

Readers Theatre

What is Readers Theatre?

“In Readers Theatre, the director’s goal is to present a literary script with oral interpreters using their voices and bodies to suggest the intellectual, emotional, and sensory experiences inherent in the literature.”

Alfred North Whitehead in “The Aims of Education and Other Essays”

Volunteers Please!

- **Cat**
- **Duck**
- **Dog**
- **Little Red Robin**

Why try Readers' Theatre? / Benefits we saw

- Promote reading / Bring the written word alive
- Promote your library and your library's collection, or a special part of the collection – local history? What's special about your collection that you'd like to promote?
- Performances can range from simply using voice or can be aided by the use of sound effects, simple props, movement of readers,
- Very adaptable for programming
- Engage your community
- Address topics of interest in your community
- It's fun!
- It's very doable - if we can do it, you can do it

Who is my audience?

- **No limit to who your audiences are**
- **Wide age spectrum - programs for children up to adults**
- **Can appeal to a variety of interest groups – think of some of the groups in your library or in your community with special interests (genealogists, history buffs, musicians, farmers, ...)**

What Did We Need To Run It?

- **A producer – prepares scripts, assigns parts, runs the table read.**
- **Practice space**
- **Performance space – very flexible**
- **Don't need a lot of equipment or supplies.**
- **May or may not need a sound system.**
- **Scripts / stories. We have used children's stories, soldier's letters, famous authors, seasonal themes**

When – how much time does it take?

- **Scripts are distributed in advance, so readers can familiarize themselves with the material**
- **“Table read” – a few hours & then keep practising until performance day**
- **Depends on show and audience – Adult Performance – 45 minutes / break / 45 minutes – children’s show 45 minutes total.**

How did we run it?

- **Recruited readers through social media and through posters.**
- **Producer – prepares the scripts, assigns the readers parts, runs the table read. Because he creates podcasts, there is some equipment setup.**
- **I took care of promotion & press.**
- **As we developed a core group of readers, more ideas for programs emerged.**
- **Through our partnerships in the community, we have been able to perform at a church, at the Legion, at the Seniors' Centre, and at the Library.**

Challenges

- **Copyright – we have been using public domain material / remembrance day letters with the permission of families.**
- **Sometimes too many readers, sometimes not enough**
- **Coordinating dates with available readers**

Examples and Highlights for MVPL

- **Remember Me – a Remembrance Day Program**
- **Beatrix Potter Stories**
- **The Tartan Show – A Robert Burns Day Program**

Remember Me



Family members view letters & photos



Second performance at the Library



Beatrix Potter Show



Beatrix Potter – Behind the scenes



The Tartan Show



We even had a piper!



Photo Credits

**Thank you Danielle Paul
and
the Madawaska Valley Current!**

Summary

- **Affordable**
- **Engages your community**
- **Celebrates written word**
- **Creates partnerships in the community**
- **Creates an awareness of your community's history and cultures, and those who have contributed to the community.**

Opeongo Readers' Theatre

- Performances from Madawaska Valley, Killaloe, and Hastings Highlands Public Libraries have been recorded and can be [listened](#) to by podcast.
- Download from the Apple App Store or Google Play



Readers Theatre Resources

- **Readers Theatre Handbook: A dramatic approach to literature**
Leslie Irene Coger / Melvin R. White
- **Readers On Stage**
Aaron Shepard
- **Folktales On Stage**
Aaron Shepard
- **12 Fabulously Funny Fairy Tale Plays**
Justin McCory Martin