BOOTH TARKINGTON CIVIC THEATRE



CLASSROOM RESOURCE GUIDE

Play Originally Produced by the National Theatre of Great Britain

Adapted and Originally Directed by Katie Mitchell

Based on the book by Dr. Seuss



Welcome to **Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre** and our exciting new production of Dr. Seuss's THE CAT IN THE HAT! Building on over 70 years of offering excellent theatre education programming for youth, our Children's Theatre Series exists to bring quality, professional, locally-produced theatre for young audiences to central Indiana and beyond. We're so glad you will be joining us as we revisit this exciting, entertaining and educational show!





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THE CAST

The Boy **Nolan Daugherty**



The Girl (Sally) **Emily Bohannon**



The Fish **Danny Kingston**



The Cat in the Hat



Kendrell Stiff





Thing 1/Kitten #1 **Alex Smith**



Thing 2/Kitten #2 **Karen Woods Hurt**



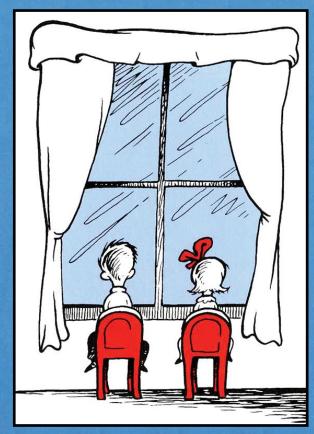
Kitten #3 **Lizz Krull**

Synopsis

Sally and her brother, beyond bored, stare out from their house at a cold, wet day. With their mother gone and nothing planned, a dull day looms large. Things take a dramatic turn when the Cat in the Hat swoops in, promising the kids good games to play. Their pet Fish, however, insists that the Cat, no matter what he promises, should not be in the house while their mother is out.

To prove his tricks are good fun, the Cat balances Fish, still in his bowl, atop an umbrella. Then the Cat constructs a tall tower of balancing objects, adding a book, teacup, cake and rake to his act, and begins hopping on top of a ball. Of course the tower and Cat come crashing down. The boy and Sally watch the disaster unfold in slow motion. Fish is fine, but his protests grow more insistent.

A whole new level of chaos erupts when the Cat brings in a large red wooden crate. He opens the box, and Thing One and Thing Two run out, wearing red suits and topped with wild blue hair. They politely shake hands with Sally and her brother, and then explode into action. The children are not sure what to do. The Things pull out kites and fly them down the hall, knocking over pictures on the wall. They rampage around the house, spreading mayhem through the bedrooms and back again, making big bumps and thumps and doing "all kinds of bad tricks."





They have thrown the home into unbelievable disarray when Fish, shaking with fear, sees a glimpse of Mother returning home. The boy quickly takes charge. He captures the acrobatic Things with nets and insists that Cat box them up and take them away. The Cat does as he is told; he locks up the box and leaves with a sad smile, but the trail of ruin remains. Sally and her brother don't know what to do.

Some tense moments pass. Then the Cat re-appears driving his extraordinary picking-up machine and promising to clean everything up. Using the machine's mechanical hands, Cat puts back the cake, the rake, the gown, the milk, strings, dishes, fan, cup, ship and finally, the Fish. Then the Cat leaves with a tip of his hat. It's unbelievable but true: he has returned the house almost completely to its original order. The siblings replace a few chairs, put away a ball. They sit back down quickly in their window seats. It appears as if they've never moved. Their mother enters and doesn't suspect a thing.

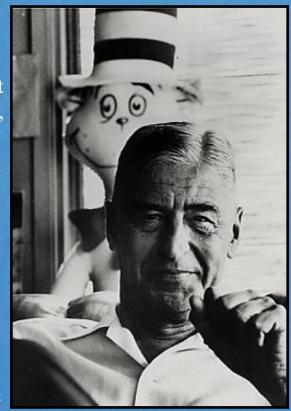
But what answer will she get when she asks about their day?

Dr. Seuss

Theodor "Ted" Seuss Geisel, better known to the world as the beloved Dr. Seuss, was born in 1904 on Howard Street in Springfield, Massachusetts.

