



# Childsplay's 360° Theatre Resources for Schools

## About *School House Rock Live!* and Your Theatre Experience



### Schoolhouse Rock Live!

Book by Scott Ferguson, George Keating and Kyle Hall

Music and Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, Bob Dorough, Dave Frishberg, Kathy Mandry, George Newall and Tom Yohe

Directed by Anthony Runfola  
Musical Direction by Alan Ruch  
Choreography by Molly Lajoie  
Scenic Design by Holly Windingstad  
Costume Design by D. Daniel Hollingshead  
Lighting Design by Tim Monson  
Sound Design by Christopher Neumeyer  
Projection Design by Limitrophe Films  
Stage Manager: Sarah Chanis

#### The Cast

Tom. . . . .Rudy Ramirez  
Shulie. . . . .Molly Robinson  
Dina. . . . .Keilani Akagi  
George. . . . .Eric Boudreau

**National Tour 2014-2015**  
Recommended for Ages 6 and up

#### Themes/Curricular Ties:

music ~ dance ~ grammar ~ the constitution ~  
solar system ~ systems of government ~ women's  
suffrage ~ circulatory system ~ science

#### The Story:

Tom, a young teacher is nervous about his first day of teaching. He turns on the television in an attempt to calm his nerves. Suddenly, he is surrounded by three characters who have appeared to help him. They are all a part of him, facets of his personality, and through imagination and song they help him to gain the confidence he needs to teach subjects like grammar, science, math, and social studies. Academic subjects will never seem boring again when *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* explodes onto the Childsplay stage with the songs you loved updated for a whole new generation!

#### Production History:

TheatreBam Chicago first performed School House Rock Live! in August 1993 in the basement of Chicago's Cafe Voltaire and broke attendance and length of run records. It moved to the Body Politic in 1994 and stayed there for six months while continuing to tour to schools and youth groups during the day. In June of 1995 the show moved Off Broadway and played at the Atlantic and The Lamb's Theatres for a total run of eleven months. School House Rock Live! returned to Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater in April 1996 and later moved to The Theatre Building. The show closed in Chicago in March 1997. Since then it has been produced by many professional and amateur companies throughout the country. This is the fourth time Childsplay has produced the show. It was part of the 1996-97, 1997-98 and 2001 seasons.

#### The History of School Rock:

The original idea for the School House Rock cartoons came from an advertising executive who noticed his son had a hard time memorizing multiplication tables but knew all of the words to the rock and roll songs he listened to. As a result, a series of animated musical educational short films were created with the first one first airing in 1973 during Saturday morning cartoons on ABC and continued to run until the mid 80s and then again in the 90s with both new and old episodes.



## About Childsplay:

Childsplay is a professional non-profit theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families based in Tempe, AZ. It was founded in 1977 by Artistic Director David Saar.

**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, those hallmarks of childhood that are the keys to the future.



## Our Home:

The Sybil B. Harrington Campus of Imagination and Wonder at Mitchell Park (formerly Mitchell School) is where you'll find our administrative offices, costume shop, prop shop, rehearsal spaces, and Academy classrooms. We love to hear from our audiences. Send your letters and reviews to:

**Address:** 900 S. Mitchell, Tempe, AZ 85281

**Phone:** 480-921-5700

**Email:** [info@childsplayaz.org](mailto:info@childsplayaz.org)

**Web:** [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/childsplayaz](http://www.facebook.com/childsplayaz)

To help enrich and extend your theatre experience, check out the **360° Theatre Resource Center** on our website!

## 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 the audience can see and hear them.

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

- Food, candy, gum and beverages will not be allowed in the theater/during the performance.

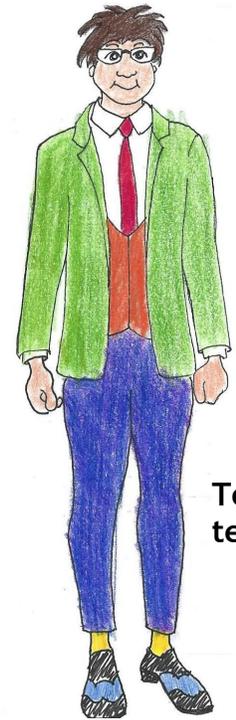
- Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is not allowed in the theatre/during the performance at any time.

