

# A Guide for Teachers

December, 2011

Chattanooga  
**YOUTH THEATRE**  
Centre

*We're Live*

## Hans Christian Andersen's



*Directed by A. Maria Chatten Carter*

Co-Producers: Steve & Amy Meller, Carl & Paula Henderson,  
Clif & Ruzha Cleaveland, Mitch & Jackie Collins,

Jo Coke



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TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION



# The Cast:

## The Emperor

Jock Pierre	Jordan Alexander	Signal Mtn MS/HS
Lynn Claude	Caroline Anderle	Home School
Flynn Henry	Christian Nichols	CCA
Sally, the stagemanager	Gigi Dodson	CCA
Bobo, the clown	Damon Miller	Home School
Penini Panera	Will Hunt	Bright School
Pipi Panera	Genna Williams	Silverdale Academy
Daniel Carpenter	Jared Alexander	Signal Mtn MS/HS
Sara	Emily Horton	Hixson High School
Rosey	Aubrey Floyd	Bright School
Lily	Loren Flyod	Bright School
Daisy	Maggie Meller	Nolan Elementary
Stage Manager	Holly Alexander	Signal Mtn MS/HS
Student Choreographers (scoundral dances)	David Couter	CCA
	Damon Gillespie	CCA

## Director's Notes:

I decided a year ago that I wanted to do another fairy tale that we as a cast created. I wasn't sure which one to do but then decided on Emperor's New Clothes. It's one that isn't done very often and I've not done it before so I thought it would be fun. Then I had to come up with a style. I wasn't sure about this, I didn't want to do it traditionally, that would be too easy. So, I pondered, and pondered, and pondered until I finally ran across vaudeville. I love this style of theatre partially because it derives from another one of my favorite styles, Commedia dell'Arte. So, I jumped in head first to read and watch all things vaudeville. It was so inspiring and eye opening. I suddenly wanted to be a part of this creative explosion. I wanted to learn to do it all: juggle, walk on stilts, swing from trapezes, dance, sing, play all kinds of instruments, just anything I could think of. And with that I started working with a cast that was up for anything. My excitement fed their excitement that fed my excitement. We have spent the last 5 weeks working on their acts, the script and being overwhelmed by all the things that are possible. Finally, we came up with a show. We hope you all enjoy it as much as we've enjoyed putting it together. And we hope you leave the theatre excited about coming up with your own acts that will excite others back into the seats of theatre once again.

# Hans Christian Andersen 1805 - 1875

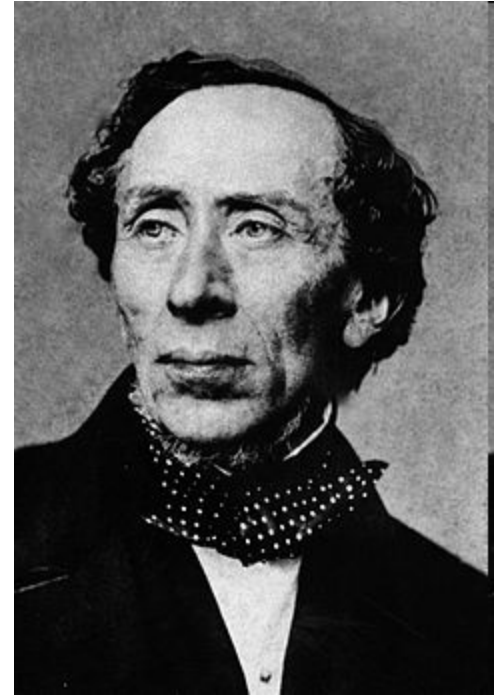
The Ugly Duckling, Thumbelina, The Little Mermaid. There are few people in the world who are not familiar with the work of Danish writer, Hans Christian Andersen. Though best known for his fairytales, Andersen spanned the breadth of literary genres, writing novels, poetry, plays and travel journals.

He was born in 1805 to a washer woman and a shoe maker in Odense, Denmark and spent his childhood in provincial poverty, but with an active imagination. His father would nurture this by taking to performances at a local theatre. Upon the death of his father, a young Hans Christian was apprenticed to some artisans before moving to Copenhagen to work as a singer and actor. Because of his good soprano voice, he eventually became associated with the Royal theatre until his voice changed. It was at this time that someone commented on his ability as a poetry, thus setting the direction for the rest of his life.

Jonas Collin, a director of the Royal Theatre secured funding to send Andersen to grammar school. These were tough years for him. He was older than the other grammar school students and tall and lanky. His sensitive nature caused him much anguish as the head master felt the need to toughen him up.

