2013 | 2014

DALLAS CHILDREN’S THEATER

STUART LITTLE

MON | MAY 5 | 10 AM
WELCOME TO THE HOP
A performance needs an audience, so be prepared to play your part!

THEATER ETIQUETTE
When entering the Hopkins Center, show consideration for all those sharing the building by remaining quiet and respectful in common areas.

Be aware and use quiet voices. Remember that live theater differs greatly from watching television or movies or attending a sporting event. Live performers can hear and see you and are easily distracted by any talking or moving around in the audience. Even the smallest sounds can be heard throughout the theater, so it's best to be quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance.

Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation!

Important things to remember: Backpacks, food, drink, and gum are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off all cell phones and note that recording the performance or taking any photos is strictly prohibited. Hats off! It is respectful to remove hats during your time in the theater.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS
Be prepared and arrive early. You should arrive at the theater 30 to 45 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time, parking, and trips to the restroom. You should be in your seat at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.

Have a head count. On the day of the performance be sure to have an accurate head count of students, chaperones, and teachers.

Staying for lunch? Please call 603.646.2010 no later than one week in advance of the show to make a reservation for lunch. The day of the show, bring lunches in marked boxes and give them to a Hop staff member. Lunches will be ready for you after the show in Alumni Hall.

Photo Policy. The Hopkins Center may take photographs during the performance for use on our website or on promotional materials. If you or your students do not wish to be photographed, please see a Hop staff member.

The Show Must Go On! We do not cancel events due to inclement weather. Performances will only be canceled if the artist is unable to reach the theater. Schools will be notified by phone if the performance has been cancelled. We do not issue refunds for weather-related cancellations; please feel free to fill empty seats with other school or community members.

This study guide was created for you by the Outreach & Arts Education team. To download copies of this study guide, see additional resources for this event, or view past study guides, please visit: www.hop.dartmouth.edu/outreach.

ENJOY THE SHOW!
Hopkins Center Outreach Department:
Stephanie Pacheco, Outreach Manager
Mary Gaetz, Outreach Coordinator
Erin Smith, Outreach Assistant

The Hopkins Center Outreach & Arts Education department embodies the Hop’s mission to “ignite and sustain a passion for the arts.” It provides Dartmouth, the community and beyond rare personal contact with artists and a broad context for the performing arts. Unveiling the creative process of extraordinarily diverse artists, Outreach programs touch more than 14,000 lives each year.

DID YOU KNOW?
- The Hopkins Center opened in 1962.
- The Hopkins Center was designed by Wallace Harrison, architect of Lincoln Center and the United Nations Building in New York City.
- Spaulding Auditorium houses one of the largest pipe organs in New Hampshire. Can you find it?
ABOUT THE ARTISTS: DALLAS CHILDREN’S THEATER

Dallas Children’s Theater (DCT), one of the top five family theaters in the nation, serves over 250,000 young people each year through its local main stage productions, national tour, educational programming and outreach activities. Since its opening in 1984, this award-winning theater has endeavored to create challenging, inspiring and entertaining theater, which communicates vital messages to our youth and promotes an early appreciation for literature and the performing arts. As the only major organization in Dallas focusing on theater for youth and families, DCT produces literary classics, original scripts, folk tales, myths, fantasies and contemporary dramas that foster multicultural understanding, confront topical issues and celebrate the human spirit.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Stuart Little tells the surprising story of an extraordinary mouse who is born into an ordinary New York City family. In no time at all, his life becomes a series of adventures and misadventures as he adapts and learns to survive in his super-sized world of humans. First, the well-dressed Stuart is trapped in a window blind while doing his exercises and Snowbell, the malevolent family cat, places his little hat and cane outside a mouse hole, panicking the whole family. Stuart then sails to victory in an exciting boat race in Central Park. The Little family adopts a beautiful bird named Margalo who becomes Stuart’s best friend. Unfortunately, Margalo is forced to flee the city when she is warned that one of Snowbell’s friends intends to eat her. Leaving his home and family behind, Stuart sets out in a gasoline-powered model car on his most thrilling adventure of all—to see the country and bring Margalo home. Along the way he encounters a variety of colorful characters and exciting situations that test his spirit. Hopeful and determined in his quest to find Margalo, Stuart discovers the true meaning of life, loyalty and friendship. The story ends with Stuart heading north, his next adventure just over the horizon.

THE CAST

Mr. Little/Ensemble .................... Nathaniel P. Reid
George/Snowbell/Ensemble .......... Justin Duncan
Mrs. Little/Ensemble ............... Kathryn Taylor Rose
Margalo/Ensemble ....................... Jad Saxton
Angie/Mrs. Morrison/Ensemble .... Sky Williams
Stuart Little ............................ Randall Scott Carpenter
CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: E.B. WHITE

Children’s author Elwyn Brooks White was born in Mount Vernon, New York in 1899, the son of a piano manufacturer. He had two brothers and three sisters. He wrote books for both children and adults. In addition to writing books he also wrote poetry and was an editor at the New Yorker magazine from 1925 until his death in 1985. For most of his life, E.B. White and his wife, Katharine, lived on a farm in Maine with many animals in their barn.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mr. White had this to say about whether or not his stories were true: “They are imaginary tales. But real life is only one kind of life—there is also the life of the imagination.”

