

THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

Here We Go!

New material for **THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS: HERE WE GO!**
was created by Ted Brackett, Kevin Richard Woodall and John Stone,
with classic sketches drawing from material created by founding Artistic Director Judith Martin
Performed by Ted Brackett, Cassy Pogensky, Rebecca Rand and Kevin Richard Woodall
Music by John Stone and Donald Ashwander
Scenic Artist: Jonathan Peck Production Supervisor: James Huggans
Co-Directed by Kevin Richard Woodall and Artistic Director Ted Brackett

2019-20 Study Guide

Dear Teachers,

The following study guide has been designed to help make your students' experience of our show be as meaningful as it can be. For many children, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We encourage you to use this guide to prepare your students before they come to the show as well as to discuss topics, themes and ideas back in the classroom so that their appreciation will be all the more memorable and significant.

The Paper Bag Players are thrilled to present our 61st season's show, *Here We Go!* Our title suggests a journey, and so we invite you to come along for a thrilling ride. The many things and people you'll encounter include galloping horses, dancing cowboys and cowgirls (who will invite you to dance along with them!); a trio of trees who will ask your help to escape a lumberjack; a littering giant and three busy sweepers; a bowling pin who doesn't feel like waiting for a bowling ball; a patient with a terrible case of hiccups who meets a zany doctor; a postman and a butterfly; a beautiful chair with a mind all its own; and last but not least, a cute little alien named Snerp from the faraway planet, Zymillaquixar!

At the heart of this adventure are two special words: inspiration and imagination. We use paper and cardboard materials to tell our stories, just like children do! We draw inspiration from children and the imaginative ways they play and we hope through our own performances to inspire them in turn. From the entire Paper Bag Players team, thank you for being a part of this exciting journey. Get ready to laugh, sing, dance, and take a wild ride: *Here We Go!*



The cast of "Here We Go!" Kevin Richard Woodall, Cassy Pogensky, Rebecca Rand, John Stone and Ted Brackett

A Note for Students to Prepare Them for the Show

One thing that makes live theater different from television and the movies is that the show is taking place in the very space you are, at the very moment you are watching it. Your presence is a very important ingredient: without an audience, there is no show! You are part of the show whether you are silently listening, laughing or clapping. Sometimes, you will be called upon to help the performers, shouting advice, getting out of your seats to dance, and singing along with them. We can't wait for you to see our show – and to be part of it, too! Finally, **we love to hear from you:** If you have time to draw us a picture about your favorite moment, or a letter telling us what made you laugh or think about something in a new way, we will certainly appreciate it. Your artworks and letters are always treasured!

HOWDY!

Our show opens in a happy and sunny Western locale we call Sunshine Town, where everyone gleefully gets along, sings and dances. Along with full cast (Ted, Cassy, Kevin, Rebecca, and John at the keyboard), you'll see horses and a cow, tumbleweed, and a giant friendly farmhand named Big Red. Most fun of all, we'll invite you to join in with us, slapping your knees, clapping your hands, turning in a circle, and dancing in a Western "ho-down." Get ready to join the delightful world of Sunshine Town!



The cast in 2012 performs "Howdy": John Stone, Laura Canty-Samuel, Amy Walsh, Kevin Richard Woodall (Photo: Gerry Goodstein)

Discussion

When the people of Sunshine Town greet each other, they like to say, "Howdy," which is a popular way to say *Hello* in the West. It is short for "How do you do?" Because the word is very welcoming, we thought it's the perfect way to welcome you to our show.

- ✧ How do you like to say Hello to your friends, family and teachers? Do you sometimes say "Hi," "Hey there?" Can you think of ways people say Hello in other parts of the world where English isn't the first language? Does anyone know how to say Hello in Spanish? (*Hola!*) Chinese? (*Ni hao ma!*) French? (*Bonjour!*).
- ✧ What are some ways to greet someone without making any sound? Did you think of a wave? How about a high five, handshake, a fist bump, or even a big smile?
- ✧ How about ways of saying *Goodbye* in English, other languages, or without making a sound?
- ✧ Did you know that in Hebrew and Hawaiian languages, the very same word is used for Hello, Goodbye, and Peace (and even more)? The Hebrew word is *Shalom*, and the Hawaiian word is *Aloha*.

Activity

- ✧ Activity: Play the "Hello" game. In an open space, walk in different directions. Every time you encounter someone, greet them with a different Hello (can be in English, other languages, or the silent methods). Keep moving until you've greeted 10 of your classmates. Challenge yourself to use a few different ways to say *Hello*!

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

It is the first day of school for Cassy, Kevin and Rebecca. Cassy is excited: she can't wait for school to start. Kevin is not so happy: he wants the summer to last longer. Rebecca is nervous: it's her very first day in a new school and she doesn't know anyone yet.



"The First Day of School," 2011 (Photo: Gerry Goodstein)

Discussion

- ✧ Do you remember your first day of school this year? How did you feel? What's the best part about coming back to school?
- ✧ How about when it was your first day in a brand new school? It's normal to feel worried in new surroundings or before you know anyone, even for grownups! But it usually doesn't take long before those nervous feelings go away: all you need is a few friendly faces, a nice teacher, an activity you like, and before you know it, you feel right at home!
- ✧ What if it's not *your* first day at a school, but it is for some new kids? How can you make them feel welcome? (E.g. Talk to them, sit with them at a meal, make friends with them, help them find their way around, get to know them. Remember: you were new once, too!)

