Hopkins Center Outreach & Arts Education

SCHOOL MATINEE SERIES

2014 • 2015

Curious George

Theatreworks USA

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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!

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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.
• The first three rows of The Moore Theater are on an elevator that goes eleven feet below ground to create an orchestra pit and can also be raised to the height of the stage to make it larger.
• In The Moore Theater, the area over the stage, called the “fly loft,” is 63 feet tall.
ABOUT THE COMPANY

The mission of Theatreworks USA is to create, produce and provide access to professional theatre for young and family audiences nationwide, including disadvantaged youth and under-served communities. Since their founding in 1961, they have performed for more than 90 million children and their families in 49 states and Canada. Each season, three million children, many of whom have no other access to the performing arts, attend Theatreworks’ original productions. They tour approximately 16 shows each season from their repertoire of 133 plays and musicals. In addition, Theatreworks USA has an extensive multi-cultural roster of guest artists, including storytellers, puppeteers, poets and magicians.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Curious George, a new musical based on the books by Margret and H.A. Rey, features a book by Jeremy Desmon with original music by John Kavanaugh. This production is directed and choreographed by Marcia Milgrom Dodge and features costumes by Tracy Christenson with sets by Michael Schweikardt.

Curious George began its national tour in the fall of 2014. When a show is on tour, that means it moves from town to town and performs in a wide range of venues, from large performing arts centers like the Hopkins Center to elementary school cafeterias. Before leaving on tour, the six actors and stage manager rehearse for two weeks in New York City with the director and choreographer. After they practice and have the performance ready to go, they hit the road. The actors and stage manager typically arrive at the performance venue early in the morning to set up the scenery and to prepare for the performance. Following the show, they pack up the set, costumes and sound equipment into two large vans, drive to the next city, sleep in a hotel and begin the whole routine again the following day.

ABOUT THE BOOK WRITER/LYRICIST

Jeremy Desmon is an award-winning musical theatre book writer whose stories have played to audiences around the world. His musical credits include: The Girl in the Frame, Pump Up the Volume (his adaptation of the 1990 film) and the high-school jukebox musical, Cyrano de BurgerShack as well as touring Universal’s Curious George Live! For more information on Jeremy visit his website at www.jeremydesmon.com

CAST

(Alphabetical by role)
Chef Pisghetti and others: Kyle Lemaire
Curious George: Nick Piacente
Doorman and others: Taylor Janney
Man With The Yellow Hat: Daniel Moser
Netti and others: Carlyn Connolly
Phinneas and others: Joshua Downs
THE STORY
All–You-Can-Eat Meatball Day comes just once a year. George has been waiting all month for this day, a day almost bigger than his birthday! On Meatball Day, George helps his friend Chef Pisghetti cook delicious meatballs and serve them to the hungry crowd, but this year the crowd has vanished! Something is keeping people away. Something pretty big. And that “something” is Phinneas T. Lightspeed and his speedy Meatballs O’Matic machine. In despair, Chef Pisghetti vows to cook no more. Determined to help his friend, George goes on a mission to enter the Chef’s meatballs in the world-famous Golden Meatball Contest….in Rome, Italy! With every swing and flip, George takes the audience on a fun-filled adventure in which he learns more about Rome, meatballs and the “secret ingredient” to cooking than he’d ever imagined!

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND
ABOUT THE AUTHORS
Hans Augusto Rey was born on September 16, 1898, in Hamburg, Germany. He grew up near the world-famous Hagenbeck Zoo and developed a lifelong love for animals and drawing. Margarete Elisabeth Waldstein (who would be known to most of the world as Margret Rey) was also born in Hamburg on May 16, 1906. The two met briefly when Margret was a young girl, before she left Hamburg to study art. They were reunited in 1935 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where Hans was selling bathtubs as part of a family business and Margret was living abroad. Hans and Margret were married in Brazil on August 16, 1935, and they moved to Paris. It was there that Hans published his first children’s book, after a French publisher saw his newspaper cartoons of a giraffe. Raffy and the Nine Monkeys (Cecily G. and the Nine Monkeys in the British and American editions) marked the debut of a mischievous but interesting monkey character. After Raffy and the Nine Monkeys was published, the Reys decided that the monkey deserved a book of his own, so they began work on a manuscript that featured the lovable and very curious George. Eventually the Reys moved to New York City and then to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

DID YOU KNOW?
Before he became Curious George, the Reys’ cheeky monkey character was named Fifi.

LOCAL CONNECTION!
You can visit the Margret and H.A. Rey Center and Curious George Cottage in Waterville Valley, New Hampshire! Located in the southern part of the White Mountain Forest, the center is the former summer home of the Reys. It is approximately 90 minutes from the Hopkins Center.

All images and text are original to this document. Margret and H.A. Rey
CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND (CONT.)

BRUSH UP ON YOUR ITALIAN!

In *Curious George*, part of the story takes place in America and part takes place in Rome, Italy. The performance uses some Italian words.

