stages theatre company

2015-16 SEASON

STUDY GUIDE

WORLD PREMIERE BALLET

March 4 - 20

In collaboration with

The Snow Queen


STAGESTHEATRE.ORG

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stagetheatre.org
BEHIND THE STAGE DOOR - STUDY GUIDE

A resource guide for teachers

BEHIND THE STAGE DOOR is intended as a resource guide for teachers and students to use before and after attending a performance at Stages Theatre Company. Our goal is to provide helpful information to enhance your theatre-going experience and to offer a resource that serves as a springboard for extending this experience into the classroom and across the curriculum.

WHO WE ARE...
Stages Theatre Company is committed to the enrichment and education of children and youth in a professional theatre environment that stimulates artistic excellence and personal growth.

Guide content by Jeannine Coulombe
WHAT GOES INTO A PERFORMANCE

The performance you see at Stages Theatre Company is the result of many people working together. As the audience, you mostly see the performer on stage, but there are many more people working behind the scenes that you never see. Each person, both on stage and off, serves an important role to create the performance you see as an audience member.

Role of the Director

• Responsible for the overall vision of the production
• Guides actors in interpreting characters and provides them with stage movement
• Works with designers in planning the sound, lights, costumes, make-up, props, scenery, stage effects

Role of the Designers

• Responsible for creating the look of the lights, scenery, costumes, make-up, sound and stage effects
• Works with the director in realizing the overall vision of the production

Role of the Stage Manager

• Responsible for organizing the production, including schedules, resources, communications, technical effects and personnel
• In charge of making sure everything runs smoothly both during rehearsals and performances

Role of the Crew

• Responsible for building the scenery, costumes, props and stage effects that you see on stage
• Work backstage during the performance operating the scenery, props, costumes, effects, lights and sound

Role of the Cast

• Responsible for performing the characters in the play on stage in front of the audience.

Role of the Audience

• The play doesn’t exist without you! That’s right, you are a collaborator in any performance you see. All of the work that goes into a production means nothing without the audience there to experience the performance. It is a unique responsibility. It is important for you to learn your role so you can join everyone else who has worked to create the production
THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

The audience has an important role in the theatre experience. When the lights go down, a performance, especially for you, begins. This special relationship only happens in live theatre. When you take your seat in the audience, you accept the responsibility of a special agreement.

The Audience Agreement
1. Believe what happens is real. It is happening live, before your eyes!
2. Listen carefully and quietly.
3. Let the production unfold and enfold you.
4. Respond honestly and sincerely. The actors are aware of your presence and your responses.
5. Tune in to what is happening on the stage.
6. Remain polite throughout the performance.

How to be a Polite Audience Member
1. Avoid anything that distracts the performers. Un-necessary talking, rustling papers, gum-snapping, jangly jewelry, cellophane wrappers, cell phones, and pagers are all examples of un-warranted and un-welcome sounds during the play.
2. Never use flash cameras. They are strictly forbidden. Their blinding lights can be an actual danger to the actors.
3. Finally, when the play is over, show your appreciation with hearty applause. These are the sounds that warm the hearts of the actors.