His mother, Henrietta Seuss Geisel, had worked in her father's bakery before marrying Ted's father, often memorizing the names of the pies that were on special each day and "chanting" them to her customers—"Apple, mince, lemon – peach, apricot, pineapple – blueberry, coconut, custard and *squash*!" If Ted had difficulty getting to sleep, she would sing him her "pie-selling chants" and read bedtime stories to him with the same rhythm. As an adult, Ted credited his mother with both his ability and desire to create the rhymes for which he became so well known.

His father owned a brewery until the onset of Prohibition, a time in the 1920s when buying and selling alcohol was made illegal. Ted's father then took a job as superintendent of city parks, which included the local zoo. There, young Ted spent many days drawing the animals and eventually developing his own unique style. Though Ted would later gain fame because of his unique artistic style, he never once had an art lesson.



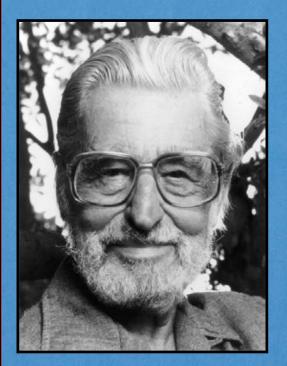
As a magazine cartoonist, Ted began signing his work under the name of "Dr. Theophrastus Seuss." (Theophrastus was the name of the toy stuffed dog he'd had since he was a little boy and that he kept with him all through his life.) He later shortened that to "Dr. Seuss." And that's how Ted Geisel became Dr. Seuss. He also has written books under the name Theo LeSieg—Geisel spelled backwards.

Even though most people pronounce his name Soose (like it rhymes with goose) the Seuss in his real middle name is pronounced Zoice (like it rhymes with voice).

Dr. Seuss worked as a writer and cartoonist at various magazines before being hired to draw ads for a pesticide company. He drew nasty looking bugs for 15 years.

Dr. Seuss was not a doctor, although Ted did consider pursuing a Ph.D. in English. After graduating from Dartmouth, he went to Oxford University in London, where he studied literature. Though his Oxford notebooks include some notes on the lectures, they reveal a much greater love for doodling.

One day after class, his classmate Helen Palmer (who would become his first wife) looked over at his notebook. "You're crazy to be a professor. What you really want to do is draw," she told him. "That's a very fine flying cow!" Ted realized that Helen was right. He really did want to draw. So, he left higher education, returned to the U.S. and became a cartoonist.



It was when Dr. Seuss was returning to the U.S. from a European vacation, by boat, that he wrote his first children's book. His boredom on the long trip inspired him to write a poem to the rhythm of the ship's engine. The result was the book *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, which was rejected, depending on the version of the story he told, by either 20, 26, 27, 28, or 29 publishers. The book was finally published and became a hit. But Dr. Seuss didn't become a household name until he wrote *The Cat in the Hat* in 1957.

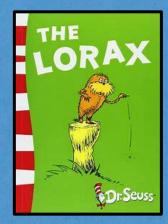
Ted's memories of Springfield can be seen throughout his work. Drawings of Horton the Elephant meandering along streams in the Jungle of Nool, for example, mirror the waterways in Springfield's Forest Park. *And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street* is not only named after a real street, it is filled with Springfield imagery, including a look-alike of Mayor Fordis Parker on the reviewing stand, and police officers riding red motorcycles, the traditional color of Springfield's famed Indian Motorcycles.

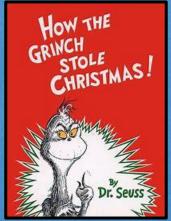
Geisel had no children of his own. When asked how he was able to write so well for children when he didn't have any he said, "You make 'em, I amuse 'em."

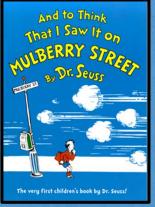
Dr. Seuss claimed his ideas started with doodles: "I may doodle a couple of animals; if they bite each other, it's going to be a good book."

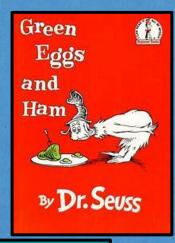
Dr. Seuss's birthday, March 2nd, has been chosen as Read Across America Day by the National Education Association (NEA). Each year it's a day for kids, students and teachers to focus on reading and how important and entertaining it can be.

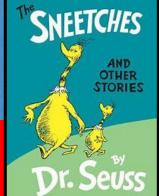
Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1984 and three Academy Awards, Seuss was the author and illustrator of 44 children's books, some of which have been made into animated television specials and films for children of all ages. Even after his death in 1991, Dr. Seuss continues to be the best-selling author of children's books in the world.