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:

GARTH WILLIAMS

Mr. Williams was born April 16, 1912 and died May 8, 1996. Stuart Little was one the first books he illustrated in 1945. Seeing adults and children on busses around New York City reading Stuart Little make him want to keep illustrating. He went on to illustrate over 50 books including Charlotte's Web, A Cricket in Times Square and all of Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House books.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT/ADAPTOR:

JOSEPH ROBINETTE

Mr. Robinette is the author and co-author of 55 published plays and musicals, and was nominated for a 2013 Tony award for the libretto of A Christmas Story, The Musical. He won the Children’s Theatre Foundation of America medallion in 2006 for his “body of dramatic works for family audiences in the United States and beyond.”
CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

LITTLE + LITTLE + LITTLE = BIG

The character of Stuart Little famously appeared to E.B. White in a dream in the 1920s as “a boy who looked like a mouse.” He wrote a few short stories starring Stuart then tucked them away in a drawer, thinking he might someday share them with his nieces and nephews. In 1945, he expanded and collected the small stories into a much bigger book and published Stuart Little, his first book for children. The episodic nature of the book allows Stuart to do many things and have many adventures—each short story takes him to a different place with different characters. Sometimes it can be confusing as Stuart moves from story to story, but each smaller story helps the reader learn a little more about Stuart. When he rescues the ring from the drain we see Stuart’s bravery; we see his resourcefulness when he figures out how to board the bus without being stepped on. E.B. White was asked many questions about the vague ending to Stuart Little, and his reply was: “They are good questions but I did not answer them in the book because, in a way, Stuart’s journey symbolizes the continuing journey that everybody takes—in search of what is perfect and unattainable. This is perhaps too elusive an idea to put into a book for children, but I put it in anyway.”

STORY THEATER

Playwright Joseph Robinette has adapted Stuart Little in the style of story theater. It is a style of theater that combines traditional storytelling and a fully acted out play. This style of performance makes it easy to link together all the stories of Stuart’s life. In keeping with the style of story theater, DCT’s Stuart Little includes an ensemble of actors who all play multiple roles, except for the actor portraying Stuart. With the help of props and many costume pieces, actors assume new characters and change locations frequently throughout the play. Another important piece of story theater is the imaginations of the audience members. The theater is a place where using your imagination is always encouraged. The theatrical term for using your imagination in the theater is “willing suspension of disbelief.” The Dallas Children’s Theater works hard to act their roles convincingly but they also count on the audience members bringing their imaginations with them to the theater.
PRE PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• Read the book Stuart Little out loud. Use your imaginations to think about these questions:
  • What characters do you expect to see onstage?
  • How do you imagine the locations will be created onstage (Central Park, for example)?
  • How do you imagine the scenery, costumes and props?
  • Will there be music? If so, what kind? How will it sound?

• Have you ever had to solve a problem like Stuart? Explain.
• Have you ever wanted to take a journey to a new place? If so, where? Would you want to go by yourself? With someone else? If so, who?
• Have you ever had a good friend move away? How did it make you feel?

POST PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

• Where do you think Stuart Little goes after the story ends? Does he ever find Margalo?
• How did the episodic short stories connect to each other in the play? Was there a specific way you knew when one story was over and the next one was beginning?
• Did you use your imagination while watching the play? If so, when? How did it help you? If you didn’t use your imagination, why not?

VOCABULARY:

Adapt: change to meet different conditions; become used to a new environment or different conditions
Elusive: difficult to find or understand
Ensemble: group of actors all working together in a performance
Episodic: divided into separate but closely related sections
Flee: run away quickly, usually from something or somebody that wants to cause one harm
Libretto: the words of a dramatic musical work such as an opera, including both spoken and sung parts
Malevolent: wanting to cause harm
Resourcefulness: good at solving problems especially in difficult situations
Symbolize: to represent something else
Unattainable: not able to accomplish or understand something
Vague: not clear in meaning or intention
LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

GREAT THINGS = SMALL PACKAGES (GRADES 2-3)
Stuart Little may be small but he does not let that stop him from living life to the fullest. Discuss the ways in which Stuart is able to interact with the world of full-grown humans. In what ways would you interact with the world if you were the size of a mouse? How would you eat your favorite foods? Open your water bottle? Play your favorite video games? What tools would you need to invent and develop to be able to keep doing all the things you love to do? Once you have explored how you would be able to accomplish an activity as a tiny mouse, draw yourself in mouse form doing the activity.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MARGALO? (GRADES 2-4)
Margalo the bird flies off and is never seen again in the story of Stuart Little. Where do you think she goes? What adventures does Margalo have? Write a postcard to Stuart from Margalo. Draw a picture on the front that shows where she is writing from, and then write a short message on the back from Margalo to Stuart telling him how she is doing. Make sure the postcard is addressed to Stuart as well!

MAPPING THE JOURNEY (GRADES 3-5)
If Stuart’s journey to find Margalo brought him to the Upper Valley, where would he go to look for Margalo? Using a map of the area, identify locations where Stuart might look. Locations could include past field trip places, locations from trips with friends and family, parks, lakes, general stores and public monuments. Mark these areas on the map and identify the best path and roads to take to get from one to the next. Have students select a location and have them draw Stuart at the location. If Margalo and Stuart came to your town, where would you want to take them?

JOURNEY JOURNALS (GRADES 4-5)
Take an exciting trip in your imagination. Write down the story of your incredible and imaginative the journey as a set of episodes in journal format. Create dates, locations, modes of travel, events, etc. Write down the most exciting and memorable moments in four or five entries. You can draw pictures or include pictures as well. To read about everyone’s imaginary travel, share journals in a reading corner or on bulletin board.

READING LIST:
By E.B. White:
Charlotte’s Web
The Trumpet of the Swan

By Others:
James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl
The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster
Sarah, Plain and Tall by Patricia McLachlan
Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson
The Cricket in Times Square by George Selden
The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick
Call It Courage by Armstrong Sperry
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor

CREDITS:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garth_Williams
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