

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 Nykol DeDreu Sound Design by David Temby Stage Manager: Abigail Hartmann

#### <u>The Cast</u>

Cat in the Hat Horton Mayzie LaBird	D. Scott Withers . Katie McFadzen
Gertrude McFuzz	
JoJoMaxx Carlisle-King	
Bird Girl /Mrs. Mayor Bird Girl	
Bird Girl.	
Wickersham Brother/Mr. Mayor Wickersham Brother	•
Wickersham Brother	-





This production is supported in part by: 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**

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your children for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

**The Story:** This upbeat musical full of singing and dancing is based on beloved books by Dr. Seuss like *Horton Hears a Who* and *Horton Hatches the Egg* and adapted especially for young people by the show's creators.

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.



We would love to have your feedback on this Preview Guide. What did you find helpful? Did you use any of the content before seeing the play? After? Which activities did you try? Did you have success? Is having AZ Education Standards noted in the activities helpful to you or unnecessary? What else would you like to see us address in future Preview Guides? ANY COMMENTS WILL BE THOUROUGHLY APPECIATED! Please send them to: Katie McFadzen at <u>kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org</u>

# About *Seussical*:

Here are topics for discussion or activities to use before or after seeing the production: Dr. Seuss • rhyming and poetry • loyalty • animals • teasing and bullying • friendship • dependability • imagination and daydreaming • respect • democracy

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: ~Use the restroom before seeing the show as we do not have intermission during our school performances.

~Stay seated during the performance.

~ Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance. Remember, the actors can see and hear the audience just like you can see and hear them.

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

~Food, candy, gum and beverages are not allowed in the theater. ~Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is *not allowed in the theater at any time!* 

#### The Characters:

Cat in the Hat: the master of ceremonies or storyteller Horton: the kind elephant Mayzie LaBird: irresponsible mother of the egg; has a glorious tail Gertrude McFuzz: has a crush on Horton; doesn't have much of a tail Sour Kangaroo: doesn't believe that Horton hears the Whos; rallies the jungle creatures against him; has a baby (a puppet)

**JoJo:** one of the Who's; endless imagination

Mayor of Whoville and his wife: JoJo's parents; quite strict **Bird Girls:** Nool creatures; back up singer/dancers who help to tell the story

**Wickersham Brothers:** jungle monkey bullies; they take the clover from Horton

**The Who's:** tiny people of Whoville living on a speck of dust

**Vlad Vladikov:** a black-bottomed eagle who drops Horton's clover into a field of clover

Judge Yertl the Turtle: presides at the trial of Horton and his dust speck

Hold That Thought: Ask students the questions in **bold type** on this page before seeing the play and talk about their answers afterwards!

#### Here are some things to look for regarding the elements of design (set, costumes, music, lights).

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 madeup creatures! A team of designers worked with the director to create the world of the musical. When you see the musical, you won't see the characters dressed in creature costumes. Instead, the costumes will give suggestions of the creature by using color and texture. What did the costume designer do to suggest different types of animals? The director and designers decided to give the production a 1930's movie musical style. There are two specific worlds created: Whoville and the Jungle of Nool. What did the scenic designer do to make these two worlds different? The musicians will be in view onstage in the middle of the set. How many musicians are there and what kind of instruments do they play? The lights used in the production help to tell the story by spotlighting different areas at different moments to help the audience know where to focus. Lights also help to

establish mood, time of day and give color, texture and definition to the people and scenery on the stage.



Preliminary scenic design drawing by Edie Whitset

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?

**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 in the musical (dialogue and songs) is communicated in the form of rhymes. Reading these books before seeing the show can help the students follow the plot.

#### Dr. Seuss Factoids:

 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.

Photos from the 2006 production of Seussical. Below: Gina Handy (center) and the rest of the cast. Above: Jodie Weiss as Gertrude McFuzz and D. Scott Withers as Horton the Elephant





We get a lot of questions from our audience members. Here are answers to some of the most common questions!

 $\blacktriangleright$  Acting is a full time job for most of the performers in the show; we are lucky enough to get paid for what we love to do.

Actors put on their own make-up; both males and females wear make-up.

► Several of the actors play more than one character and therefore have as many as seven costume changes.

► It takes a team to run the show--there are eight people running the show backstage including two wardrobe people (for quick costume changes), two spotlight operators, one light board operator, a sound and microphone operator, an assistant stage manager (who is backstage) and the stage manager who runs the entire show from the back of the house (behind where the audience sits).

► The rehearsal process takes about three weeks, six days a week, six to eight hours a day. The actors have to learn and memorize music and choreography (dance) which involves doing a lot of homework!

► It took approximately six weeks to build the set and approximately eight weeks to build the costumes and wigs.

▶ Producing theater is expensive! It cost approximately \$7,200 for costumes, \$6,000 for the set, and \$3,000 for the properties!