Information excerpted and compiled from:

Seussville - http://www.seussville.com/#/author

Encyclopedia of World Biographies - http://www.notablebiographies.com/

For a complete biography of Dr. Seuss, go to http://www.seussville.com/#/author

Dr. Seuss National Memorial – http://www.catinthehat.org/history.htm

Kidzworld - http://www.kidzworld.com/article/4013-dr-seuss-biography



WHAT WOULD YOU DO? THE MORAL MESSAGE OF THE CAT IN THE HAT

The Cat in the Hat has no moral, in the Aesop's Fable sense of the word. Just about everything that everyone does in *The Cat in the Hat* would clearly be off limits in real life, starting with using a talking goldfish as an all-day babysitter. The Cat comes, the Cat wreaks fun havoc, the Cat cleans up and goes away, leaving no trace of his presence. Except, as the nameless narrating boy relates:

...our mother came in
And she said to us two
"Did you have any fun?
Tell me. What did you do?"

The Cat has cleaned up the physical mess he made, but has left a moral mess behind: what should Sally and her brother do?

One mother tells a story about this moment in the book.

My daughter always looks up at me and says, "I would tell you." But I don't believe her. I think it's quite possible that the Cat in the Hat has already been here, and she's just telling me what I want to hear.

Resources:

An interesting comment-board discussion of moral and ethical dimensions of *The Cat in the Hat* – http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/233093.The_Cat_in_the_Hat A New Yorker article which both indulges in and mocks multiple over-analysis of *The Cat in the Hat* – http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2002/12/23/021223crat_atlarge Online chapter from W.C. Crain. (1985). *Theories of Development*. Prentice-Hall. pp. 118-136, outlining Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Reasoning – http://faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/kohlberg.htm

Discussion

Of course, in real life any mother would want to know if an intruder had come into her house while her children were there alone, however fun he seemed to be and however neatly he picked up after himself. It would also be a very, very good idea for those children to tell her about it. But *The Cat in the Hat*, clearly a wacky fantasy, lets us think about things in a fun way that we will, at many times in our life, have to think about very seriously indeed.

According to Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development, how the children think about answering their mother's question will give insight into how far along they are on the stages of moral development. There are three main levels:

1. Self-interest – what's in it for me? At this level, individuals try to get what they want and avoid punishment. In some ways, the fish-in-the-pot embodies this attitude. As he sees the Mother approaching, he shrieks:

"Look! Look!"
And our fish shook with fear.
"Your mother is on her way home!
Do you hear?
Oh, what will she do to us?
What will she say?
Oh, she will not like it
To find us this way!"

At this stage of moral development, the children might decide to conceal the truth because the Cat has removed all the evidence—they can avoid punishment, and hope the Cat will come back for more fun. Or, they might decide to reveal the Cat's antics because they are frightened of what the Cat might do if he does return.

2. Conventional Morality – what are the rules? At times, the fish-in-the-pot embodies this sort of reasoning as well, shrieking at the Cat:

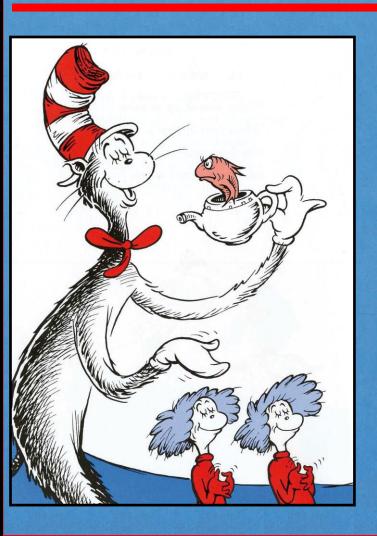
"You SHOULD NOT be here When our mother is not. You get out of this house!" Said the fish in the pot.

If the children are at this stage of moral development, the children might tell their mother the truth about the Cat if they believe they have broken a rule and should be disciplined for doing so. On the other hand, if they have NOT been given a specific rule to the contrary (from somebody with more status than a goldfish) they might feel under no obligation to reveal the recent presence of the mischievous Cat.

