Nebraska Theatre Caravan’s
A Christmas Carol
Educator Resource Guide
Dear Educator –
We are excited to welcome you to the 2016-17 Season, filled with engaging artistic and educational opportunities for you and your students. Join us as we celebrate the voices of community and culture that have the power to unite us all. As part of The Boldt Company Beyond the Stage Education Program, this resource guide will provide you with lesson ideas to prepare your students for the upcoming performance. Please feel free to adapt any of the activities in this guide to make them appropriate and meaningful to your students.

The captivating classic tale of Ebenezer Scrooge will come to life for your students as they are reminded the true meaning of Christmas. Students will explore the enduring holiday fable which demonstrates the unfairness of the Industrial Revolution and the necessity for brotherhood and unselfishness.

We look forward to recognizing each unique voice and providing a platform for expression through the arts. From lesson ideas and professional development workshops to backstage tours, allow us to partner with you to provide students with exciting educational opportunities!

For questions contact the education sales department (920) 730-3726 or educationsales@foxcitiespac.com.
WELCOME TO THE FOX CITIES P.A.C.

We are in need of an audience – are you up for the part?

THEATER ETIQUETTE

• When entering the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, remember to show respect for others by waiting your turn and speaking quietly.

• Remember that during the performance the live performers can see and hear you. Even the smallest sounds can be heard throughout the theater, so it is best to remain quiet so everyone can enjoy the performance.

• Applause is the best way to express how much you enjoyed the performance!

• Important things to remember:
  • Student backpacks, gum, drinks and food are not allowed in the theater.
  • Cell phones should be turned off and stowed.
  • Note that recording or taking photos in the theater is strictly prohibited; however, photos may be taken in the lobby.
  • It’s a long way down – please do not drop items off balconies.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Be prepared to arrive early – You should plan on arriving to the Center 30 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time, parking and trips to the restroom.

Know your needs – To best serve the needs of you and your students, please indicate in advance if you have individuals who require special services or seating needs upon making your reservation.

Seating – Seating is based on a number of factors including when the reservation is made, size of group, students’ ages and any special seating needs.

DID YOU KNOW?

• The Center has over 153,076 gross square footage (approx. the same as three football fields!).

• There are a total of over 230 plumbing fixtures!

• It required 75 million pounds of concrete to build the Center. Some of the walls are up to three feet thick to help baffle outside sound.

This study guide was created for you by the Education Team as a part of The Boldt Company Beyond the Stage Education program. To download copies of this study guide or to find additional resources for this performance or view past study guides please visit: www.foxcitiespac.com.

Questions about your show reservation? Contact our education sales team at educationsales@foxcitiespac.com or call (920) 730-3726.

ENJOY THE SHOW!
WISCONSIN ACADEMIC STANDARDS

To assist you in your planning the Wisconsin Academic Standards that are most likely to connect with this performance are listed below.

SOCIAL STUDIES

GEOGRAPHY: Students in Wisconsin will learn about geography through the study of the relationships among people, places and environments.

HISTORY: Students in Wisconsin will learn about the history of Wisconsin, the United States and the world, examining change and continuity over time in order to develop historical perspective, explain historical relationships and analyze issues that affect the present and the future.

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND CITIZENSHIP: Students in Wisconsin will learn about political science and acquire the knowledge of political systems necessary for developing individual civic responsibility by studying the history and contemporary uses of power, authority and governance.

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES: Students in Wisconsin will learn about the behavioral sciences by exploring concepts from the discipline of sociology, the study of the interactions among individuals, groups and institutions; the discipline of psychology, the study of factors that influence individual identity and learning; and the discipline of anthropology, the study of cultures in various times and settings.

MUSIC

ANALYSIS: Students in Wisconsin will analyze and describe music.

THE ARTS: Students in Wisconsin will relate music to the other arts and disciplines outside the arts.

HISTORY AND CULTURE: Students in Wisconsin will relate music to history and culture.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

READING/LITERATURE: Students in Wisconsin will read and respond to a wide range of writing to build an understanding of written materials, of themselves and of others.

ORAL LANGUAGE: Students in Wisconsin will listen to understand and will speak clearly and effectively for diverse purposes.