In 1827, Jonas Collin again secured funding to send him to Copenhagen University. After completing his studies Andersen traveled extensively throughout Europe, writing travel journals of his trips. His first acclaimed novel, *Improvisatore*, was set in Italy and had a somewhat autobiographical story. He met many renowned writers during his many travels including Balzac, Dumas, Robert and Elizabeth Browning (who wrote a poem in his honor), and became friends with Charles Dickens.

His love life seems to have been less successful than his literary life. Andersen had a series of unrequited love interest, including a young woman named Riborg Voigt, who married another man. After his death a small pouch was found containing a letter from her to him. He also had an infatuation with the Swedish opera singer, Jenny Lind. In a letter, he expressed his interest in marriage, but her reply made it clear that she saw him as more of a brother. It was for her that he wrote the fairytale, *The Nightingale*, which is the origin of her nickname, the "Swedish Nightingale." For all his attempts, Andersen died a bachelor.



*In this excerpt from a later story of Andersen's, you can see his special mixture of language and magic.*

## **Which Was The Happiest**

by Hans Christian Andersen (published in 1872)

"Such lovely roses!" said the Sunshine. "And each bud will soon burst in bloom and be equally beautiful. These are my children. It is I who have kissed them to life."

"They are my children," said the Dew. "It is I who have nourished them with my tears."

"I should think I am their mother," the Rose Bush said. "You and Sunshine are only their godmothers, who have made them presents in keeping with your means and your good will."

"My lovely Rose children!" they exclaimed, all three. They wished each flower to have the greatest happiness. But only one could be the happiest, and one must be the least happy. But which of them?

"I'll find out," said the Wind. "I roam far and wide. I find my way into the tiniest crevices. I know everything, inside and out."

Each rose in bloom heard his words, and each growing bud understood them.

His earliest fairytales seem to be retellings of stories his mother had told him and were published in 1835. Soon he began writing completely original fairy tales. In 1837 his third volume was published containing some of his best known stories such as *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Little Mermaid* and *The Ugly Duckling*. Out of the 156 stories in his published works, only 12 came from folktales.

Hans Christian Andersen died on August 4, 1875 in the house of Moritz Melchior and his wife. Over the years, many statues have been erected in his honor throughout Denmark and the world. He left his stories to live on after him, enchanting many generations with his unique storytelling abilities.

## **Web Sources**

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# American Vaudeville



Our production of The Emperor's New Clothes is presented in the form of American Vaudeville. This style of theatre grew out of the variety entertainments that sprung up during the Civil War to entertain soldiers on furlough. Minstrel shows, honky tonks, dime museums, medicine shows and burlesque offered a bawdy variety of acts consisting of singers, dancers, acrobats, jugglers, magicians and comedians. But after the Civil War, a group of theatrical entrepreneurs began to organize a kind of entertain that would appeal to the growing middle class.

The term "Vaudeville" seems to have come from the name of "Sargent's Great Vaudeville Company" of Louisville, Kentucky, formed in 1871. It has no definitive meaning, though some say it is a French term that means either "worth of the City" or "songs of the town." It is also likely that the word was never meant to mean anything, but rather to merely give the entertainment a slight air of sophistication.

Vaudeville quickly began distancing itself from the earlier forms of variety entertainment by billing itself as clean family fun. Tony Pastor, the first to offer "clean variety," opened his first show in 1881. As vaudeville gain popularity, it began to organize into chains of theatres across the country known as "circuits." The biggest was owned by B.F. Keith and Edward F. Albee who's premiere theatre was "The Palace" in New York City. It was seen as a sign of distinction to have played "The Palace." The Keith-Albee circuit enforced strict codes on appropriate material. In the Keith/Albee circuit, all acts previewed on the Monday matinee to make sure they were acceptably clean for the audience. Any changes in the material would be left for the performers in blue envelopes. From this comes the term "blue material," meaning anything crass or dirty. Anyone not abiding by these standards would be banned from any Keith-Albee theatre. Since, by the beginning of the 20th century, most vaudeville theatres were in the Keith-Albee circuit, it was wise to follow their rules.

A typical vaudeville bill went this way:

- Opening "silent act" like acrobats or animals
- sister or brother acts like the Gumm Sisters which included a young Judy Garland
- comedy sketch or short play
- novelty act
- rising or falling star acts
- Intermission
- Big act like choirs, orchestras or something with a large set
- Next to closing was reserved for the headliner such as Al Jolson, Kat Smith or Eddie Cantor.
- Closing spot was an act that would encourage the audience to leave before the next show. Later, a short film was used as a closer.

What killed vaudeville. In truth, the end was more evolutionary as vaudeville acts began to perform on the new mediums of radio and movies. Later, they would find the new medium of television a perfect replacement for the variety stage. Most of the great comedians of the twentieth century, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Jackie Gleason, started in vaudeville and went on to successful television and movie careers. Like all great art forms vaudeville's death nurtured new beginnings.