3. Post-Conventional Morality – This stage involves understanding that compromise between competing points of view is necessary for society to function. It also involves being able to see the world from another's point of view while upholding universal ethical principles. What would the Mother do in their shoes, and why? Many psychologists, including Kohlberg, doubted that many people could consistently achieve the highest level of moral development. It does seem daunting, and perhaps beyond the range of the fish-in-the-pot, but Dr. Seuss understood how important it is to see from another's point of view. His final question points us out of the book in the direction of empathy.

What would you do? If your mother asked you?

Share Your Stories!



Dr. Seuss can tell the craziest stories but they still remind you of how you feel about things in your real life. A giant cat in a striped hat might never have come knocking on your door, but you know what it's like to make a mess you might not be able to clean up before your mother sees it. You probably will never be asked to eat green eggs and ham, but what is this broccoli stuff everyone wants you to try? And an elephant is not likely to carry you around on a flower, but you know what it's like when people won't listen to what you have to say.

Dr. Seuss knows that to tell a good story you need to help readers understand the characters in it and what they are feeling and doing. He doesn't only use words to do it. His pictures tell a lot, too.

Let's take a look at some of the elements that help make a good story.

Who's in the story?

Stories need a hero, but it doesn't have to be someone who wears a cape and can fly through the air. It can simply be someone who is trying to be a good person and do what's right. But if the hero is able to do what they want too easily, that's not much of a story. It would be like playing games by yourself all the time—there aren't any surprises and you always know who is going to win. That's why the story needs someone who is trying to keep the hero from her goal. You can call him the bad guy or the villain, but he doesn't have to be evil. He just needs to be doing something that is a problem for the hero.

- Who do you think is the hero of *The Cat in The Hat?*
- Who is the villain?

Where does the story happen?

Every story has to take place somewhere. It doesn't have to be in a place that's exactly like where you live. There are some very exciting stories that happen under the sea or on a different planet. But even a strange place can be something like one you know. That can help you better understand the story and the people in it.

- Where do Sally and her brother live?
- How is it like where you live?
- How is it different?

What happens in the story?

This is probably the most fun part. Anything you want can be in a story. The best stories, like *The Cat in the Hat*, take you on a trip with a beginning, a middle and an end. The beginning often starts with the normal life of the people in the story. In the middle something happens that changes things for them. What happens to them is so important that they have to do something about it. In the end you find out how the changes turn out for everyone.

- What are the beginning, middle and end of *The Cat in the Hat*?
- What would happen in the end of the story if the middle changed?

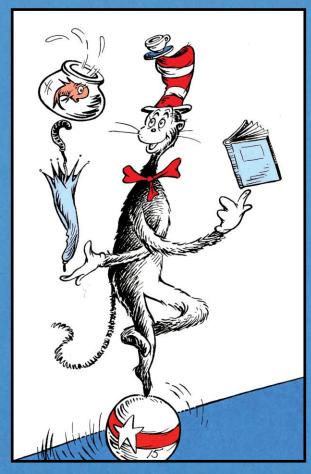
You can take all these parts and use them to make any story you want. You can write it, or draw it, or act it out. Or all three! What will make all these parts into a great story?

Your imagination!

Reflect and Act Out!

Balancing Act

- Have your students find an individual space in the room.
- Inform your students that when you say that magical G.O. word that rhymes with throw, you would like them to pretend to balance a beach ball on one hand.
- Encourage your students to make BIG physical choices and to experiment with different levels and large facial expressions.
- Inform your students that when you say that magical G.O. word that rhymes with doe, you would like them to also balance a tea cup on their toe, without falling.
- Ask your students how they might physically change their bodies to balance these two items at the same time. How do they feel about balancing these items? Are they nervous, confident or focused?
- Tell your students that when you say that magical G.O. word that rhymes with bow, you would like them to pretend to add three large books on their head.
- Wander around the room to give your students specific positive feedback.
- Tell your students that they may drop their imaginary items.
- Allow your students to pretend to balance items of their own choosing. Ask your students to start off with one item and when you say that magical G.O. word that rhymes with mow, they can add another one. Encourage your students to use different body parts to balance the items, like their pinky finger or elbow.
- Tell your students that when you tap their shoulder they can tell the class what items they are balancing.
- Tell your students that they may drop their imaginary items.