- Following the performance (time permitting) there will be a brief question/answer session where audience members will have an opportunity to ask the actors questions about the production.



## Songs and Thematic Connections:

Verb: That's What Happening (grammar)  
A Noun is a Person, Place or Thing (grammar)  
Three is a Magic Number (math: counting by 3s)  
Sufferin' 'till Suffrage (social studies: women's right to vote)  
Unpack Your Adjectives (grammar)  
Just a Bill (social studies)  
The Preamble (social studies)  
Ready or Not Here I Come (math: counting by 5s)  
Do the Circulation (science)  
Rufus Xavier Sarsaparilla (grammar: pronouns)  
Conjunction Junction (grammar)  
A Victim of Gravity (science)  
Interplanet Janet (science: planets)  
Interjections (grammar)  
The Tale of Mr. Morton (grammar: subject and predicate)



Tom, the teacher



George



Dina



Shulie

Costume Design renderings  
by D. Daniel Hollingshead

The designs for *School House Rock Live!* were inspired by the 1980s. The costume design incorporates the slim suit style that was popular in the 80s. Tom, the teacher, wears a mix of bright colors and the other characters, who represent facets of Tom's personality, are all costumed in the colors that are part of Tom's costume.

The set design by Holly Windingstad (Childsplay design credits include national tour shows *Tomás and the Library Lady* and *Rock the Presidents*) was inspired by the look of video games like Tetris and Mine Craft. Parts of the set were repurposed from the two existing sets from *Rock the Presidents*. The entire set has to break down and fit into the back of a van, so technical director John Emery constructed the box units so they can be easily taken apart and stored.

#### Technical Tidbits from John:

- The 3 cubes are 3'-9" wide x 2'-6" deep. Assembled, they are 1'3" tall (15"), and when they are folded up for transport, they are 5" tall.
- There are 72 knobs used to assemble the back wall.
- The 'T' cube used 148 bolts to build it.
- It took 3 people a total of 5 weeks to build and paint the show.
- All the wood in the show is from sustainable sources, FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified, and domestically produced.



Scenic design and rendering by Holly Windingstad



Childsplay's 360° Theatre Resources for Schools  
Pre and Post Show Discussion Questions for *Schoolhouse Rock Live!*  
2014-2015 National Tour  
[www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

**Questions to Ask Before Seeing the Production:**

- 1) How is going to the theatre different than going to a movie? Talk about the many differences.
- 2) What do you know about *Schoolhouse Rock*? What do you remember about the original cartoons? Who are some of the characters that you remember from the cartoons?
- 3) The original *Schoolhouse Rock* was a series of short musical cartoons. How do you think the songs will be performed on stage?
- 4) Which part of grammar includes person, place, or thing?
- 5) What is the difference between a verb and an adverb?
- 6) When did women first have the right to vote? Why were they previously denied the right to vote?
- 7) If you could travel to any planet in the solar system, where would you go and why?
- 8) Sometimes we feel anxious or nervous before a big event. What are some situations that might make us feel anxious or nervous (first day of school)? What do you do to help yourself when you feel anxious or nervous?
- 9) Everybody learns differently. When you have to learn or memorize something (like spelling words or multiplication tables), what are the techniques that you use?

**Questions to Ask After Seeing the Production:**

- 1) Which character was nervous and worried? About what? Why do you think he was so nervous? When have you felt nervous or worried about something? How did you deal with it?
- 2) How did the costumes communicate that the other characters were all a part of the teacher?
- 3) The set design was influenced in part by two video games. Which video games influenced the design?
- 4) How were projections (video) used in the production? How did they help to communicate the songs?
- 5) Which character visited all of the planets?
- 6) The Preamble contains four words that are not included in the song from the show. What are those four words?
- 7) What is the function of a conjunction?
- 8) Which song from the show was your favorite and why?
- 9) What is a bill? How does it become law?
- 10) What does the term "suffragette" mean?
- 11) How were the songs in the production different than their cartoon counterparts?
- 12) By the end of the show, the teacher feels confident enough to go into the classroom. What helped him to build his confidence? What are things you can do to help yourself or others feel more confident?