# Things To Talk About and Do After Seeing *Seussical*:

#### **Discussion Starters:**

~ Now that you've seen Seussical and read the books that it's based on here are some things to talk about: How does the play differ from the books? Which characters or incidents were left out of the play or presented differently in the play? Why do you think the changes were made?

~ All plays have three P's: People in a Place with a Problem. Where does the play take place (setting)? Who are the people (or characters)? What are the problems (conflicts)? What happens at the beginning of the play? The middle? The end? What is the climax or high point in the plot? Resolution?

~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).

~Horton and Gertrude both prove to be good friends. What did Horton do that made him a good friend? What did Gertrude do? 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?

Promises: Horton promises to stay with the egg. Mayzie promises she'll be back real soon. Talk about promises you make in your lives, and how you go about keeping them. Which character keeps his/her promise? Why is it important to keep promises? Have you ever not kept a promise? How did it make you (or somebody else) feel?

Being Responsible: Horton takes responsibility for caring for the Whos and their clover. Mayzie proves to be an irresponsible mother. What does it mean to be responsible? What kinds of responsibilities to you have in your life?

# Dream on...

Wouldn't it be great to be allowed time for daydreaming? Set aside time to think new thinks! 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!

#### <u>Activities Linked to Standards</u> (samples noted in bold):

#### <u>Writing</u>

► 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 repeat the 50 words as often as you like to tell your story. W03-S1C2, R01-S1C2

 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. R0151C201
 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! **R02-S1C603**, **W02-S1C202** 

#### <u>Reading</u>

► 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! **R00-S1C6, R03-S1C6** 

▶ Read Across America Day is March 3, 2008 Go to

# www.nea.org/readacross/index.html

for more info. Schedule some activities around this very important day. You could even have a Read Across America Week or Month!

#### **Creative Drama/Theater**

► 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 down 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? T-S2C1-203, 4WP-F1



► In groups of four or five, create a scene using pantomime (just body and imagination, no voice) where someone is sitting on an egg through various seasons (like Horton did). Use your imagination to figure out ways to communicate things like warm sun, cold wind, rain or snow. Share your scenes with the class. T-S1C1-201, -202, -203, -204, T-S1C2-204, -205

► Horton gets bullied by other characters that later have a change of heart. In small groups, create a scene in which someone is bullied for being different. Find a way for the bullies to change their opinions by the end of the scene. Rehearse and share with the class. T-S1C2-201,-202, 3WP-R1

▶ The Wickersham brothers are actually monkeys. Create your own monkey character. Decide what his/her name and age is, what he/she looks like, how he/she moves, walks, talks, etc. Draw a detailed picture of what your character would wear and carry. Next, use your voice, body and imagination to bring your monkey to life. Take turns introducing your monkeys to the rest of the class: move as your monkey to the front of class and share your name and age and one thing about yourself. You can also create short scenes with other monkey characters from class. T-S1C2, 3WP-R1

#### <u>Music</u>

► 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. MO2-S2C2-01, MO5-S2C1-01

#### <u>Visual Art</u>

► In this production, the tiny residents of Whoville are played by

actors. What if the director had decided to make them 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. VA-S1C32-01, T-S1C22-02

► When Mayzie's egg hatches 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 their offspring. Share them with the class then hang them in your room. VA-S1C12-03

► Create your own versions of Gertrude's tail both before and after she visits Dr. Dake by the Lake and eats from the pillberry bush. Use feathers, pipe cleaners, fabric, ribbon, cardboard or any other materials you can think of. Make the first tail small and plain. Make the second tail as grand and long as possible. In pairs, play out the scene in which Gertrude eats from the pillberry bush and grows a long tail. See if you can come up with a way to magically switch the tails without your audience seeing! Share your scene with the class. VA-S1C1-,-S1C2,-S1C5, T-S1C3-205

#### Social Studies

Bullying is a big problem for young people today. Think about Horton and how he was bullied. How might he have dealt with the situation differently? Discuss which behaviors are considered bullying and what the effects of bullying are. Come up with an anti-bully policy for your class or school. Start by taking the following pledge (print it out on a poster board):

We will not bully other students.

2. We will help others who are being bullied by speaking out and by getting adult help.

3. We will use extra effort to include all students in activities in our school.

Make a list of bullying behaviors that will not be tolerated and the consequences for those behaviors. **3WP-F1** 

#### <u>Math</u>

Horton counts thousands and thousands of clover trying to find the Whos. Come up with a list of at least ten things that can be counted. For example, how many letters are in your first name? Your last name? How many chairs are in the room? How many students are in the room? How many are boys? How many are girls...etc. Count each item on the list and write down your answers. Go over the totals as a class. How many did you get correct? **MOO-S5C2-01,-02** 

#### <u>Science</u>

► The Jungle of Nool is full of all kinds of animals. As a class, come up with a list of the various types of animals that might live in a jungle. Alone or in teams, research one of the animals from the list. Find or draw pictures of your animal and gather as much information as you can on their habits, what they eat, when and how long they sleep, how long they live, etc. Put together a presentation that you can share with the rest of the class. SC-S4C3, VA-S1C2-101