Clean Machine

- Reveal to your students that they will be creating a large cleaning machine similar to the one in *The Cat in the Hat*.
- Ask your students to come up with a gesture and sound to represent a part of the machine. The gesture and sound has to be easily repeatable and stay in the same area, so no cartwheels or screaming.
- Ask one student to start. The first student repeats the exact same gesture and sound again and again. The other students may join in one by one when they feel ready and do their own gesture and sound effect. Remind your students that the parts of a machine must connect and work with each other or the machine will not work properly.
- Once everyone has joined the machine, you can ask the students to speed up, slow down and eventually break.
- You can repeat this activity and ask your students for suggestions for other machines they could create. You can also ask your students to create an emotion machine for example, a cheering up machine. Once you have successfully created an emotion machine you can take suggestions from your students for other emotionally endowed machines.

Reflection on the Story

- Ask your students to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Inform your students that you will be passing around a talking stick and that when they receive it they can share one thing they remember from the story *The Cat in the Hat. Ground Rules:* "If someone shares the same thing you were going to share, show me silently by touching your nose."

Reflection on the Lesson

- Ask your students to sit in a circle.
- Pass around the talking stick and have your students share one thing they remembered from today's lesson.

Backstage Pass!

Attending a performance at a theatre can be a very exciting experience! Things we see and hear on stage can transform and transport an audience in ways we may not have thought were possible without the special effects we see on television, in video games or at the movies. In the theatre, we use a special kind of creative magic that encourages all of us to use our imaginations and truly believe that what we're seeing is real even though we know it may not be very "real" at all!

Too put it simply, we use the art of theatre to tell stories—just like you do at home or school! We just use some very fancy

elements to help bring those stories to life. Here are some descriptions of those elements:

Actors

ACTORS are people. People just like you. ACTORS are special because they have the ability to become someone that they are not. They use their bodies and their voices to become (or portray) CHARACTERS in our stories. We, the audience, use our eyes and ears to watch and listen to what the ACTORS on the stage are doing and saying (or sometimes singing!) so we can follow the story. The actors in THE CAT IN THE HAT are *very* active..! You can see a list of their names on page 2 of this Guide.

Scenery

SCENERY provides the setting for our plays (our stories!) and musicals (our stories with music!). Also called "the set", the SCENERY can tell the audience where the story takes place. It can be the inside a building or in a cave. Or maybe outside in a field, city or forest. Or maybe on the ocean. The SCENERY for THE CAT IN THE HAT features a house and a tree—the tree tells us that the story begins outside of the house. But then we see things like chairs and tables and a fish bowl—doesn't that mean the story is set inside of the house? See if you can figure that out when you watch the show!





Lighting

LIGHTING might be the most important technical element of any theatrical production. Without LIGHTING, we wouldn't be able to see anything happening on the stage. The director of the play also uses lighting to help the audience know where to look and what to pay attention to. The Lighting Designer can use lights to create different moods and feelings by changing colors or patterns of the lights on the stage. LIGHTING can tell us if it's daytime or nighttime in our story or sunny or rainy, too! The lamps that create LIGHTING on stage are not like the lamps we have in our homes or offices. Here is a picture of one...



Sound

SOUND is a word that describes things we hear. In the theatre, SOUND can be many things. It can be the sound of the actors' voices as they are speaking or singing and "telling" the story. It can also be the sound of live or recorded music if the story is being told as a musical. SOUND can also refer to "sound effects". Sound effects are things that we can usually recognize that can enhance the story being told—they can tell us more about what we are experiencing. SOUND can also tell us how to feel. For instance, the sound of a cow mooing might tell us that our story takes place on a farm. The sound of a train getting louder and louder might make us feel anxious or frightened. THE CAT IN THE HAT has *lots* of sound effects that will make our story exciting and entertaining!



Costumes



Many people wear COSTUMES on Halloween so that they can become someone or something they are not. It's the same with actors. COSTUMES are the clothing an actor wears on-stage when the are portraying a character. The COSTUME they are wearing can tell us a lot about the character in the story—social status—are they rich or poor? Occupation—are they a farmer or a soldier? Time of year—Is it summer or winter; past or future? Location—Are they from a foreign land or in a neighborhood we recognize? The costume designer works closely with the director to make sure the actors look just right for the story being told. In THE CAT AND THE HAT, we have the special challenge of trying to make the COSTUMES look very similar to Dr. Seuss' drawings. This requires putting lines or accents on the COSTUMES where you might not normally imagine they'd be.