Before the Show Activities
1. Have students make a list: “What do we do when we watch television or go to a movie?” Compare the results to the theatre audience etiquette list above. How are they similar? How are they different?
2. Take some time to practice being an audience member. Turn down lights to darken the room. Have a student tell or read a story. When the speaker is done, have the audience applaud. Ask the speaker how the quiet listening and the applause made him or her feel? How did it make the audience feel?
3. Before the play, discuss the elements that go into a theatrical production. Scenery, make-up, costumes, lighting, properties, and sound effects each has a unique design and a unique designer. In consultation with the director, each of these designs is coordinated to produce an overall design concept. By making students aware of these production aspects, you can then ask them to comment on their observations of specific design elements after viewing the play.
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Hans Christian Andersen was born in the town of Odense, Denmark, on 2 April 1805. He was the only child of Hans Andersen and Anne Marie Andersdatter. His family was poor but Andersen was sent to a local school where he received a basic education, but upon his father's death in 1816, when Hans was only 11, he was forced to support himself as an apprentice to a weaver and later a tailor. At age 14, he moved to Copenhagen to seek employment as an actor. He was an excellent singer and was accepted into the Royal Danish Theatre. However, when his voice changed he began to concentrate on becoming a writer. The director of the Royal Danish Theatre assisted Andersen in receiving a full education, and although his schooling was difficult, Andersen published his first story, The Ghost of Palnatoke's Grave in 1822. He found considerable success in 1829 with the short story, A Journey on Foot from Holmen's Canal to East Point of Amager. This success was followed by the theatrical piece, Love on St. Nicholas Church Tower and a short volume of poems. From 1833-35, Andersen travelled through Europe, especially in Italy, which inspired his first novel, The Improvisatore.

After publishing his novel, Andersen turned to writing fairy tales and took the genre to a new level by writing a vast number that were bold and original. In 1835, Andersen published the first two installments of his immortal Danish Fairy Tales. More stories, completing the first volume, were published in 1837. This collection includes, The Tinderbox, The Princess and the Pea, Thumbelina, The Little Mermaid and The Emperor's New Clothes. Initially, these stories were not met with great recognition, due partly to the difficulty in translating them and capturing his genius for humor and dark pathos. His critical success continued, however, with the novels O.T and Only a Fiddler. Andersen returned to fairy tales in 1838 with another collection, Fairy Tales Told for Children, which included The Daisy, The Steadfast Tin Soldier and The Wild Swans. He continued to write and publish fairy tales until 1872.

Andersen died on August 4, 1875 at the age of seventy. At the time of his death, he was internationally revered and the Danish Government paid him an annual stipend as a "national treasure." His fairy tales, which have been translated into more than 125 languages, have become culturally embedded in the West's collective consciousness, appealing to both children and adults. His stories continue to be read world-wide and inspire ballets, both animated and live-action films, and plays.

--(Taken in part from wikipedia.org)
JENNIFER KIRKBY, PLAYWRIGHT

Jennifer Kirkeby has been involved in theatre for over 25 years as a playwright, actress, choreographer, director and teacher. She has worked with Stages Theatre Company for over a fifteen years, writing the memorable productions of Dot and Tot of Merryland, Madeline’s Christmas, The Frog Princ, Twas the Night Before Christmas and Twelve Dancing Princesses; all published by Dramatic Publishing, as well as Harriet and Walt; The Mitten; Owl Moon; Aladdin and His Magical Lamp; The Paper Bag Princess; Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type; Giggle, Giggle Quack; Duck for President; If You Give a Moose a Muffin; Llama, Llama Red Pajama, Llama Llama Holiday Drama and this season’s Bear Snores On. Other work includes Eyes Wide Open, a touching play about a teenage girl struggling with anorexia, which continues to tour schools. Jennifer is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, Inc., The Playwrights’ Center, and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

JAMES LEKATZ, COMPOSER

James Lekatz is a music director and composer in the Twin Cities. As a music director he has collaborated with Black Dirt Theatre, Mixed Precipitations, Stages Theatre Company, and the Minnesota Historical Society. As a composer, his music has been heard throughout the Twin Cities, and London, England. He holds a B.A in Theatre Arts, and a Certificate of Completion from the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA).
PLAY SYNOPSIS

When Gerda's best friend Kai disappears she sets off on an epic journey to save his life. But can Gerda’s belief in their friendship break the Snow Queen’s enchantment before it’s too late? Through musical movements the story follows the seven narrative divisions of Andersen’s original Danish tale. These include—The Mirror and Its Pieces; A Little Boy and a Little Girl; The Flower Garden of the Woman Who Knew Magic; The Little Robber Girl; The Norse Women; The Snow Queen’s Palace; and What Happened Afterwards. Through it all, Gerda must find the strength and wherewithal to break the Snow Queen’s spell on Kai. To release Kai from the Snow Queen’s hold, Gerda must believe in her love of Kai and their friendship despite the obstacles and doubt that plague her.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE PLAY AND ITS HISTORY

The Snow Queen is an original fairy tale written by Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875). The tale was first published in Danish in December 1844 in New Fairy Tales. First Volume. Second Collection. 1845. The story is one of Andersen's longest and most highly acclaimed stories. It is regularly included in selected tales and collections of his work and is frequently reprinted in illustrated storybook editions for children.

