



ROYAL  
COLLEGE  
OF MUSIC  
*London*

# RCM SPARKS

## Wayang - Shadow Puppets



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## What is Wayang?

Wayang is a classical Javanese shadow puppet performance that can be traced back to before the 10th Century. Wayang is renowned for its elaborate and orchestrated performance and this ancient form of storytelling originated from the Indonesian island of Java.

The two most common types of puppets that feature in Wayang are three - dimensional wooden puppets called Wayang Klitik and flat leather shadow puppets called Wayang Kulit which are projected in front of a screen lit from behind.

Wayang is accompanied by gamelan musicians who provide music for the show and create the appropriate atmosphere for each scene.



## Discover

Watch this helpful video to see a [Wayang Puppet Theatre](#) performance!

Task: What facts can you find out about Indonesia? How many islands are there? How many languages are spoken there?



## Listen

Listen to these gamelan pieces and think about how your puppet show is going to work alongside the music.

[Baris by Gong Kebyar of Peliatan](#)

[Rangsang by Gamelan Wayang Sasak](#)



What atmosphere does the music create?

Is there a clear beginning and end?

Are there any changes in tempo or dynamics that may affect your story?



## Get Creative

Use the template and instructions provided to create your own Wayang shadow puppet. To create your shadow puppets you will need:

- A template
- Card
- Hole punch
- Paper Fasteners/Split Pins
- Lolly Sticks/Coffee Stirrers

You may wish to decorate your puppet using:

- Felt tip pens
- Paints
- String

**Remember: The most common colours featured in Wayang are Black, Gold, Red and White. Black and White are used to show the characters body. Gold and Red are used to represent jewellery and costume.**

To create your shadow theatre you will need:

- A white cloth or large sheet of paper or a plain wall
- A torch or a lamp

Listen back to the gamelan pieces included in this resource or the music you created as a class and think about a story that could accompany these pieces.

Where is your story set?

What type of characters are involved?

How many characters are there?

How does the music support your story?

How does your story begin? How does it end?



## Perform

Once you have created your puppets and developed your story, perform your show alongside the gamelan pieces you have listened to or the piece you have created. Film the results to show to friends, family or the rest of your class.