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# Activities

## Creating Stories on Stage

Here is a simple series of steps to involve your whole class in the preparation and presentation of a play. Using these steps will avoid any need of them learning lines and ensure every student has a part to play.

### 1. Read and analyze

Have students choose a story. (Start with a well-known story. When your class is comfortable with this, they can create something original). Read or tell the story to the class. Ask and have the students answer the following questions:

#### Who-characters:

How many? Who are they? What is their relationship to one another?

#### Where-setting:

Where does the story take place? How many different settings will be needed?

#### When-period:

Does this story happen a long time ago or recently? What kinds of clothes will the characters wear? What kinds of objects will they use? (You may want to use pictures to give your students a better idea of different periods in history).

#### What-problem:

What happens in the story? What kinds of problems do the characters run into? You might want to outline each scene and number them.

#### How-plot:

How do the characters get into trouble? How do the characters try to solve their problems? How do their solutions affect the other characters?

#### Why-motivation:

Why do the characters behave the way they do? What has happened before the play to make them do the things they do?

## 2. Sound Play

This exercise will allow students to participate actively in the story while getting to know it better before actually taking on parts.

- List all the sounds that could possibly happen within the story (i.e. wind, horse galloping, music, running water, fire).
- Assign each sound to a different student or group of students. (Sounds can be made with the voice, instruments or other objects, such as crumpling a plastic bag to make the sound of fire).
- Tell the story, mentioning the various sounds as cues for the students to make their particular sound effect (i.e. "As he walked over the bridge, he could hear the water below").

## 3. Adding Dialogue

Practice the sound play a few times until everyone is comfortable with the story and the sounds. Choose some students to add in dialogue. Retell the story, mentioning the various sounds and leaving places for dialogue to be filled in by the chosen students:

*Narrator:* When Little Red Riding Hood saw the wolf in Grandmother's nightgown, she said..."

*LRRH:* "Grandma, what big eyes you have."

## 4. Giving the play legs

When your students have a good idea of the story and the dialogue spoken by the characters, it is time to put the play on its feet:

- Go over with your students the various activities performed by the characters in the play.
- Choose an appropriate number to act out those activities in the order that they happen within the story.
- Allow these students to act out those activities as the story is narrated and other students add the dialogue as practiced in Step 3. Have students performing the dialogue match the words to the actions being acted out.

## 5. Creating visual elements (optional)

All visual elements can be created with whatever art supplies and found objects you might have. Theatrical designers are creative problem solvers. So are children when they are asked to be.

- Divide students into three groups: scenery, costumes, properties.
- Have each group create the visual elements given the needs of the story and the period in which the play is set.
- Materials can be anything available: cardboard, paper, paints, markers, garbage bags, old packing materials, or old clothing.

## Presenting the Play

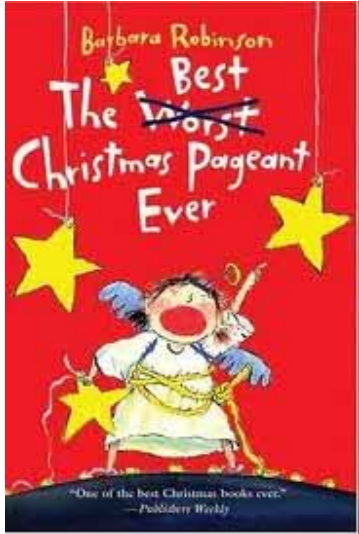
Because a play cannot exist without an audience, plan to present your class's creation. You should act as director, being sensitive to the ideas of your cast.

- Be sure to put your sound orchestra in a prominent place so they understand the importance of their part in the play.
- You don't need a large space to do this as long as you design your visual elements with your performance space in mind.

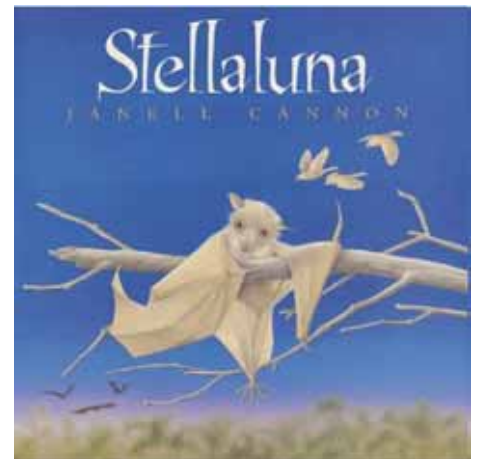
Where the audience is placed is as important as where the performers do their play. Your audience need not be placed on one side and the actors on the other. Plays can be made more exciting by inventive placement of the audience.

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