



Co-created by Lynn Ahrens, Stephen Flaherty and Eric Idle

Directed by Dwayne Hartford
Choreography by Michael Barnard
Musical Direction by Alan Ruch
Scenic Design by Edie Whitset
Costume Design by Kish Finnegan
Lighting Design by Michael J. Eddy
Sound Design by David Temby
Stage Manager: Samantha Ries

The Cast

Cat in the Hat Jon Gentry
Horton. D. Scott Withers
Mayzie LaBird. Katie McFadzen
Gertrude McFuzz. Jodie Weiss
Sour Kangaroo. Gina Handy
JoJo. Adam Moffit
Bird Girl. Lisa Fogel
Bird Girl. Molly Lajoie
Bird Girl. Yolanda London
Wickersham Brother. Lucas Coatney
Wickersham Brother. Edgar Torrens
Wickersham Brother. TBA



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Arizona Commission on the Arts
Bashas' Markets
City of Tempe/Tempe Municipal Arts Commission
Wells Fargo

Preview Guide for Parents and Teachers to Childsplay's Production of Seussical

This upbeat musical full of singing and dancing is based on beloved books by Dr. Seuss (Horton Hears a Who, Horton Hatches the Egg and The Cat in the Hat, to name a few) and adapted especially for young people by the show's creators.

The Story: Horton the elephant is bathing in the Jungle of Nool when he hears sounds coming from a speck of dust. He discovers young JoJo and the other Whos of the city of Whoville living in danger of being blown away by the wind. Horton vows to protect them but his jungle neighbors think he's crazy (they aren't as sensitive as Horton so they can't hear the Whos) and they end up losing the dust speck in a field of clover. Then there's Gertrude, a bird with low self-esteem, who is fond of Horton. She wants to be as glamorous as Mayzie LaBird. Mayzie ends up sending Gertrude to Dr. Dake who helps her grow more tail feathers in an effort to make Horton notice her.

Having promised to keep Whoville from harm, Horton sets off to find the dust speck and save the Whos when he comes across Mayzie sitting on her egg. She convinces Horton to sit on her egg while she takes a little break. She promises she'll be gone for one afternoon but doesn't return. While the faithful Horton is sitting on the egg some hunters arrive and take Horton, the egg, nest and tree off to the circus. Who should appear at the circus but lazy Mayzie! She ends up giving Horton custody of her egg thinking she is doing him a favor. Gertrude finally realizes she doesn't need lavish feathers to be noticed (and the tail made her too heavy to fly) and she has them plucked by the very doctor who gave her the pillberry to grow them in the first place. She finds Horton at the circus and has the best surprise ever: she has found the clover with Whoville on it! Unfortunately, the rest of Nool still doesn't believe Horton so they take him to trial where Judge Yertle the Turtle sentences the dust speck to be boiled in Beezle-Nut oil. It is little JoJo who finally lets out a "yopp" that is loud enough for all of Nool to hear. As the residents agree to take care of Whoville, Horton's egg hatches and it's a half bird, half elephant! In the end Horton and Gertrude are together and all is well in the Jungle of Nool.

Things to Talk About Before Seeing the Show...

Theater Etiquette: It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance.

~Stay seated during the performance.

~ Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance.

~ Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.

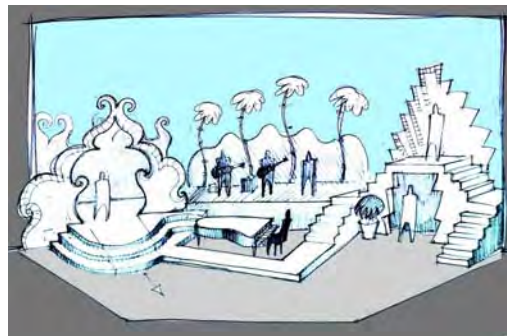
~Use of cell phones, cameras and any other recording device is **not allowed in the theater at any time!**

Page to Stage: *Seussical* was adapted for the stage by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. Reading Dr. Seuss' books, it's hard to imagine how they could be translated to the stage because the characters appear as cartoon illustrations *and* many of them are animals or made-up creatures! A team of designers worked with the director to create the world of the play. When you see the play, you won't see the characters dressed in creature costumes. Instead, the costumes will give suggestions of the creature by using color and texture. The director and designers decided to give the production a 1930's movie musical style. The musicians will be onstage in the middle of the set.

What are the differences between seeing a play and a movie? A play happens live in front of an audience. The actors need to recreate the same play over and over again giving the audience the illusion that it is the very first performance. Since theater happens live, each performance may be a little bit different than the next. When a production closes, the play is no

more than a memory. In movies, a performance is captured on film, can be accessed any time and becomes a part of history.

