

Assistance League® of Southern California
NINE O'CLOCK PLAYERS
Theatre for Children

Spring 2010

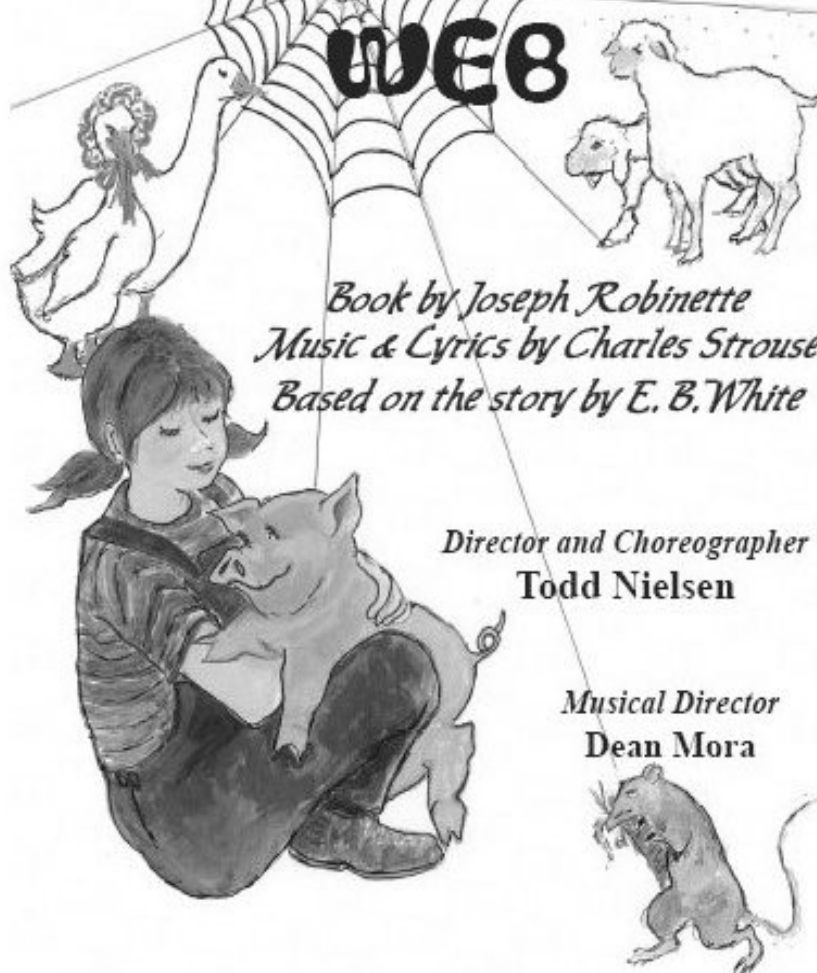


CHARLOTTE'S WEB

*Book by Joseph Robinette
Music & Lyrics by Charles Strouse
Based on the story by E. B. White*

Director and Choreographer
Todd Nielsen

Musical Director
Dean Mora



TEACHER'S GUIDE

Teacher's Guides are developed by members of the Nine O'Clock Players, an auxiliary of Assistance League of Southern California.

Committee Chairman: Roxanna Amdur
Committee Members: Carolyn Barbian, Judy Jensen
Artwork: Carol Onofrio
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Assistance League of Southern California
1370 N. St. Andrews Place, Hollywood, CA 90028

Weekend Performances of *Charlotte's Web*
Saturdays: March 20, 27
Sundays: Feb. 28, March 7, 14, 21, 28
All performances are at 2 p.m.
Ticket Donation: \$12
Group Sales, Birthday Parties and Theatre Rentals available

Box Office:
323-469-1970
E-mail: nop@assistanceleague.net
Website: www.nineoclockplayers.com

Notes to the teacher:

Guides are distributed to facilitate learning and discussion and to provide an enhanced theatre experience for our audience. These pages have been written with young students in mind so that they will have a better understanding of the production they will be seeing.

Seat assignments are predetermined based on age levels of classes. Ushers will ask adults to sit toward the aisles.

The suggested activities are consistent with the California Department of Education Academic Content Standards in English Language Arts, Visual and Performing Arts (Music, Dance, and Theatre). www.cde.ca.gov

THE STORY OF THE MAKING OF A PLAY

ACT I: GETTING STARTED

First, a Play is chosen, one that is appropriate for young audiences. The Production Chairman then selects the following individuals who will help to tell the play's story:

- The Director, who plans how to tell the story by using actors who learn dialogue, songs, and dances
- The Musical Director, who teaches the actors musical numbers and orchestrates the music throughout the entire play
- The Costume Designer, who creates costumes based on the characters in the play
- The Scenic Designer, who builds sets to make the different scenes in the play appear on stage
- The Prop Designer, who fills the stage with objects (such as tables and chairs) to help the actors tell their stories
- The Lighting Director, who chooses colored lights to make the sets and stage look like real places
- The Sound Engineer, who teaches the actors how to use "mics" (microphones) they will wear during the play
- The Stage Manager, who helps everyone work together

ACT II: THE PLAY COMES ALIVE

- Actors audition for the parts in the play. They sing a song, read lines from the script and are given a role to play.
- Beginning with rehearsals, the actors learn their lines, songs and dances, have costumes fitted, learn to use props and move scenery.

