co-production between Sandglass and Doppelskope. The remounted co-production premiered at Sandglass's Winter Sunshine Series in 2024 and was recently featured in the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival.

About Sandglass Theater

Sandglass Theater is a renowned theater company specializing in combining puppets with music, actors, and visual imagery. Since 1982, the company's productions have toured internationally in over 30 countries, performing in theaters, festivals and cultural institutions and winning numerous international prizes.

Sandglass is dedicated to the arts of theater and puppetry as a means of exploring contemporary issues, inspiring dialogue, and sparking wonder. We create original ensemble performances and collaborations, present diverse theater artists, produce events that serve our communities, and teach our art.



About Doppelskope

Founded by Ora Fruchter and Stoph Scheer, Doppelskope creates highly visual and interactive comedies that explore topics ranging from existential dread to ecological crises. The name Doppelskope is a misspelled portmanteau of “doppelganger telescope” (imagine a telescope so powerful you can see the back of your own head).

Doppelskope believes in the intelligence of children and the whimsy of adults, that audience interaction empowers people to be active participants in the world, and that the stories we tell about the world can change the world.

Creative Team: The Cousins Grimm

Ora Fruchter [she/her] is a puppeteer, theater-maker, and educator. She has been creating puppet theater for adults and kids for about 20 years, and is the co-Artistic Director of Doppelskope. Her hope is to use theater as a homing device to find others who might need a hand on their back and to create a safe haven as we navigate our often confusing and chaotic world.

Stoph Scheer [she/her] creates original puppet performances with Doppelskope, and original puppet videos with The Creatures of Yes. In addition to her work with Sandglass, her other notable performing credits include The Jim Henson Company, The Muppets, and Banksy. She recently completed her studies at UConn, earning a Master's Degree in Puppet Arts.

Shoshana Bass [she/her] is the Artistic Director of Sandglass Theater based in Putney, Vermont. She tours internationally as an ensemble member and solo performer with numerous productions. She is the director of Sandglass' Puppets in the Green Mountains International Festival.

Mackenzie Doss [she/her] is a Southwest born writer, director, educator, fabricator and puppeteer. She received her MFA from the University of Connecticut Puppet Arts Program in 2022 and is the current Managing Director for Sandglass Theater.

Ben Hemmendinger [he/him] is the mostly-fearless operator of the Amazing Story Machine's LMH-442 Sound Module, which strongly resembles an accordion. In his spare time, he is a musician and accordion technician in Brattleboro, Vermont.



Technical Needs

Number of Performers: 4

Set up / Break Down Time: 60 - 90 minutes

Audience size: up to 250

Audience Configuration: Proscenium style seating

Stage Requirements: At least 15' wide x 11' deep x 10' high



Electrical Requirements: We need three outlets and three extension cords. One for a puppet that has a functional light bulb, another for the projector and third for a light bulb on our story “machine.”

Lighting Requirements: We would like to work with someone at the venue to set some basic lighting looks:

Basic Option: The lighting can be a general wash with the level adjusted at several moments in the show (there are intermittent shadow puppetry sequences where we need dim lights). We also have a few moments where it would be nice to bring house lights up a little and then down again.

Ideal Option: Time and resources permitting, we would do a few more looks. This would include creating focused areas on tabletops (SR and SL) and center (in our proscenium frame on the center of the machine). We would also ask for a flickering effect as the machine is breaking, as if there’s a potential power outage.

Sound Requirements: The two audio cues are meant to sound as if they are coming out of the Machine onstage. This will likely work with your normal speaker placement.

Video Requirements: BENQ Short Throw Projector (we will bring our own) will be set onstage behind a shadow screen. The projector is ideally run from the booth, if it is possible to run a cable from the booth to the stage.

Personnel Needs: A board operator provided by the venue, who will operate a minimal number of light, sound, and video cues.