THEATER

PLAY READING AND ANALYSIS: Students in Wisconsin will attend live theater and read plays, be able to analyze and evaluate the play and articulate (create meaning from) the play’s message for individuals and society.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS: Students in Wisconsin will research and analyze methods of presentation and audience response for theater, the interconnections of theater, community, other cultures and historical periods for use as general knowledge.
ABOUT THE COMPANY
The Nebraska Theatre Caravan was founded in 1975 as a joint project between the Omaha Playhouse and the Nebraska Arts Council “to bring together a small group of professional performer-teachers for workshops in Omaha and out-of-state.” The original 12-week program soon became a full time program touring to Greater Nebraska, Kansas and Wyoming, and in its second season was playing to 45,000 people in 37 communities.

In 1979 the Caravan started touring the Charles Jones adaptation of A Christmas Carol nationally with one company touring the Midwest. Three years later, in 1982, another company was added to tour the East Coast and a third to tour the West Coast in 1987.

Since its inception the Nebraska Theatre Caravan has produced 90 fully mounted productions, many of which were new works, and has played to 160 Nebraska communities and numerous others across the nation. The national tour of A Christmas Carol has performed in over 600 cities in 49 states and 4 Canadian provinces.

The Caravan has had a long history of touring locally, state wide and nationally and as they move forward, their focus will be on producing national touring theatrical productions.

ABOUT THE SHOW
Following the story of miser Ebenezer Scrooge, students will learn what it means to have the true spirit of Christmas. Awakened on Christmas Eve by spirits who reveal to him his own miserable existence, Scrooge is faced with his own story of bitterness and meanness. Traveling to Christmas Past, Present and Future, he sees his life played out before his eyes. Will he learn from his past to change his future or is the true meaning of Christmas to far hidden from him?

Bringing Christmas to life onstage, A Christmas Carol features characters, sets and music larger than life. This celebrated adaption of the beloved story is rich with thrilling ensemble music, alive with color and movement and is created to tell the enduring tale to audiences of all ages. With a cast of over 24 actors, live musicians and Broadway style scenery and costumes, students will cherish this annual holiday classic.
LESSON ONE: A Dickens of a Christmas

OBJECTIVE: Students will research Victorian Era Christmas celebrations and explore traditions.

MATERIALS
- Venn Diagram
- Computer access
- Paper
- Writing utensils
- “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens

OPENING DISCUSSION
We have heard the phrase “write what you know” used to encourage writers to put pen to the page. You can look at several authors and see examples of their experiences woven through their writing. Today we are going to explore some of these and see how Dickens’ own life and culture was represented in his work.

The original publication of “A Christmas Carol” was published and set in 1843, but in the production you will see the time has moved forward forty years to 1883. The producer of the show chose to do this because of the advancements that were made in fashion and development of secular Christmas customs. Although the date has moved, Victorian Era (1837-1901) traditions were still being practiced albeit, more advanced. Today we are going to explore what Christmas was like during Dickens’ lifetime.

WARM UP
- Have students read the biography of Charles Dickens (www.biography.com/people/charles-dickens-9274087)
- Share with students that the time between 1760 and 1850 inventions in the textile (fabric) industry and enormous industrial changes led to extensive industrialization. This era became known as the Industrial Revolution as production was removed from the home and placed in factories.
  - This time saw many people leave the countryside to move towards cities where they were paid very little and lived in terrible conditions.
  - The working conditions were horrific, but since there were long lines of people willing to work, employers could set wages low.
- As a class, discuss Dickens’ viewpoints on the Industrial Revolution and its impact on people.
- The main themes of the Industrial Revolution included: child labor, environment, housing, gender roles, literacy and the economy.
- Assign students one of these topics and instruct them to compare and contrast how these topics are represented in “A Christmas Carol” and how they are still discussed today.