Stages Theatre Company’s world premiere production brings this fantastical fairy tale from Hans Christian Andersen to life through the art of dance. This timeless story is told completely through dance and movement, including aerial artistry. It contains a complete musical score with storytelling voiceovers. It continues our performance partnership with Escalate Dance that brought audiences Owl Moon, The Mitten and Twelve Dancing Princess.
DOOR OPEN ON...

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

The ideas and questions in this section are designed as a springboard for student discussion after attending the play.

BIG IDEAS

- The Power of Friendship
- Storytelling through dance
- Good versus Evil

WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN?

1. Where does Kai find the mirror shard? (In the garden)
2. Who empowers Gerta to move forward on her quest to save Kai? (The Finn Women)
3. What does Kai dream about when he is locked in the Snow Queen’s castle? (Playing with Gerta.)
4. When does Kai disappear? (In the spring)
5. What do the robbers gift to Gerta? (Reindeer)

WHY?

1. In the story, in order to save Kai from the Snow Queen, Gerta must believe in the power of their friendship. What do you think makes a good friend? How does a good friend act? Do you remember a time when you were a good friend? What happened? What did you do? Why were you a good friend? Do you remember a time when someone else was a good friend to you? What happened? Why do you think they acted like a good friend?

2. When the shard of glass gets into Kai’s eye, he starts to see the world differently and acts accordingly. Was there ever a time when you saw a situation one way and then were able to see it another way? Why did you change your point of view? What happened? Was your shift in seeing things differently a good thing for the situation or a bad thing for the situation? Why or why not?
DOOR OPEN ON...
ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

The possibilities of using the story *The Snow Queen* as a jumping off point for cross-curriculum and interdisciplinary study in your classroom are endless. From adapting your own story to comparing and contrasting different versions of the same story or from a lesson on poetry to analyzing character traits, this classic fairy tale offers a platform for reaching any number of educational goals.

Below are a few suggestions for curriculum that incorporate *The Snow Queen* into your classroom studies.

Please also refer to the ADDITIONAL RESOURCE section at the end of this guide for links and resources to more curriculum ideas and lesson plans.

THEATRE ARTS

ACTIVITY (GRADES K-5)

EXPECTATIONS

**BEFORE THE PLAY:** Read a version of *The Snow Queen*. See the ADDITIONAL RESOURCES section at the end of this guide for both free text and audio versions available on the Internet.

With student input, establish the expectations for the upcoming play. What actions or events might be seen on stage? What characters might the play include from the tale? Students may draw or write about what they anticipate seeing.

**AFTER THE PLAY:** Revisit the expectations to see how many were realized. Discuss the similarities and differences from the tale to the play, in terms of plot, characters, and action. Were the characters as portrayed on the stage faithful to the characters in the original story? How or why? How would you describe the main “message” of the play? How was it similar or different from the original tale?

ACTIVITY (GRADES 1-5)

COMPARE AND CONTRAST – FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE

The play is an original adaptation of the classic folk tale. After seeing the play, it is a good opportunity to discuss the elements of adaptation with your students. Discuss the definition of adaptation—the rewriting of a work written in a different genre or medium than it was originally written—and analyzing how the playwright and composer achieved this with Stage’s version of *The Snow Queen*. Why do you think the playwright/composer made the decisions she did in order to turn the story into
a ballet?

Students could then create a comparison chart or a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences of the folktale to the ballet.