► Horton sits on the egg to protect it as the seasons change. He experiences a variety of weather including rain, wind, and snow. Talk about the various seasons we experience in Arizona. What do we need to do to protect ourselves during different seasons? Compare and contrast the weather in Arizona with the weather in another part of the country. Compare information about things like temperatures, rain and/or snow fall, sunny days per year, and how long the seasons are. SC01-S6C3-01, M02-S4C4-04

# 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 things to print

www.k-state.edu/english/nelp/seuss
-this page has links to all things Seuss on the web

# Want Some Drama in Your Classroom?

If you would like help incorporating drama into your curriculum by having a Teaching Artist come into your classroom, Childsplay can help. We offer a variety of artist-in-residence and teacher training experiences. We can also help with pre- and postshow activities related to the production as well as AZ Education Standards connections. For more information, contact Patricia Black, Director of Education, at: pblack@childsplayaz.org or 480-350-8129

# 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!

Childsplay PO Box 517 Tempe, AZ 85280 Phone 480-350-8101 or 1-800-583-7831 (in-state)



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

# **Seussical Booklist:**

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



### **Curriculum Connections:**

### Dr. Seuss

*Suessical* is based on the books *Horton Hears a Who* and *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss. Characters from other books by Dr. Seuss appear as well. Once you've seen *Seussical* you should read these books by Dr. Seuss:

The Cat in the Hat

*Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories* (includes the story of Horton's friend, Gertrude McFuzz)

### <u>Animals</u>

*Zany Zoo* by William Wise *Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See*? by Bill Martin Jr. *Click Clack Moo: Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin *The Baby Beebee Bird* by Diane Redfield Massie

## Teasing and Bullying

Hooway for Wodney Wat! By Helen Lester Winchell Mink: The Misadventure Begins by Steve Young Shredderman: Secret Identity by Wendelin Van Draanen

# <u>Friendship</u>

*My Friend is Sad* by Mo Willems *Today I Will Fly* by Mo Willems *The Remarkable Friendship of Mr. Rat and Mr. Cat* by Rick Walton

# Imagination and Daydreaming

Leonardo the Terrible Monster by Mo Willems The Lost Thing by Shaun Tan Not a Box by Antoinette Portis Scribble by Deborah Freedman

# <u>Loyalty</u>

*Chato Goes Cruisin'* by Gary Soto

# Rhyming and Poetry

My Many Colored Days by Dr. Seuss Wild About Books by Judy Sierra

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





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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 Nykol Dedreu Sound Design by David Temby Stage Manager: Abigail Hartmann

# The Cast

Cat in the Hat	•
Mayzie LaBird.	
Gertrude McFuzz	Jodie Weiss
Sour Kangaroo	Amanda Kuchinski
JoJo	or David Cottrell
Bird Girl/Mrs. Mayor	Yolanda London
Bird Girl	Molly Lajoie
Bird Girl	Laurie Trygg
Wickersham Brother/Mr. Mayor	Toby Yatso
Wickersham Brother	Edgar Torres
Wickersham Brother	-





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# Student Activity Guide for

# Seussical

Today you saw a production of *Seussical*, performed by Childsplay. Here are some things to think about and some activities to do now that you've seen the show!

Tell your family and/or friends about the play you saw.

Tell them about the story and the characters: What happens in the beginning, the middle and the end of the play? How many characters can you remember? Which character was your favorite and why? What were some of the things the characters did? What was your favorite part of the play?

Tell them about the costumes, scenery, props, and music that were used in the production. Draw pictures to help describe the different costumes and scenery.



-i vi wi <del>4</del>i

#### Rhyme Time: Draw a line between the two pictures with names that rhyme! Caution: Some of the pictures could have several possible names; find the one that rhymes with another one! Н R Ε ν 0 C S S 0 Ι L V Е т .Т Ε Ε R Н L Α 0 Ι С υ Ι Х J Н Т V В R Ν S 0 Q ۷ 0 В G S Ι F S CAT Words EGG WORD can be S Ι Ν S 0 Μ U С A L JOJO SEARCH backwards. THINKS Η S R Ε Κ С Ι W diagonal, M CIRCUS across, up HAT G Ζ or down! κ W Т Н Ι Ν Κ S MUSICAL WHOVILLE G С U Q F т Δ Х \*\* **CLOVER** HORTON Ε Ζ J J D U D SEUSS WICKERSHAM

Try one of these activities at home: create your own version of Horton's elephant ears or Gertrude's tail! Be creative about the materials you use. You might try attaching cardboard ears to a hat or fabric and feathers to a belt to make a tail. Have an adult help you and have fun!

Use your imagination to color the Cat's hat. It can be any color or design you like!



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

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or email us at info@childsplayaz.org