DID YOU KNOW?
- The real Ebenezer Scrooge was actually Ebenezer Scroogie. Dickens had misread Scroogie’s tombstone in a Scottish cemetery to read “mean man,” and wrote it down for future use. The irony is the tombstone really read “meal man” as Scroogie was a wealthy grain merchant and a distiller.
- Scrooges’ sister, Fanny, was based on Dickens’ sister whom he adored. Many of Scrooge’s memory are those of Dickens and his sister. Dickens stayed with Fanny, her husband and their severely hampered young son, and placed the nephew of his favorite sibling at the center of his tale.
- It only took Dickens a month to write “A Christmas Carol” and he rarely worked on it past two in the afternoon, but would take walks of up to 20 miles late at night to clear his head.
- Dickens is said to have popularized the phrase “Merry Christmas” thanks to its repeated use in the book. Without his phrasing we could very well have been wishing each other a “Happy Christmas.”
Charles Dickens’ own story is one of rags to riches. He was born in Portsmouth, England on February 1812, to John and Elizabeth Dickens. The good fortune of being sent to school at the age of nine was short-lived because his father was imprisoned for debt. The entire family, apart from Charles, were sent to prison along with their father. Charles was sent to work in Warren's blacking factory and endured appalling conditions as well as loneliness and despair. After three years he was returned to school, but the experience was never forgotten and became fictionalised in two of his better-known novels “David Copperfield” and “Great Expectations”.

Like many others, he began his literary career as a journalist. His own father became a reporter and Charles began with the journals “The Mirror of Parliament” and “The True Sun.” Then in 1833 he became parliamentary journalist for “The Morning Chronicle.” With new contacts in the press he was able to publish a series of sketches under the pseudonym “Boz.” In April 1836, he married Catherine Hogarth, daughter of George Hogarth who edited “Sketches by Boz.” Within the same month came the publication of the highly successful “Pickwick Papers,” and from that point on there was no looking back for Dickens.

As well as a huge list of novels he published autobiography, edited weekly periodicals including “Household Words” and “All Year Round,” wrote travel books and administered charitable organizations. He was also a theater enthusiast, wrote plays and performed before Queen Victoria in 1851. His energy was inexhaustible and he spent much time abroad - for example lecturing against slavery in the United States. He died of a stroke in 1870 and is buried at Westminster Abbey.

CLOSING DISCUSSION
What similarities do you see between today’s holidays traditions and those of Victorian England?
LESSON TWO: OLD MR. FEZZIWIG & FRIENDS

OBJECTIVE: Students will create their own dialogue based off characters in the story.

MATERIALS
- Paper
- Writing utensils
- “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens

OPENING DISCUSSION
We often learn as much about characters from their conversations as we do from their actions. Based on this story, who are some of the characters that most stand out to you? What makes them memorable? Can you provide examples of how Charles Dickens describes the characters? Today we are going to demonstrate our knowledge of the characters and exercise our imaginations. Suppose, that like Marely’s Ghost, the Ghost of Fezziwig comes to haunt Scrooge. What might he look like?

WARM UP
- Provide students a blank sheet of paper and have them brainstorm what dialogue might happen between the Ghost of Fezziwig and Scrooge. Encourage students to follow the flow of their dialogue and include information that might not be in the story. However, remind students to strive to represent the characters accurately.
- Once students have finished writing their dialogue, have them write a descriptive paragraph outlining what Fezziwig’s Ghost might look like.
  - Hint – Think of how Marley’s Ghost wears chains. Would Fezziwig’s Ghost being chained down based on what he did during his life?
- Look at how Dickens describes Marley’s Ghost, encourage students to included the details of dress and behavior.

DID YOU KNOW?
When Charles Dickens penned “A Christmas Carol” in 1842, the holiday was nothing like it is today. Instead of weeks of buildup and anticipation for the festivities, it was frowned upon and on a rapid decline. During the 17th century, Oliver Cromwell, England’s Lord Protector and devout Puritan, wanted Christmas to return back to a day of religious prayer and piety with no celebratory components. Cromwell and his parliament had soldiers sent out to take food by force if they saw any families celebrating around lavish feasts in their home. Traditional decorations were also banned outright! As a result of the intense scrutiny of England’s holiday traditions, there was almost a complete lack of observance of Christmas over the following centuries.

Between 1837-44, England experienced one of the worst economic depressions ever. An estimated one million people were starving because of lack of employment. In his book, Dickens illustrates how cities were less inclined to give paid holidays and through the ghostly appearance of Ignorance and Want Dickens displayed the widespread poverty and suffering. For Dickens, and later countless readers, “A Christmas Carol” was a spiritual experience that ignited a desire to treat others better. The novella was bound and released on December 19, 1843 and sold for an affordable five shillings (requested by Dickens). By Christmas Eve, all 6,000 copies printed had sold out and continued to sell out with each new edition into the following year.