Below is a lesson plan on comparing and contrasting the original folktale with an adaptation.

**Learning outcomes**

Students will:
- Recognize differences and commonality in two very different forms of information and be able to articulate those differences.
- Become more aware of necessary changes from one media to another.
- Enjoy interesting traditional stories in whatever form they are presented.
- Increase viewing and listening skills.

**Materials/resources**

**Activities**

1. Discuss what makes a fairy tale/folk tale and what the students will be doing - listening and looking for things that are alike and different in the written/read form compared to the ballet they see. Also, think about why some written material may have to be changed for the dramatic stage version.
2. Read “The Snow Queen” from any of the sources listed above or from one of your own.
3. See the Stages ballet adaptation of the Hans Christian Andersen tale.
4. On the board make two columns “Alike” and “Different.” Have students list what they saw and heard. (Be sure you have your own mental list in order to prompt ideas - if this is needed.)
5. Discuss why the ballet changed the story so it could be told on stage and through dance.

**VARIATION:**

As The Snow Queen was the original source material for the ever-popular Disney animated film, Frozen, you could add a second comparison of the original story of The Snow Queen and Disney’s Frozen. The story was heavily adapted by Disney and finding resemblances would present a strong exercise in how adaptable source material can be.

**ACTIVITY (GRADES 3-8) – WRITING & ACTING**

**ADAPTATION—CREATE YOUR OWN SCRIPT**

Students can create and act out their own version of The Snow Queen. Using the elements of adaptation that were explored in the above activity, have students create their own adaptation of the original tale. You may want to watch screen adaptations of the story also. The most appropriate versions that are available (that are NOT Frozen) are:
• [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV1M1y595_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV1M1y595_U) – (animated film version, 1 hour)
• [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M55flJgsQ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M55flJgsQ0) – (short film version, animated, 30 minutes, well-adapted, focuses on friendship of Kai & Gerta)

**SEQUEL—CREATE YOUR OWN SEQUEL**

Once the show concludes, the story is not necessarily over! What happens to the characters after the play ends? Individually, or in small groups, or as an entire class, write and/or perform the next part of the ongoing story. What might happen after Gerda and Kai return home? What might they tell their friends and family of their adventures with the Snow Queen? What about one of the other characters?

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

**ACTIVITY**

**CREATE A CINQUAIN POEM (GRADES K-2)**

With this activity, students create their own five-line poem about one of the characters in *The Snow Queen*.

1. Read the story of *The Snow Queen*. (See the ADDITIONAL RESOURCES section at the end of this guide for free text and audio versions available on the Internet.)
2. Have students choose one of the characters in the story.
3. Use the graphic organizer at the link below to assist students in creating their poem. This sheet is well written and straightforward.
4. Have students draw their own picture depicting their character.
5. Make a classroom display of the character pictures and poems.

The graphic organizers can be found at: [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson43/RWT016-2.PDF](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson43/RWT016-2.PDF)

**ACTIVITY (GRADES 2-5)**

**THE FATHER OF THE MODERN FAIRY TALE**

Fairy tales are fanciful stories intended to entertain children and have existed since ancient times. For centuries in many cultures, stories involving supernatural forces and faraway places were passed down orally from older generations to younger ones. In the early 19th-century, a pair of German brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm became the first internationally famous fairy tale authors when they wrote and published Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood and a number of other classic tales.
Hans Christian Andersen, however, is considered the father of the modern fairy tale. Though he wrote several decades after the Brothers Grimm achieved fame, Andersen’s tales revolutionized children’s literature.

Here are some of the main points that made his tales unique:

- **The Here and Now**
  Before Andersen, fairy tales almost always took place “once upon a time” and focused on princesses, kings and other members of royalty. Anderson, however, set his stories in the present day, and his main characters (like Gerda and Kai in *The Snow Queen*) came from regular walks of life.