How is a musical different than a play? A musical is a story that is told through speaking, singing and dancing. The characters sing thoughts and feelings that are too strong for words. They reveal information about themselves and others through song. Lyrics and melodies that make up songs often stay with you long after you've heard them. Can you think of a song from a movie, musical or even a commercial that has stayed stuck in your head?



Preliminary scenic design drawing by Edie Whitset

Read the Books: *Seussical* is based on several Dr. Seuss books; in particular, *Horton Hears a Who*, *Horton Hatches the Egg*, *Gertrude McFuzz*, *McElligot's Pool* and *The Cat in the Hat*. The entire story (dialogue and songs) is communicated in the form of rhymes. Reading these books before seeing the show will help the students follow the plot.

Dr. Seuss Factsoids:

- Theodor Seuss Geisel was born on March 2, 1904 in Springfield, Massachusetts
- His father worked at the Forest Park Zoo and after visiting the zoo he began to draw pictures of the animals. The pictures looked nothing like the actual animals and thus, his drawing style was born.
- After graduating from Dartmouth College in 1925, he attended Oxford University in England with the goal



of attaining a doctorate in literature. At Oxford he met Helen Palmer, whom he wed in 1927. He returned from Europe in 1927, and began having cartoons and articles published in several magazines. In 1936 he wrote *And to Think I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, which was rejected by the first 27 publishers he showed it to. But finally in 1937, a friend published the book for him, and it went on to moderate success.

- Seuss was his middle name and his mother's maiden name. After dropping out of Oxford and not wanting to disappoint his father by arriving home without a doctorate, he added "Dr." to "Seuss" and the rest is history.
- In May 1957, Life Magazine published an article observing that young children were having trouble learning to read because their books were so boring. Nine months later, Geisel would revolutionize children's beginning reading books when he wrote and illustrated *The Cat in the Hat*. This book was the first in a series of classic beginner books.

- In 1960 a friend bet him \$50 that he couldn't write an entire book using only fifty words. The result was the classic *Green Eggs and Ham*.

- After his wife Helen passed away in 1967, he married Audrey Stone Diamond, a long-time friend of both him and his late wife. Audrey had a daughter from a previous marriage, but Ted never had any children of his own.

- *Oh, The Places You'll Go* was Dr. Seuss' last book and is often read at graduation ceremonies.

- His 48 books have been translated into more than 20 languages and have sold more than 200 million copies.

- Before Dr. Seuss died on September 24, 1991, he received numerous awards for his work including the Pulitzer Prize.

"Fun is good."

~Dr. Seuss

Things To Talk About and Do After Seeing the Performance...

Suggestions for Discussion:

~All plays have three P's: *People* in a *Place* with a *Problem*. Where does the play take place? Who are the people (or characters)? What are the problems?

~Gertrude thinks more feathers will get her noticed. Name some things people wear or have that make them feel more important. Does having certain things really make people more important? In the end Gertrude realizes it's what she does not what she looks like that makes her important to Horton. What can people do to make them more important to others?

~Horton is rejected for being different. He is bullied because no one believes that he can hear the Whos. Why are people bullied for being different? Discuss the value of all people despite their differences (a person's a person no matter how small).

~What did Horton do that made him a good friend? Which adjectives would you use to describe a good friend?

~JoJo gets in trouble for splashing water in the bathtub as he imagines the wonderful things in McElligot's pool. When is it all right to daydream and when isn't it? When do you tend to daydream?

The following activities fulfill Arizona standards in the areas of theater, dance, music, visual art, reading and writing. Many of the activities cover more than one standard area.

Status Game: You'll need a deck of cards for this game that illustrates discrimination. People are treated differently for many reasons: fame, wealth, social status, etc. This game illustrates discrimination. Standing in a circle, hand out one card to each person (face down). On the count of three everyone has to hold the card face out on his or her forehead without looking at it. Next, mingle about the room and react to each person according to the card they hold. Ace is the highest and most important and well respected and 2 is the lowest class. After the game has gone on for 5-10 minutes ask everyone to freeze and without talking arrange themselves in order according to what they think their card is (from Ace to 2). On the count of 3, look at your card. Talk about how people reacted to you and how you reacted to others. How can this be tied to events in our everyday lives?

What Does It Mean? Songs from musicals tell a mini story within the story. Can you find examples of songs that you listen to on the radio or on a CD that tell a story? Find a song that you can translate or interpret for your class. What is being said in the song? What does it mean? Play the song and then talk about your interpretation.