## 15 Minute Activities:

1) Try counting by 2s, 3s, 4s, and 5s in groups of 4. Two people take turns counting by 2s to 100 (A says "2", B says "4", A says "6" and so on). If one person makes a mistake, another person from the group rotates in and takes over where their teammate left off. If no mistakes are made, the counting continues with a new round starting every time counting goes over 100. Try and keep the game moving quickly. If you don't know the next number or hesitate too long, let someone else take over. If you succeed at counting by 5s, move on to 6s!

2) Have a grammar contest with a friend. Using a timer, write down as many nouns as you can in one minute. Check each other's answers. Reset the timer and try it again with adjectives. Do it again with verbs. Count them all up and find out who wins!

3) Find your pulse in your wrist. Count the amount of beats in a 30 second period. Double that and you've got your resting heart rate. Write it down. Walk around the room at a normal pace for 2 minutes. Repeat pulse check and write it down. Do 25 jumping jacks. Repeat pulse check and write it down. How much of a change was there between each pulse check? What is happening in our bodies that makes our pulses increase or decrease?

## 30 Minute Activities:

1) Sit in a circle. Each person must choose a noun to take on vacation. Start the game by saying "When I go on vacation I'm taking my purse (or another noun). The next person says the sentence, that object and then adds a new one and so on. You can also play with verbs. For example, when I go on vacation I'm going to "play," when I go on vacation I'm going to "play and swim" and so on. The goal is for each person to come up with a different word and to remember the whole list (obviously this gets more difficult the longer the list gets).

2) Review the US Constitution. Write a constitution for your classroom that reflects how you want your class to be governed and what powers you want those who govern to have. Post it in your classroom.

3) Make two columns on the board, one for interjections and one for types of relationships (or use the lists on the next page). Play the 3 line improv game. Make a semi circle. The first two people get up and are assigned a relationship. Between them they will take turns saying a total of 3 lines based on the relationship. Each sentence must begin or end with an interjection from the list. Player one then sits and a new person gets up and a new improv begins (each player does 2 rounds).

## 45 Minute Activities:

1) Divide into 4 groups and assign each group a woman who made a positive impact on women's rights in the USA. Using the internet and/or books, go on a fact finding mission to learn as much about that person as you can in 20 min. Prepare a 5 minute presentation that you can share with the class. Make sure that each person in your group plays a part in the sharing.

2) Divide into groups and assign each group a planet that they are from. Use your imagination and decide what types of creatures inhabit your planet (are you human, animal, alien or a combination). Research facts about your planet. Create a flag, a greeting and travel brochure for that planet. Give a short presentation about your planet to the rest of the class.

3) Alone or with a partner, write a short story that includes 5 of each of the following parts of grammar: nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and interjections. Next, type or write out your story but replace the adjectives, nouns, verbs, and interjections with a blank space with the part of speech in parenthesis underneath the line. For example:

The \_\_\_\_\_ sank.  
(noun)

You've just created your own version of a Mad Lib! Make copies of all of the stories and put together a book for each student.

## Lists of interjections and relationships for the 3 Line Improv Game:

### Interjections

Ow

Yay

Rats

Snap

Wow

Yikes

Aw

Eek

Hey

Oops

Hooray

Whoa

### Relationships

Parent/Child

Teacher/Student

Doctor/Patient

Best Friends

Enemies

Boss/Employee

Pet/Owner

Celebrity/Fan

Coach/Athlete

Grandparent/Grandchild

Neighbors

Waiter/Customer

### Sample Improv:

Relationship~ Doctor/Patient

Player 1: Ow, that really hurts!

Player 2: Wow! I hardly touched you.

Player 1: Hey! Am I gonna live, Doctor?