- **A Real Story Telling Experience**
  In his stories, Andersen always used a narrator who would address readers directly. This let readers feel a special connection to the story, as though Andersen were in the room telling the story to them.

- **The Not-So-Happy Ending**
  Though *The Snow Queen* ends pleasantly with Kai and Gerda reuniting, many Andersen fairy tales conclude with feelings of sorrow. In *The Little Mermaid* (not the Disney version) for example, the beautiful mermaid has her heart broken and transforms into sea foam. And *The Little Fir Tree* tells the story of a tree who hopes to be decorated for Christmas but ends up being thrown into a fire.

- **Where’s the Moral?**
  Most children’s stories in Andersen’s time conveyed a simple, clear-cut moral. But his fairy tales broke that mold completely. Andersen explored relationships between characters and touched complex themes, like love and loneliness. As a result, the stories appealed to readers of all ages.

- **Objects and Animals**
  Andersen often gave simple objects human characteristics. Flowers, the sun and toy soldiers all come alive and play important roles in Andersen’s stories. In this way, Andersen shows the magic and beauty of the everyday world. Talking animals also make their way onto the page. For example, *The Ugly Duckling* is filled with animal characters, and in *The Snow Queen*, Gerda is guided on her journey by sparrows, crows and a reindeer.

**OPEN FOR DISCUSSION**

- Discuss these five elements of Hans Christian Andersen’s modern style fairy tales.
- Have students think about movies or other stories that are aimed at younger audiences where one or more of these five elements are used. For example, animals are main characters in The Lion King or the book and movie, Charlotte’s Web. Also, everyday objects come alive in Beauty and the Beast.
- Create a list of stories and/or movies that fit one or more of these five elements of an Andersen style modern fairy tale.

**CREATE YOUR OWN “MODERN” FAIRY TALE**
In this exercise, students will write their own Andersen style fairy tale set in the modern world. After analyzing the five elements of an Andersen style fairy tale, have students create their own stories (either alone or in groups of two or three.) Use the framework below to give the story a basic structure, with a setting, a starting point and a conclusion:

- The fairy tale takes place in a supermarket
- The story is be told by a narrator
- The story starts when two friends get separated
- Objects (apples, grocery carts, loaves of bread, etc.) come to life as characters in the story
- The story concludes when the two friends reunite

**ACTIVITY (GRADES 3-5)**

**COMPARING AND CONTRASTING HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN FAIRY TALES**

Have students read and become familiar with three of Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales. Have the students become familiar with the tales. Lead them in a discussion to see how the tales are similar and how they are different from one another. A Venn diagram or comparison chart may be used to enhance this understanding.

*A Few Popular Texts of Hans Christian Andersen Tales available on-line:*

- The Princess and the Pea
  - [http://hca.gilead.org.il/princess.html](http://hca.gilead.org.il/princess.html)
- The Ugly Duckling
  - [http://hca.gilead.org.il/ugly_duck.html](http://hca.gilead.org.il/ugly_duck.html)
- The Emperor’s New Clothes (or The Emperor’s New Suit)
  - [http://hca.gilead.org.il/emperor.html](http://hca.gilead.org.il/emperor.html)

Draw students’ attention to elements such as the following:

- Magic
- Hero
- Hard or mean characters
- Kind or innocent characters
- Good actions and bad actions
- Everyday objects or animals that come to life

**CHANGING CHARACTERS**

As an extension of the activity above, have the students play with the tales even more to further extend their learning. Put your students into small groups. Give them the assignment to work in the groups to prepare new oral versions of the Andersen tales that they have read—versions with different characters but the same lessons.
**ACTIVITY – Grades 1-5**

**INTERVIEW ME – GETTING TO KNOW HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN**

**One-On-One Interviews**
Divide students into groups of two. In each group, one student will play the role of an interviewer and the second student will play Hans Christian Andersen. Then, after a five-minute interview the students will switch roles and conduct the interview a second time with the new roles. The interviewer will ask Hans questions about his life. The student playing Hans should use the biography available in this guide and/or the links below to form the basis of his/her answers. The student playing Hans should also feel free to expand on the basic biographical information and talk about emotions and thoughts Hans Christian Andersen might have possessed.