PROPS is a word that is short for "Properties". We use this word to describe the items that an actor might carry on stage with them. They can also be items that are set on the stage to help create the world in which our story takes place. Regardless, they are an important part of making the audience believe what they are seeing and they help tell the story. If an actor carries a suitcase on-stage with them, would you know that they might be going on or returning from a trip? If you saw a very old looking radio on the stage, would you know that our story was set sometime in the early 20th century? THE CAT IN THE HAT has *tons* of props that you will see the Cat and the other characters in the story. One actor has a very special prop... The Fish is actually a puppet! When you see our play, will you watch the puppet or the actor??

Props

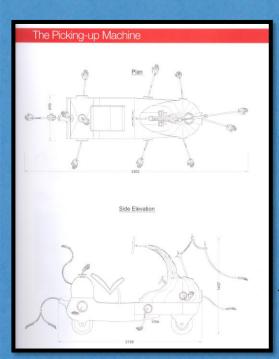


Designs

The set and costume designs for our production of THE CAT IN THE HAT are not happening in the usual way. Normally, our directors work with our designers to create the look of a show from scratch, but part of our agreement with Musical Theatre International to produce this script, which was originally performed at the National Theatre of Great Britain in London, gives us the chance to use their designs. The designs look so much like what Dr. Seuss drew that they are exactly right for the show. We received a packet with pictures from Dr. Seuss's book, photographs of the original production and drawings of the set and costumes. We will use that information to build them in our scene and costume shops.

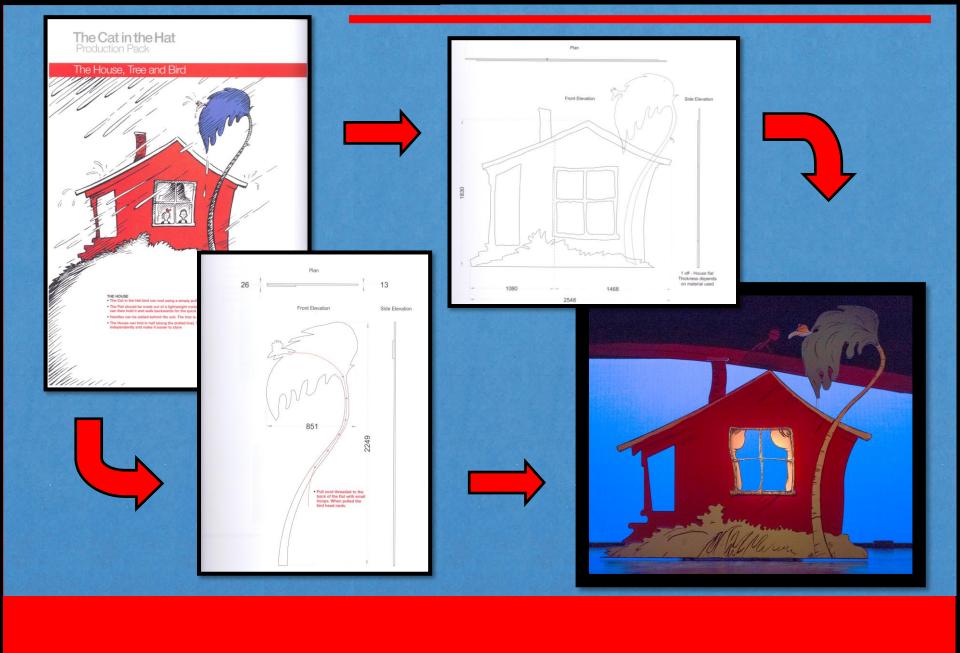
Here are some examples of the drawings we will be working from for our production.

Because the design comes from a theater company in Britain, the numbers you see on the sketches are measurements in metric notation—in millimeters. Good thing, because a house that was 2548 feet wide would be way too big to fit in our theatre!









Vocabulary

Here are some words and phrases from THE CAT IN THE HAT that might be new to you!

And we did not like it.