TREE ANGEL

Tree Angel tells the story of three trees in a vast forest who are in danger of being chopped down by a lumberjack. Suddenly, a tree angel appears and thinks of a way to save them.

Discussion

✧ Did you realize that the same person (Kevin) plays the tree angel and the woodchopper? When he's the angel, Kevin holds a silver stick that serves as a long trumpet. When he's the woodchopper, the very same stick becomes an axe.

✧ Historical fact: *Tree Angel* dates back to the earliest days of The Paper Bag Players, over 60 years ago! Even though it's a very old play, it has relevance today (that means, the story still is meaningful and important now). At the start of the play, the angel tells us, "The forests of this country are disappearing fast, so I have been appointed to try to make them last." What the angel says is still true: there are forests and jungles in this country



Kevin Richard Woodall as the Tree Angel, 2008 (Photo: Gerry Goodstein)

and others that are endangered by fires, drought and manmade choices (such as logging, clear-cutting, and industry).

✧ The tree angel solves the problem for his trees by giving them feet so they can stand and run away. He also gives them the power to make faces and scare off the lumberjack. Can you think of some ways you might save trees that are in danger?



Amy Walsh, Ted Brackett and Laura Canty-Samuel in "Tree Angel," 2008 (Photo: Gerry Goodstein)

Activity: The trees in *Tree Angel* are given feet so that they can stand up and run away from danger. Can you draw trees with feet, too? What other special powers could you draw on a tree to save it from danger? Now that the tree is safe, can you draw a happy tree?

THE POSTMAN'S DREAM

In this short play, two houses with people inside them await the letter carrier. When he comes, he delivers his letters, walks away, falls asleep, and dreams of a butterfly with shimmering wings.

Discussion

✧ Some things in the world have very clear answers: $2 + 2 = 4$, always! But certain things are what we call open to interpretation: that means it is up to YOU to decide what is true, what is real.

✧ At the end of this play, we ask: Was the postman dreaming of a butterfly, or was it a butterfly's dream? Which do YOU think is the right answer? There is no wrong answer here!

✧ In our shows, we have fun making objects transform, or become more than one thing. Can you remember what transforms in *The Postman's Dream*? (Hint: the postal letters become wings!) What are ways you can transform an object into something it might not have been intended for?

✧ The word dream is interesting because it can mean the things that happen in our minds as we sleep, but also the things we really wish for, and sometimes both of these at the same time! What are some of your dreams, in both senses of the word? Write them down in a story or draw them as a picture.



Amy Walsh, Laura Canty-Samuel and Ted Brackett in "The Postman's Dream," 2009 (Photo: Gerry Goodstein)

ZYMILLAQUIXAR



The show ends with a thrilling trip to a make-believe planet called Zymillaquixar where astronauts Ted, Cassy, Kevin and Rebecca find a funny little alien named Snerp. When they return to Earth, Snerp decides to travel all the way back so he can tell them a joke.

Discussion

✧ Snerp crosses the galaxy to tell this joke: *Why did the Glippittersnee cross the galaxy? To get to the other side!* It's

quite a silly joke: does it remind you of another one?

Activity

✧ Snerp has four ears, three eyes, blue skin, spiky orange hair and antennae. What kind of alien can you draw? How many ears and eyes would it have, what color skin, what kind of hair (if any), and what other features? We would love to receive drawing of your alien (and give them a name, too!), and we may feature them in a gallery for everyone to see!



Snerp the alien, created and held by Scenic Artist Jon Peck, 2019

The Art & Fun of The Paper Bag Players: Workshops

Deepen your students' experience of the arts by taking them from seeing theater to creating it! Our innovative arts educational program is designed to expand upon the theatrical experience and bring to arts education into the classroom. Our workshops, led by The Paper Bag Players Creative Team, are tailored to children Pre-K – 3rd grade. Children become a Paper Bag Player for the Day, engaging in movement, storytelling, and improvisation, as well as creating sets, props, and costumes. Our 1-week and 2-week programs allow for in-depth exploration of each area and culminates in a class performance of the play for family, friends and community. Single 90-minute workshops are process-oriented, giving children the opportunity to fully explore working with paper in art, movement and dramatic play.



Children learn how to make theater out of what is all around them with the help of their own ideas, creativity, and a little bit of paper – just like The Paper Bag Players do! The paper transforms into everything from trombone to telescope, puppy to party dress. This dramatic play exercises children's imagination, as well as social, language and motor skills. Students work as a team and learn how to collaborate. Our workshops provide early readers and writers with an active context for literacy development and for exploring new and abstract concepts. In addition, teachers can witness The Paper Bag Players approach, tools, and techniques to enhance their own curriculum, utilizing low-cost, readily available, expressive paper.

Workshops are designed for groups of 10-25 children, can be held during or after school. For more details, or to book dates and times, call 212-353-2332. For examples of our work, CDs & DVDS, please visit www.thepaperbagplayers.org

The Paper Bag Players *A Non-Profit Theater for Children*

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