Source: www.thingssaidanddone.worpress.com
ACTIVITY

• Prior to class, prepare a sample character “life box” for a famous individual. The life box should contain items that are uniquely representative of the character you picked. Display the items in a shoebox, small suitcase or a portable box. If time allows compose a short poem that describes your individual through the props included.

• Ask students to imagine what might be inside the briefcase, purse, backpack or bag of the following people:
  • The President of the United States
  • A teacher
  • A doctor

• How are the items different? What could they reveal about the person they belong to?

• Share with students that in a play, characters typically have props that help reveal information about them. Sometimes in a performance an actor will play multiple roles with props and costumes being used to help the audience tell the difference between characters.

• Present your created character life box, but do not reveal your character. Read your created poem and have students guess your character.

• As a class compose a list of characters in “A Christmas Carol” and assign students to take a role (Note: dependent on class size you may have multiple students in roles).

• Instruct students to research their character using the book and historical references as guides to determine items they may have in their life box.
  • Have students work on creating a list that includes a listing of items they would include in their boxes.

• As a take home assignment, instruct students to compile a box of items. If they are unable to access the actual items their characters would have used, encourage them to make creative mock-ups of the items. Have each student bring to class at least 5 items for their boxes.

• Have students write a short poem that provides clues to their character without revealing their identity.

• Provide students with time to present their life box and poems and have the class guess who the character is.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

There are so many fascinating characters that Charles Dickens has created. As you worked with your assigned character, was it easy or difficult to come up with props that would identify them?
LESSON THREE: VICTORIAN CULTURE

OBJECTIVE: Students will explore the culture of Victorian England through music and creating their own dance sequence to depict proper etiquette.

MATERIALS
Open Space Internet access
Sample Victorian Christmas cards

OPENING DISCUSSION
Music is an important part in this production of *A Christmas Carol* and also in Charles Dickens’ novel. Instead of using chapters, Dickens instead refers to the various portion of the book as staves which is defined as a set of verses (similar to a traditional carol).

WARM UP
• Share with students that throughout the production, the director has selected certain carols to help accompany the story.
• Instruct students to research three traditional carols to use in their production of *A Christmas Carol*.
• Each student will need to provide the following information:
  • History of the song (include composer and lyricist)
  • Lyrics of the song
  • Reasoning for why the carol connects to *A Christmas Carol*

ACTIVITY
• Find examples of Victorian Christmas cards and share with students. Lead a discussion on what they can see depicted in the cards. How do people carry themselves? What can you notice about how they interact with each other? What types of clothes are they wearing?
• Find an open space in the classroom and have each student warm up by imagining they are a character depicted on the card and they are out taking a walk.
• Practice walking in a slow, controlled manner. During their practice, have students walk to a section of the room and take a seat.
• Share examples of how men and women behaved during this time period. (Resource: www.logicmgmt.com/1876/intro.htm) After discussing some Victorian rules of etiquette, have student stand and on the count of five, find a group of three other students.
• Explain that as a group they will decide whether they are a group of ladies, gentlemen or a mixed group.
• They will select several of the activities/movements discussed and link together to form a sequence. They should consider whether they will all perform together, individually, etc.
• Share that each group will repeat their sequence four times.
• Have half the class perform while the other half observes. Ask for comments and evaluation. Then swap over and repeat.

CLOSING DISCUSSION
Based on the music and artwork on the cards that you studied, how do you think a producer or director of a show would incorporate these observations into the show? Share an idea with your neighbor about one thing you think you might see on stage.
LESSON FOUR: YOUR CHRISTMAS CAROL

OBJECTIVE: Students will reimagine “A Christmas Carol” and create their own Ghost of Past, Present or Yet to Come. They will then create their own ending to the story by writing an obituary for Scrooge and determine if he truly changed his ways.