Not one little bit. – not at all

We looked!
Then we saw him step in on the mat! – doormat

"A lot of good tricks.
I will show them to you.
Your mother
Will not mind at all if I do."
tricks – skills, like juggling and balancing
mind – care

"Now! Now! Have no fear.
Have no fear!" said the cat.
Now! Now! – calm down
Have no fear – don't be afraid

"Put me down!" said the fish.
"I do not **wish** to fall!" – want

I can fan with the fan
As I hop on the ball!
But that is not all. – I can do more
They should not be here
When you mother is not!
Put them out! Put them out! – make them
leave

They are tame. Oh, so tame! - harmless

So, as fast as I could,
I went after my net. – went to get

One phrase gets used in two slightly different ways:

Then he got up on top

With a tip of his hat. – lifting his hat as a "hello"

And then he was gone

With a tip of his hat. – lifting his hat as a "good-bye"



From the Director

Anne Beck is Civic Theatre's Young Artist's Program Coordinator and regularly directs and choreographs on our stage. Anne performed on Broadway in the original company of *Saturday Night Fever* and was a cast member in the National Tours of *Saturday Night Fever*, *The Who's Tommy*, and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. Anne has been seen in numerous commercials, has been a featured performer with numerous Symphony Orchestras in the United States including YULETIDE with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

1) Having directed our production of THE CAT IN THE HAT several times now, what excites you about remounting the show? What are the challenges that come with each new remount?

What excites me most about revisiting this wonderful production each year is the opportunity to put together a new cast - even if we have actors returning. In this year's production, several actors are back to portray the same roles as last year but we have some actors who are new to the show this year. Every time a new actor joins the project, it brings a new "freshness" to the entire show.

The challenge with each new remount is never letting the excitement and energy of the storytelling drop. Every year of production brings a fresh, new, young audience that is seeing the show (and maybe even attending the theatre!) for the first time and we are so happy to honor that.

2) How do you incorporate your experience as a dancer/choreographer into your direction of this particular script?

That is a great question! I like the characters in my show to move as though they are characters inside an animated film - I want them to "jump off" the page of the Dr Seuss book! So, I work from my background in movement and dance to help my actors move in that "animated" fashion which, in the end, helps create a unique look and style for Civic's production.

From the Director

3) Do you remember reading THE CAT IN THE HAT as a child? What are your recollections of the story and will they inform your direction of the play at all?

I do recall reading CAT IN THE HAT as a child and how I enjoyed watching the animated TV special with my daughter back when she was five years old. I always enjoyed the intelligence of the cat and the humor and fun that came along with his appearance. That certainly continues to influence my direction of our show. Our cat is definitely wise and funny and knows exactly how much he can get away with!

And the roles of The Cat and The Fish and the way they disagree and get feisty toward one another often remind me of Tom and Jerry. It is fun to play with that., the sing-song nature of Dr. Seuss' writing is something I always recall from reading the book aloud, and I assume our audience will, as well. I focus on that "Seussian" rhyme and rhythm in my direction and will guide the actors to do the same.

4) If a young student asked you how they could become a director or an actor or a dancer, how would you respond?

Schools for acting or directing or dancing are always a great start. Programs for children at theatres, like the long-established Jr. Civic program at Civic, are a wonderful way to get started. Exercising the creativity within us as much as possible is a wonderful way to explore and learn where our individual passions lie be that dancing, acting, singing, directing or choreographing. Or all of the above!

I also encourage young people to watch as many plays and theatrical programs as they can. Sometimes we learn from observing successful productions. And sometimes we can see what we might change or do differently.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

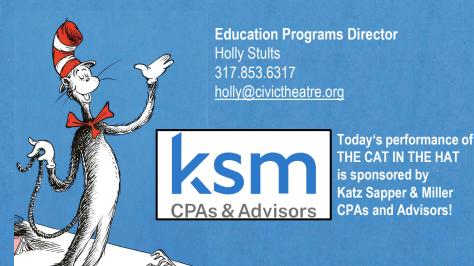
Attending the theatre can be a fun experience for everyone if you observe a few simple courtesies:

- Turn off and put away all electronic devices prior to entering the theatre.
- Taking photographs and video recording in the theatre is strictly prohibited and NO TEXTING!
- Please do not place your feet on the seat in front of you.
- The actors onstage can see and hear the audience just as well as you can see and hear them. Please refrain from talking or moving around during the performance as it can be distracting to the actors as well as to other audience members.
- Feel free to respond to the action of the play through appropriate laughter and applause. The actors enjoy this type of communication from the audience and it's an important part of our performance!
- Have fun! Attending live theatre should be an enjoyable experience for all!

Contact/Connect with us

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Civic Theatre would like to thank Christel DeHaan for her generous sponsorship of our student matinee program.