Benvenuto (BEN-vuh-noo-toe): welcome  
Ciao (chow): hello and goodbye  
Grazie (GRAH-zee): thank you  
Piazza (pee-AHT-zuh): in Italian cities and towns, a large open area in front of shops, houses or other buildings, like a paved town green or square

PLAYING MANY PARTS

Actor is the word we use to describe a person who performs in plays and musicals or on television shows. Actors use their voice, body and imagination to bring a character in a story to life. In a musical like *Curious George*, the actors need to be able to sing, dance and say the words that the playwright has written for their characters. It is the actor’s job to help the audience understand the story by being believable in the role he or she plays. Theatreworks USA performs *Curious George* with six actors, but there are 26 different characters in the show!

When an actor plays more than one role in a play, he or she must use his or her voice and body in a variety of different ways so the audience does not get confused. Listen carefully to the way the actors in *Curious George* change their voices depending on what character they are playing. Watch to see how they walk or move differently. They may also change all or part of their costume or use props to help show which character they are playing. Another important thing that helps the actors play multiple roles is the audience. The imagination of the audience members is very important. The actors use their imaginations, and if the audience uses their imaginations also, then the show is a success!

PRE PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What would you say to a friend or classmate who was sad or upset by something that happened to them? Have you ever been sad or upset and then had a friend or family member help you feel better?
- Have you ever been curious about something you did not understand? How did you find out more about it? Is being curious a good thing or a bad thing?
- Do you ever pretend you are a different person or character, maybe an animal like *Curious George*? How do you use your body and voice to show that character?
LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

BALANCING ACT (GRADES K-3):

In Theatreworks USA’s performance, George is curious about being a waiter. He decides to practice for the job by carrying a tray of meatballs to see if he can balance them. Have students try their hand at being waiters. Stack a tray with blocks or beanbags. Have students attempt to carry the tray with one or two hands and see how far they can carry it before items start to fall off. Turn it into a relay race. Form two groups into two lines, each line with a tray and a stack of blocks, beanbags or empty plastic cups. The first person in line puts all the items on the tray, then lifts and carefully walks the tray across the room without anything falling off. Once across the room, they must unload the tray then race back to hand the empty tray to the next person in line. The next person races across to the items, loads them onto the tray then carefully walks back and unloads the tray. The group with the best time and least “drops” gets best waiter bragging rights! Don’t have trays? Have students use a picture book balanced flat on their hand. After the relay, discuss the different techniques that students used to stay balanced and walk across the room. What was the most successful way to carry the items? Why were some ways less successful than others?

INSPIRE CURIOSITY (GRADES K-3):

Read Curious George stories in class to inspire curiosity and spark the imagination. Below is a list of a few of the 153 titles from the Curious George series:

- Curious George and the Rocket
- Curious George The Perfect Carrot
- Curious George Rain or Shine
- Curious George Race Day
- The Complete Adventures of Curious George
- Curious George
- Curious George’s First Day of School
- Curious George Cleans Up
- Curious George Goes Bowling
- Curious George Rides a Bike

After reading a Curious George story, explore acting out the different roles together as a group. Have students stand beside their desk and explore the character of Curious George. George does not speak English so how does he communicate with his voice? What does the Man in the Yellow Hat sound like? How does each character stand? Sit? Walk? Explore these facets for each character in the story. Use the illustrations for inspiration. Read the story again with all the students acting out the roles together. Include dialogue when appropriate. Discuss how each character differs from the others. How did voices and bodies change to show each character? Were some choices for voice and body better than others? Why?

STUDYING ITALY (GRADES 2-3):

In the performance, Curious George uses the length of his arm to measure distance on a map of Italy. Have students look at a map of Italy and discuss how distance is actually determined. Working alone or in groups, research how far they would have to travel to get from their school to Rome for the Golden Meatball Contest. Have students brainstorm what they already know about Italy. Then have students research Italy and write down five things they did not know. Finally, have them present their findings to the class. Here are a few topics they can research:

- What is the population of Italy?
- What languages do they speak in Italy?
- What does the Italian flag look like?
- What foods do they eat in Italy?
- What are the regions of Italy (like states in US)?
POST PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What was the secret ingredient for Chef Pisghetti’s meatballs? Why do you think it made the meatballs taste better? If you had a meatball recipe, what would be your secret ingredient?
- Discuss the different ways the actors played all of their roles. How could you tell the difference between characters? Which characters were your favorites? Why?

VOCABULARY

**Book:** the words that make up the script of a musical; also a published work of literature  
**Character:** a person or animal portrayed in a play, musical, book or movie  
**Costume:** clothes worn to make a person look like somebody or something else  
**Debut:** first appearance  
**Manuscript:** a story written out by the author before it is published and becomes a book  
**Mischievous:** behaving or likely to behave in a naughty or troublesome way, but for fun and not meaning harm  

**Prop:** short for property; items used by characters on stage to help tell their story  
**Population:** all of the people who live in an area, region or country  
**Repertoire:** stock of musical or other plays that is known by a group of actors and can be performed  
**Role:** an individual part in a play, musical, opera, film or other performance  
**Stage Manager:** person who works backstage to make sure a performance runs smoothly  
**Venue:** places where events are often held such as sports, concerts, plays and musicals

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

To read more about the Reys and their journey to the United States, visit www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/cgsite/history.shtml


STEM activities based around Curious George stories http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/curiousgeorge/

The Margret and H.A. Rey Center and Curious George Cottage http://www.thereycenter.org/

Find other Curious George titles at your local library or check out www.curiousgeorge.com

Fun activities on the Curious George pages at Houghton Mifflin http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/cgsite/


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