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[Maggie Cino](#) · April 29, 2011

When Carlo Collodi penned *The Adventures of Pinocchio* in the nineteenth century, children's literature didn't exist. And unlike modern Joseph Campbell-fueled tales, Collodi's story is not a sympathetic portrait of a unique child destined for heroism. It is a cautionary tale of lazy pleasure-seeking good-for-nothings who avoid the hard work of life.

When the house opens for *The Assassins Chase Pinocchio*, a wide-eyed pixie in a plaid jumper plays on stage with toys and video cameras. In the corner, a tired looking man in a button-down shirt and tousled mop tries to concentrate on a pile of papers. But as the action begins, our expectations are quickly subverted. Pinocchio and Geppetto are not who they seem. Liz Vacco and Max Dana portray our riveting protagonists while a two-woman chorus, Lisa Clair and Siobhan Towey, guide us through the story. And puppetry in many forms brings a whole menagerie of sharks and crickets and cats and dogs to life. (Beware, fans of Jiminy—you're in for a shock!)

Immediate Medium employs theatrical tricks ancient and modern, from video cameras to masks. The sterile set, as versatile as a doll house, transforms with clever production design by Maki Takenouchi, Jason Grandy, and Lydia Fine. Rob Ramirez's sound and video transport us from a cottage in the forest to the belly of a whale and all points in between.

Pinocchio may be a marionette made of wood, but he struggles with his very human nature to seek pleasure and avoid toil. In doing so, he causes great grief to his parents. But in the end, love wins out over immediate gratification, and Pinocchio becomes a real boy. Back in the old days, it was the suffering parents, and not the wide-eyed children, who had the final word.



*Pictured: A scene from The Assassins Chase Pinocchio (photo © Maki Takehouchi)*