**LINKS TO BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**
- [http://kids.denmark.dk/denmarkKidsHCA_eng.htm](http://kids.denmark.dk/denmarkKidsHCA_eng.htm)

**Hans on TV**
After the one-on-one interviews, select two students to conduct a mock-TV interview in front of the class. One student will play Hans and the other will play a TV talk show host. The host should introduce Hans to the class, saying a few brief words about his life. The host and Hans should then have a short improvised conversation about the writer’s work and achievements. After several minutes, the host can invite questions from the audience (the rest of the class). Let the students have fun and bring out aspects of Han’s character.

**OTHER LESSON PLAN IDEAS:**

Hans Christian Andersen is a widely read and iconic writer of children’s fairy tales. His stories, created almost two centuries ago are still with us today and are read all over the world. This fact makes lesson plans and ideas too numerous to list. Below are a few lesson ideas that are available for free. These are a sampling of what is available.

**LIST OF OTHER ONLINE LESSON PLANS USING THE SNOW QUEEN:**

- [http://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/traditional-tales-the-snow-queen/1](http://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/traditional-tales-the-snow-queen/1) (Printables for younger grades (Pre-k – grade 1))
http://www.dcsd.org/district.cfm?subpage=538759 (Comprehensive lesson plans for Kindergarten.)

DOOR OPEN ON...

THE STANDARDS

Here is a listing of Academic Standards that can be met by attending a performance at Stages Theatre Company and using this resource guide for pre and post performance activities.

THEATRE ARTS (K-3)

0.1.1.4.1
0.1.2.4.1
0.2.1.4.1
0.4.1.4.1

THEATRE ARTS (4-5)

4.1.1.4.1
4.1.3.4.2
4.2.1.4.1
4.3.1.4.1
4.4.1.4.1

THEATRE ARTS (6-8)

6.1.1.4.1
6.1.2.4.1
6.1.3.4.1
6.1.3.4.2
6.2.1.4.1
6.3.1.4.1
6.4.1.4.1

LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading and Literature (Comprehension/Literature)
Speaking, Listening and Viewing
Writing
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Please review all links below before sharing with students.

LINKS TO FREE TEXT VERSIONS OF THE SNOW QUEEN:
- http://hca.gilead.org.il/snow_que.html
- http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheSnowQueen_e.html
- http://www.online-literature.com/hans_christian_andersen/972/
- http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17860/17860-h/17860-h.htm

LINKS TO FREE AUDIO VERSIONS OF THE SNOW QUEEN:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffpa85jRKIE (audio – w/British accent)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7_LNLNjEo (audio—w/British accent)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1DGJNUECcQ (audio – w/American accent)

LINKS TO FREE ANIMATED VERSIONS OF THE SNOW QUEEN:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV1M1y595_U – (animated film version, 1 hour)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M5SflJgsQ0 (short film version, animated, 30 minutes, well-adapted, focuses on friendship of Kai & Gerta)

LINKS TO OTHER RESOURCES:
- https://www.primarytreasurechest.com/role-play/role-play-areas/miscellaneous/snow-queen-resources.html - The Snow Queen teacher resources

**FURTHER READING**

**Below is a link to a chronological list of all of Hans Christian Andersen’s work:**

• [http://hca.gilead.org.il/#list](http://hca.gilead.org.il/#list)

Most of the fairy tales listed on this webpage also have a link to a free text of the story.
Our study guide is designed to be a resource for teachers and students before and after they attend a production here at Stages Theatre Company.

We are always interested in how we can improve this resource to be the most effective for you and your students. We would like to you to share with us what activities or discussions from this guide that were the most useful for you.

You can email your responses to Jeannine Coulombe at jcoulombe@stagestheatre.com

Thank you for attending Stages Theatre Company!