Who Puppets: In this production, the residents of Whoville are played by actors. What if the director had decided to make them little puppets instead? What would they look like? Create Who puppets (finger or hand puppets) using cardboard, fabric, yarn, or even socks. Use the book or our production as inspiration. Next, play a scene from the play or books using the puppets. Share with the class.

Animal Combinations: At the end of the play, Mayzie's egg that Horton has been sitting on hatches and an "elephant bird" appears. What would happen if you crossed two different animals? What if you crossed a giraffe and a fish? How about a horse and a monkey? Choose two animals that you would like to combine and draw a picture of the offspring! Share with the class then hang them in your room.

Seuss Read-a-thon: Dr. Seuss wrote more than 40 books. How many of them can you read in one month? Create a chart with all of Dr. Seuss' book titles and all of the students in class. When you've read a book, check it off the list. At the end of the month, have a green eggs and ham party to celebrate your reading success!

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."
~Dr. Seuss

Seuss Style Poems: Come up with a list of 10 words from any Dr. Seuss book. Next, find at least two words that rhyme with each word. Using the new list of words, create a short poem in the style of Dr. Seuss.

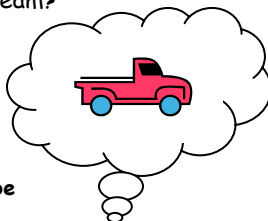
The Green Eggs and Ham

Challenge: Dr. Seuss wrote the entire book *Green Eggs and Ham* using only fifty words. Read *Green Eggs and Ham* together as a class and then take this challenge: write a story using 50 words or less! You can use the 50 words as often as you like to tell your story.

Seuss-isms: Dr. Seuss was a master at making up words that had a specific meaning. For example, Beezle-Nut oil or Truffala tree. Go through several of Dr. Seuss' books and write down as many of these words as possible. Then, write down definitions of the words. Next, create your own "Seuss-isms" complete with definitions. Put them all together in a dictionary that you can display in the classroom!

Dream on...

Wouldn't it be great to be allowed time for daydreaming? Set aside time to think new things! Schedule a ten-minute period once a week or once a day where students and teacher must do nothing but let their imaginations and minds wander. Daydreaming is good for you!



Seussical Booklist:

Prepared with the help of Tim Wadham, Youth Services Coordinator for the Maricopa County Library District

Recommended Reading...



Loyalty

Chato Goes Cruisin' by Gary Soto

King of the Wind by Marguerite Henry

Early Thunder by Jean Fritz

The Shakespeare Stealer by Gary Blackwood

Respect

Each Living Thing by Joanne Ryder

The House of Wings by Betsy Byars



Bravery

Call it Courage by Armstrong Sperry

Democracy

D is for Democracy: A Citizen's Alphabet by Elissa Grodin

Thomas Jefferson: Architect of Democracy by John Serverance

Rhyming

My Many Colored Days by Dr. Seuss

All materials are available through your local library. Check it out!

Oh, the places you can go on the internet...



www.seussville.com

-the official Seuss web site run by Dr. Seuss enterprises and Random House

www.catinthehat.org

-the Springfield, MA national monument Seuss site

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/seuss.htm>

-teacher resource file with Seuss related lessons

http://atozteacherstuff.com/Themes/Dr__Seuss

-lots of lesson plans and printables

www.k-state.edu/english/nelp/seuss

-this page has links to all things Seuss on the web

Don't miss our next two productions!

Peter and the Wolf

Feb. 3- Mar. 11, Tempe Performing Arts Center 480-350-8119

Petit Rouge (A Cajun Red Riding Hood)

April 28-May 27, Tempe Center for the Arts 480-350-2TCA (2822)

To book a field trip, contact Beth Olson @ 480-350-8107

Arizona Academic Standards:

Your visit to the theater as well as the preparation and follow up activities can involve many content areas from the Arizona Department of Education K-12 Academic Standards. Many of the suggested discussion topics and activities can be tied to standards in several areas.

If you would like help with standard connections for your particular grade we would be happy to assist.

Simply email Katie McFadzen at kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org or call 480-350-8105.

Check out the newly updated Arts Standards at www.ade.az.gov/asd/arts/ArtsStandards.asp

Want some drama in your classroom?

If you would like help incorporating drama into your curriculum or would like to have an actor teach in your classroom, Childsplay can help. We offer a variety of residency and teacher training experiences. For more information, contact Debra K. Stevens at dstevens@childsplayaz.org or 480-350-8101

About Childsplay...

Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families.

Our Mission is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future.

We love to hear from our audience members! Send letters, drawings or reviews to:



Childsplay, Inc.
PO Box 517
Tempe, AZ 85280
Call us at 480-350-8101 or 1-800-583-7831 (in-state)

Email us at: info@childsplayaz.org
Web Site: www.childsplayaz.org