Childsplay's 360° Theatre Resources: *Schoolhouse Rock Live!*  
Booklist and Websites  
2014-2015 National Tour  
[www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)



**The Constitution**

**Younger Readers**

*If You Were There When They Signed the Constitution* by Elizabeth Levy  
*Shhh! We're Writing the Constitution* by Jean Fritz

**Older Readers**

*A Kid's Guide to America's Bill of Rights* by Kathleen Krull  
*The Constitution Translated for Kids* by Cathy Travis

**Music**

**Younger Readers**

*Ben's Trumpet* by Rachel Isadora  
*Violet's Music* by Angela Johnson  
*Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin* by Lloyd Moss  
*Lizard's Song* by George Shannon  
*Singing Away the Dark* by Caroline Woodward

**Older Readers**

*Bud Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis  
*The Year of Shadows* by Claire Legrand  
*The Cricket in Times Square* by George Seldon

**Dance**

**Younger Readers**

*Song and Dance Man* by Karen Ackerman  
*Max* by Rachel Isadora  
*How Can You Dance?* by Rick Walton and Ana Lopez-Escriva

**Older Readers**

*Alvin Ailey* by Andrea Davis-Pinckney and Brian Pinckney  
*Ballet Shoes* by Noel Streatfield



**Grammar**

**Younger Readers**

*The Greedy Apostrophe: A Cautionary Tale* by Jan Carr  
*If You Were an Adjective* by Michael Dahl  
*Many Luscious Lollipops* by Ruth Heller

**Older Readers**

*Dearly, Nearly, Insincerely: What is an Adverb* by Brian P. Cleary  
*Hairy, Scary, Ordinary: What is an Adjective* by Brian P. Cleary  
*Eats, Shoots and Leaves* by Lynne Truss  
*The Girl's Like Spaghetti* by Lynne Truss



**Systems of Government**

**Younger Readers**

*House Mouse, Senate Mouse* by Peter Barnes  
*Duck for President* by Doreen Cronin  
*D is for Democracy: A Citizen's Alphabet* by Elissa Grodin

**Older Readers**

*The Voice of the People: American Democracy in Action* by Betsy Maestro  
*How a Law is Passed* by Bill Scheppeler

Prepared by Sarah Sullivan,  
[www.slatebreakers.com](http://www.slatebreakers.com)

## Women's Suffrage

### Younger Readers

*You Want Women to Vote Lizzie Stanton?* by Jean Fritz

*I Could Do That! Esther Morris Gets Women the Vote* by Linda White

### Older Readers

*A Time for Courage* by Kathryn Lasky

*With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for Women's Right to Vote* by Ann Barnum



## Circulatory System

### Younger Readers

*The Magic School Bus Inside the Human Body* by Joanna Cole

*The Circulatory Story* by Mary Corcoran

### Older Readers

*The Heart: Our Circulatory System* by Seymour Simon

## Solar System

### Younger Readers

*The Sun is my Favorite Star* by Frank Asch

*The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System* by Joanna Cole

*Star Shapes* by Peter Malone

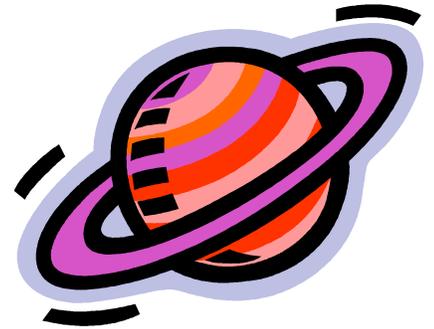
*There's No Place Like Space* by Tish Rabe

### Older Readers

*13 Planets: The Latest View of the Solar System* by David Aguilar

*Our Solar System* by Seymour Simon

*Black Holes and Other Space Phenomena* by Phillip Steele



## Interesting Internet Links:

[www.lyricsmania.com/schoolhouse\\_rock\\_lyrics.html](http://www.lyricsmania.com/schoolhouse_rock_lyrics.html)

-lyrics to SHR songs

[www.escapadedirect.com/plwigr.html](http://www.escapadedirect.com/plwigr.html)

-activities that explore gravity

[www.funenglishgames.com/grammargames.html](http://www.funenglishgames.com/grammargames.html)

-grammar games for kids

[www.kidsastronomy.com/index.htm](http://www.kidsastronomy.com/index.htm)

-astronomy info and activities for kids

<http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=168699556>

-interview with Bob Dorough, who wrote, composed and sang many of the SHR songs

<http://itsamadlibsworld.com>

-online Mad Libs for learning grammar (and having fun)





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Meet the Cast  
2014-2015 National Tour  
[www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

**Who's Who in *Schoolhouse Rock Live!***

**Rudy Ramirez (Tom)** is a recent Arizona State graduate, earning a BM in Music Theatre Performance. Some of his favorite roles include "Bat Boy" in *Bat Boy: the Musical*, "Henry" in *Next to Normal* and most recently "Boy" in *The Cat in the Hat*. When he's not performing, he also enjoys Thai food, napping and writing. He is particularly thrilled to be a part of *SHRL!*, as it was his very first musical production in 7th grade.