Workshops

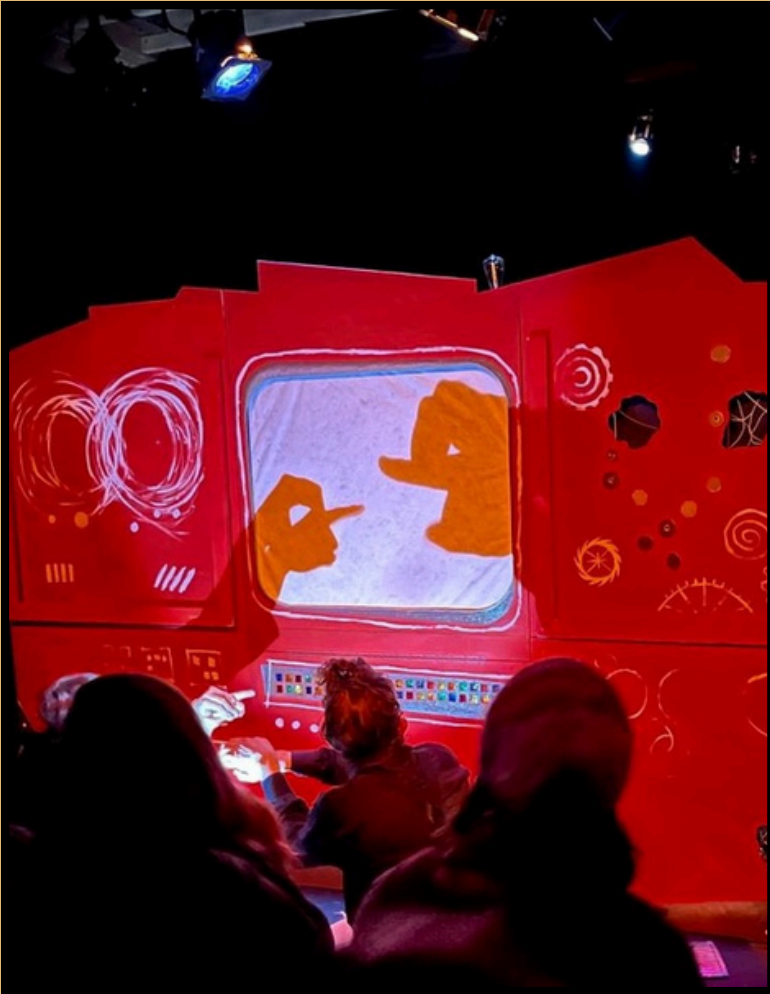
AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Puppetry is an amazing means of encouraging expression in shy children, developing literacy, hand/eye coordination, and delving into the imagination. We offer grade-level workshops in both performance and puppet building.

We can customize a workshop to your audience base (children or adults). Workshop themes can include Improvisation and Storytelling, Clowning, Ensemble Puppetry, and Basic Puppetry Construction.



Marketing



MEDIA LINKS:

*please note that the performance now tours with a new cast not represented in the video links.

[Promo Video](#)

[Full Video of The Amazing Story Machine](#)

[Hi-Res Photos](#)

Additional photos and images available upon request

Consider further engaging your audiences through:

- Work with your local library to generate energy around the collection of Grimm's Fairytales
- Promote this show for a birthday party
- Partner with a parenting or youth advocacy group interested in alternatives to screen time.
- Connect with maker movement organizations who favor tactile play over digital interactions.
- Ask us about touch tours and social stories to help audiences with sensory challenges and sensitivity transition into the magical space of the theater

Testimonials/Press Quotes

"Extraordinary puppets...this endlessly inventive production demonstrates the power of a really amazing story machine: the imagination."

- Laurel Graeber, The New York Times

"It's an hour of non-stop fun for the kids, but there are also extremely relevant socio-political messages in this show...and its creative team does a commendable job in creating an educational, well crafted, and exhilarating piece for all ages."

- Ran Xia, Theatre is Easy

"Everything that great children's theater should be.... entertaining, engaging, and educational... The show is at once smart and silly... guaranteed to keep children (and adults) spellbound..."

-DC Metro Theater Arts