MATERIALS
Drawing utensils  Paper

OPENING DISCUSSION
“A Christmas Carol” has been adapted and recreated over the years since its first publication. Within weeks after it was published, the story was being shared onstage through performances. So it is no wonder that the little tale has continued to live on in not only its original form, but also altered versions. Today we are going to explore various ways the story could have been different as you get a creative voice in this ghostly tale. We will explore how changing some of the characters or their characteristics could impact the story.

WARM UP
- As a class, review the basic outline of “A Christmas Carol” and discuss the key points of the story.
  - Visit by Marley’s Ghost
  - Ghost of Christmas Past’s Visit
  - Ghost of Christmas Present
  - Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come
  - Scrooge’s Change of Heart
- Ask students to think of various examples of adaptations of “A Christmas Carol.” Who has seen movies or read books that follow a similar sequence? How does the story remain the same, yet change?
- Pass out paper and drawing materials and instruct students to select one of the ghosts in the story.
- Share that they can use the paper to draw their ghost, paying special attention to details within their appearance. Or if students prefer to write, have them draft a written description of their ghost.
- Divide students into small group and have them share what was created. As a group, have them discuss how changing certain elements influenced the story.

ACTIVITY
- Share with students that you are now going to look to the end of the story and the character of Scrooge.
- Share with the class that in this project they will choose to write a piece based on as if Scrooge had never changed, keeping his irritable and miserly ways, or based on the changed Scrooge featured in the story.
- Next share with students that the piece they will be writing Scrooge’s obituary.
  - Define an obituary for students and share that it is a published announcement of a death, often accompanied by a short biography of the person. The information is published in a newspaper and is not only used as a news source but also a tribute to the person’s life.
- Explain to students that several years have gone by since the end of “A Christmas Carol” and Ebenezer Scrooge has passed. Share that each student is a journalist for the local paper and is assigned to write the obituary for Scrooge.
  - Main components to include:
Discover the Arts

There is a story -- perhaps fictional -- that, as Charles Dickens was leaving the theatre one night following his performance as Captain Bobadill in *Every Man in His Humour*, a man remarked: "Ah, what an actor you would have made, Mr. Dickens, if it just hadn't been for them books."

It was only a bad cold that prevented the young and out-of-work Charles Dickens from attending a scheduled audition at Covent Garden Theatre. Had he appeared, the course of English literature might have been drastically altered. Although he did not make his living performing, as an actor, Dickens performed frequently and enthusiastically in amateur productions which were often for charitable purposes.

Despite Dickens's unprecedented success as a novelist, his love of the theater never waned. Throughout his life, he seized every opportunity to be near the stage. As playwright, actor, stage manager, director, librettist, it hardly mattered so long as, somehow, he had his hand in.

Source: web-static.nypl.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Dickens was passionate about education and social justice – for all. His own childhood trauma in workhouses compelled him to write about the miserable circumstances that were brought on by poverty in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. In the story, two traits of mankind are brought to light as inheritable; the ignorance of the wealthy and want of the poor. Metaphorically speaking, Ignorance and Want are the children of mankind. These inheritable traits filter through generation after generation because of the poor quality of life that could not change due to the negligence of the wealthy. Scrooge, appalled by the condition of the children is warned to beware of them both which allows Dickens to also deliver his warning message. “But most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written is Doom, unless the writing be erased.” The message – the need for the wealthy to change their ways for the betterment of society.

Source: www.teenink.com
Don’t let this experience end with the drop of the curtain. Keep the conversation going with your students and reflect on the performance that you just attended. Here are a few questions to get the conversation started!

• What do you think the key take home message was from this performance?

• What was your favorite song or scene in the performance?

• Which moment do you remember most from the performance? What was happening?

• What did you learn about the importance of caring for others from this performance?

• Describe the music you heard. How did the music add to the mood or atmosphere of the performance?

• If you were going to tell a friend about the performance, how would you describe it in one sentence?
BOOKS
“What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew” by Daniel Pool
“A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens

WEBSITES
Arts Edge – free digital resource for teaching and learning in, through and about the arts
www.artedge.kennedy-center.org

Nebraska Theatre Caravan
www.christmascarolontour.com

Biography
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/famouspeople/charles_dickens/

This educator resource guide is created as part of The Boldt Company Beyond the Stage Education Program.
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