**Molly Robinson (Shulie)** is very excited to be making her Childsplay debut with *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* Graduating with a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre from the University of Miami, Molly's career has taken her across the USA and the world. She spent the last year in South Korea writing and performing ESL children's musicals for the Gyeonggi English Village, but is happy to be back in her hometown of Phoenix again. Some favorite roles include Nellie (*South Pacific*), Alice Bean (*Titanic the Musical*) Hodel (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Lucy (*You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*) and many more. Molly also teaches voice and piano, and music directs for theaters across the valley.

**Keilani Akagi (Dina)** Keilani is ecstatic to be back at Childsplay for another wonderful production after being seen as Amy in *Rock the Presidents!* She is a classically trained pianist and a student at ASU. Keilani has performed with Actors Theatre, Phoenix Theatre and Broadway Palm West among others and her favorite roles include *Chess* (Florence), *Joseph...Dreamcoat* (Narrator), and *Forum* (Vibrata/Dance Captain). Endless love to all the wonderful people in her life! She is represented by the Leighton Agency.



**Eric Boudreau (George)** is originally from Port Angeles, WA and is in his sixth season as a member of the acting ensemble at Childsplay. He is also a teaching artist for their Conservatory and Academy classes. Childsplay credits include: *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *Robin Hood*, *Rock the Presidents*, *Lyle the Crocodile*, *The Imaginators*, *Busytown*, *The Neverending Story*, and *Androcles and the Lion*. Other credits: *Take Me Out (N2T)*, *Speech and Debate*; *Octopus (Stray Cat)*, *Zanna*, *Don't (Desert Stages)*, *Hair (Tempe Little Theatre)*, *aDoBe (Rising Youth Theatre)*, *Seussical*; *Parade (MCC)*, *Little Queen (Teatro Bravo)*, *The Quiltmaker's Gift (Cookie Company)*, *Lisa Starry's A Vampiric Tale (Scorpius)*, and *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson (Phoenix Theatre)*.

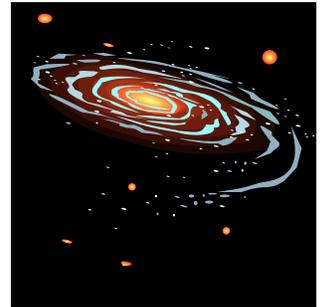
We asked the cast of *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* to answer this question: *The songs in Schoolhouse Rock were written to help us learn new ideas and facts. What's one thing (topic or fact or part of history) that you loved learning in school?*

**Keilani Akagi (Dina):** When I was in school I really enjoyed math. Honestly I wasn't very good at it, but I liked how there was only one right answer. If you worked on a problem and got a wrong answer the first time that was totally ok! With hard work and determination the right answer could eventually be obtained.



**Eric Boudreau (George):** I've always enjoyed history/geography and how intertwined they are and, of course, music class. I don't think I would be where I am today if I didn't enjoy music class. Music helps me memorize things, I mean just ask me to list all 44 presidents of the US.

**Rudy Ramirez (Tom):** One thing I loved learning in school was astronomy. I'm fascinated by faraway galaxies, black holes, and wondering if other planets could possibly sustain life like earth. I wanted to be an astronaut so badly when I was younger so I could see the marvels of space for myself.



**Molly Robinson (Shulie)** My favorite subject in school, besides drama and music classes, was always History, specifically learning about American History. I loved studying the Revolutionary War and how America was born, especially seeing the way women like Molly Pitcher helped our troops succeed or maybe I just liked knowing there was a famous Molly in history!