ACT III: ON WITH THE PLAY. . . .

The members of the audience arrive and are ushered into the theatre. They take their seats and see the pianos and other musical instruments used by the musical director. An announcer says that the show is about to begin and asks the audience to practice theatre etiquette by remaining quiet while the actors are speaking and to enjoy the play by clapping for the parts they like.

After the play is over, audience members can talk to the actors and ask them about their characters or the play itself.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY: *CHARLOTTE'S WEB*

Wilbur the pig has a problem. In *Charlotte's Web*, based on a story by E.B.White, Wilbur was born too small, and his owner wants to get rid of him. First Wilbur is rescued by the owner's young daughter, Fern, and later he develops a friendship with Charlotte, who happens to be a spider. Wilbur is able to recognize Charlotte's inner beauty. Charlotte comes up with a unique plan to emphasize Wilbur's positive qualities and rescue him from a terrible fate.

How does a spider rescue a pig? Come to see *Charlotte's Web* and you will find out how Wilbur becomes a terrific, radiant, and humble pig!

BEFORE ATTENDING THE PLAY: THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Students who are new to the theatre need guidance in how to behave while attending a play. Some pointers you can share with your students are:

- How the audience acts is important—it helps to make the play fun for everyone. Students must not walk in the aisles while actors are present or try to touch the actor or the props. They can applaud when appropriate, but talking or clapping when actors are speaking or singing is to be avoided so the audience can hear the words and music.
- Audience members may not use any photographic device (flash, digital, cell phone cameras) during the play.
- Please explain to the students the differences between watching live theatre, movies and television.

BEFORE THE PLAY: DISCUSSION

- *Charlotte's Web* is a story about friendship. What would you do to help a friend? Share your lunch? Give your friend a compliment? What else would you do for a friend?
- What are the responsibilities of the actors and the audience? (See Theatre Etiquette above.)
- What careers are involved in producing a play? (See “The Story of Making a Play” in this Teacher's Guide.) Do you think you would be interested in any of those jobs?

BEFORE THE PLAY: VOCABULARY

- Bravery: facing obstacles with courage when plans don't work out quite the way they were supposed to
- Fair: a place where people go to see exhibits of animals and crafts
- Humble: to be very appreciative of other people's worth rather than boast about yourself
- Miracle: something surprising or unexpected that occurs
- Radiant: shining bright; people or things that attract your attention
- Runt: small newborn animal often unable to survive
- Salutations: greetings, saying hello
- Spider's web: a series of lines that create a pattern; a spider's home; also, "web" refers to a network of communication.
- Terrific: very impressive; able to do things well
- Unattractive personality: a person who is not nice to other people and is very impressed with himself

BEFORE THE PLAY: MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Many animals will be seen in the play--pig (Wilbur), rat (Templeton), spider (Charlotte), and farm animals. Discuss with the children how these animals move related to their size and weight. Are the movements heavy/light, sharp/smooth, fast/slow, performed at a high/low level?

Following discussion of the different sizes and movements of the animals, allow children to explore moving like a pig, a rat, and a spider while staying in their own space. Stress moving like the animal (fast/slow, heavy/light), rather than becoming the animal. Children are to move in silence, letting their bodies portray how the animal moves.

BACK AT SCHOOL, AFTER THE PLAY: DISCUSSION, WRITING, SPEAKING

- Pretend that you are a newspaper reporter. Write a report on the miracle of Charlotte's web. Include the 5 W's: who, what, where, when, why.
- Write a description of a good friend. What qualities would a good friend have? Would he or she be selfish or unselfish? Greedy or generous? Humble? Brave? What other qualities might a friend have? Why?

- There are many kinds of spiders. Give an oral report on one type.
- Write a persuasive letter to Wilbur's owner pleading for the life of Wilbur. Use the correct date, salutation, body, closing, and signature.
- Write your own summary or synopsis of the play, but add a different ending. Present your summary to the class.

BACK AT SCHOOL: MOVEMENT

Charlotte the spider spins her web and also writes words in her web. Discuss the design found in a web--curves, straight lines, parallel lines, etc. First in their own space and then around the room, have the children spin their own web encouraging change of design (straight, curved) and moving in high, medium and low levels. Have the children use various body parts to spin their webs--hand, elbow, foot, head, etc. Using the same process as stated above, have children write their names in the web.

In two groups, have group #1 form a design--line, circle, etc. Group #2 will weave in and out of the design spinning its web. Stress using various speeds, sharp/smooth movement, and moving at high, medium and low levels. Music could be added to enhance the movement or provide for variety of movement. Switch roles so that group #1 weaves in and out of the design formed by group #2.

TEACHER'S GUIDE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please help us evaluate the content of this teacher's guide by offering any comments or suggestions.

Please share with us any activities you developed for the children in your charge related to *Charlotte's Web*, either before or after attending the production. Send samples, if possible!

Thank you for your participation. You may mail your ideas to:

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