

**BIG MOUTH PIANO TALES**  
**"THE EMPEROR AND THE NIGHTINGALE"**  
**TECHNICAL STUFF – For Theatre Venues only**  
**皇帝与夜莺**



**Company** "BIG MOUTH PIANO TALES"  
**Contact** [herbie@electricvoicetheatre.co.uk](mailto:herbie@electricvoicetheatre.co.uk)

**Cast** **Mark Troop - Pianist**  
**Frances M Lynch – Storyteller and Singer**  
**Stage Management** - by the cast – often assisted by an intern.

**Running Time:** 65 – 75mins (variable with size of venue, audience) with NO INTERVAL  
**NB – Interval** can be added if venue particularly requests it.

**Age range :** Mixed Family Audiences work best – most suitable for 8 – 11yrs.  
**warning** The audience are on stage for most of time in groups. Their safety is very important. We will inform the audience that they send children at their own risk, but it is essential that if your stage is high or there are wings into which kids could disappear, that you provide staff to act as chaperones to look after their safety.

**GET IN -** 3 hours plus 30/45 min meal break (time varies dependant on venue, and any problems we may need to rehearse through with regard to having children on stage all the time and related time and safety issues ..... – please discuss). It may take extra time to work on lighting if it is not pre-rigged.  
**GET OUT** time is maximum 1 hour.

**The venue must provide:**

- A tuned piano of good quality (Grand if possible) with all keys and pedals working and an adjustable piano stool positioned SR
- A technician to rig and run lighting, and to rig and de-rig Scenery Banners provided by the company.

**The Company will provide:**

- 2 performers
- a small amount of props and silly percussion instruments, most of which are set around the piano area.
- Four Scenery Banners each 2m tall and 1.12m wide which need to be hung on bars as agreed with performers.
- Title banner (hung above the Scenery Banners) – 4.4m wide and 63cm tall.

**Banner Hanging Notes:**

The fixings for the banners are a series of loops on cords on either side of the banners with adaptable Velcro fastenings, which can extend the height by another metre or so.

**4 Scenery Banners**

These can be hung upstage at regular intervals – however, depending on the height involved and the shape of the space it is often better to hang 2 in the centre upstage and then the other two on an angle - the Sea banner mid stage left, and the palace banner mid stage right – if this is possible.

Ideally all 4 are hung the same distance from the floor – which can be anything from ON the floor to several metres high. However, the sea banner (SL) should never be more than 1m from the floor.

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#### LIGHTING

There is no fixed lighting rig – we rely on each venue to do this for us – mainly because in each venue the show is totally different (interactive stuff again!). So we provide the following states and ideas which should allow the venue to rig itself in advance:-

#### Lighting States:

- 1 Full Brights on the stage – Warm, gold, white stuff
- 2 Audience Light
- 3 Piano and Percussion area light (Mid SR) – for reading music and seeing what he is doing – needs to be on constantly from when Mark appears on the stage until he leaves!.
- 4 Bamboo Forest – full stage, shadowy but not too dark.
- 5 Special on banners – clearly to show off the pictures. (could be one or 4 separate spots)
- 6 Special on Nightingale stool at the Sea picture (Mid SL)
- 7 Special on the Nightingale stool in its centre stage position.
- 8 Special on emperors cushion – small area rather than tight spot. (DSC)

**Lighting Cues** (or rather indications – **this is not a cue number list!** Often we don't know what the children will do next so you have to be prepared to follow what is going on.)

- 1 Special on banners.....preset and bring down light as Frances plays flute offstage
- Scene 1 – **The Emperor of China**
- 2 Bring up full stage light slowly as Mark comes on
  - 3 Bring up piano and percussion light as Mark goes over to them.
  - 4 Everything stays the same – but during the journey through the palace, gardens forest and sea the appropriate specials on the banners should come up one after the other.
  - 5 If you have only one light for all the banners – then every time we go into the Bamboo Forest we should have the dark shadowy state in addition to the banners..
  - 6 When the Nightingale stands on the stool and sings the special should come up for her and then when she finishes come out.
  - 7 Scene 2 is announced but not done – Frances refuses to play and they talk to the audience – **EVERY TIME the audience is addressed please bring up house lights to about 2/3rds**
  - 8 Some kids come on stage
  - 9 Scene 2 – **The Ambassadors** - Introduce Scene 2 & Frances plays flute – bring house lights down a little.
  - 10 AS for Scene 1, but in reverse order (possibly...)
  - 11 **talks to audience again.** We ask the audience if they want to be servants – house lights need to go up a bit and stay up for this scene

#### Scene 3 – **The Nightingale**

- 12 **at end of scene talks to audience again.**

#### Scene 4 – **The Emperors Tears**

- 13 Stays the same until the Nightingale Factor Competition – spotlight for the main singers on the new stool position. Keep it on until –
- 14 Warriors tie the Nightingale up in ribbons – as they are nearly finished this bring all other lights down and focus on Nightingale only (rest not off but low)
- 15 "she tried to sing but just couldn't" - Special off and all on stage lights back up. – Frances shakes herself free of the ribbons and **talks to audience again.**

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**Scene 5 – The Robot Bird**

16 – bring up house lights again and leave up for scene – lots of interaction here.

**Scene 6 – Death**

- 17 The emperor lies down on his cushion – special on him as he does this – keep this special on through the scene
- 18 After Death and the Time Sisters are chosen from the audience and are on stage – bring down all other lights leaving the special on the emperor with Death approaching him
- 19 “Wait a minute Death you can’t do that.....” snap on all lights including audience.(we do good deeds and bad deeds)
- 20 “The Emperor is going down”.....back to Emperors special with all other lights at low level
- 21 Another interruption for the emperor to sing solo – can be any daft lighting you want for him!
- 22 The Nightingale sings again - add special on stool at Sea Picture – take out when she leaves the stool
- 23 Death s Home song – will need light for Audience to see Frances moving around the audience...
- 24 Once Death leaves focus lighting back on Emperor
- 25 “Emperor opens the doors to his chamber – to find the servants sitting crying...” Bring up all stage and audience lights gradually until all on stage are in place and ready to greet the Emperor and the Nightingale
- 26 Once all kids have left the stage take out audience light leaving the stage area bright.