EGG

Applause Series Curriculum Guide
April 4-8, 2016
Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of Egg! This sweet tale quickly charmed its way into our hearts with its invitation into the rustic nest of three young birds grappling with the timeless joys and challenges of growing up. Your students will love the birds’ delightful routines and excitement over flying, and adults in the audience will appreciate the bittersweet feelings that it invokes.

As you prepare your students for this experience, we hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” materials and ideas from the study guide to meet your class’s unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

Support for Des Moines Performing Arts education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:

- Alliant Energy
- American Enterprise Group
- Arts Midwest
- Bradford and Sally Austin, Bank of America
- Merrill Lynch
- Bravo Greater Des Moines
- Casey’s General Stores
- DuPont Pioneer
- EMC Insurance Companies
- Hy-Vee
- John Deere
- Richard and Deborah McConnell
- Polk County
- Principal Financial Group
- Sargent Family Foundation
- U.S. Bank
- Wells Fargo & Co.
- West Bank
- Willis Auto Campus
- and more than 200 individual donors.

This study guide was written and compiled by Yvette Zarod Hermann; edited by Karoline Myers and Michelle McDonald. Based on The Improvised Shakespeare Company Shake It Up! Study Guide © The Improvised Shakespeare Company
Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa’s cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

Public education programs allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its K-12 School Programs, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 50,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts' newest initiative to support the arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and public recognition to celebrate the achievements of students involved in their high school theater programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 300,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:
- Civic Center, 2744 seats
- Stoner Theater, 200 seats
- Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space that is also part of Des Moines Performing Arts. The space features the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by artist Claes Oldenburg.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 20th season of school performances.
GOING TO THE THEATER . . .

YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER
Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience’s mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

* What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
* What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
* What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
* Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
* Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

THEATER ETIQUETTE
Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the theater:

* Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
* Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
* Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
* Do not text during the performance.
* When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
* Talk before and after the performance only. Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
* Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
* Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
* Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.
TEMPLE THEATER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Temple Theater.

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP
- Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.
- Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. (Full payment and cancellation policies may be viewed at DesMoinesPerformingArts.org/education.)
- DMPA reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Temple for the Performing Arts, and be seated in the theater.
- Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

DIRECTIONS
- The Temple Theater is located in the Temple for the Performing Arts located at Tenth and Locust Streets in downtown Des Moines.
- Directions from I-235: Take Exit 8A (downtown exits) and the ramp toward Third Street. Travel south on Third Street approximately six blocks to Grand Avenue. Turn west on Grand Avenue and travel to Thirteenth Street. Turn south on Thirteenth Street and then east on Locust Street.
- Buses will park on the south side of Locust Street in front of the Nationwide building. See next column for additional parking information.

QUESTIONS?
Please contact the Education department at education@DesMoinesPerformingArts.org or 515.246.2355. Thank you!

PARKING
- Police officers stationed at the corner of Tenth and Locust Streets will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the theater. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking.
- Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show.
- Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the theater. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with DMPA Education staff.

ARRIVAL
- When arriving at the theater, please have an adult lead your group for identification and check-in purposes. A staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- DMPA staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible.
- Seating in the theater is general admission. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may determine a group’s specific location in the theater.
- We request that an adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seats or taking groups to the restroom.

IN THE THEATER
- In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- If an item is lost at the Temple Theater, please see an usher or call 515.246.2355.
ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Join three madcap birds on an adventure of a lifetime as they grapple with growing up and giving in to their natural instincts to take flight.

This magical story of friendship and empathy unfolds on a rustic set, exquisitely constructed out of twigs, feathers and shell. The story of Egg is told through physical theatre, illusion, and music, creating a sophisticated, non-verbal exploration of the theme of 'flying the nest'. This funny, delightful, and sometimes bittersweet tale resonates as strongly with adults in the audience as it does with children. An enchanting story of friendship and wonder. A tale of three birds... and an egg!

Run Time: Approximately 1 hour

“Egg combines technical excellence with literal flights of imagination.”

-Irish Theatre Magazine

THE STORY

The story of Egg begins with three birds in a nest, waking up and performing their morning rituals: catching bugs, eating, surveying their surroundings. They cooperate admirably as a team, combing their “feathers” and brushing their teeth like happy siblings. When it begins to rain, the birds work together to collect rainwater and make tea. They clean their nest in harmony until one is enticed by the sound of a flock of birds and takes flight, leaving the nest.

The two remaining birds mourn the loss of their friend, but soon realize that two can accomplish tasks as well as three... until the sounds of another flock inspire the second bird to fly from the nest, leaving only one, abandoned and scared.

Alone, he fends for himself the best he can, until he finds an egg deep within his own nest. He gently finds a safe place for the egg and tenderly cares for it. What will happen when a predator bird arrives? And what will happen when this third bird feels the pull of flying?

WHAT YOU WILL EXPERIENCE

Egg is a play without words. The artists use a soundscape, lighting and costumes combined with expressive acting to communicate the story.

Here are some of the things you can watch for:

Mime: the silent art of using body movements and facial expressions to create an illusion of reality.

Pantomime: the use of mime techniques to tell a story without words.

Illusion: the use of special effects to create “impossible” events on stage, such as flying and hatching.

Music and sound effects: an imaginative musical score with added sound effects from nature help set the tone and mood.

Choreography: planning and arranging the movements of performers. How do the movements show the story?
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Learn more about the theater company behind *Egg* and the book it was inspired by!

THE COMPANY

*Egg* is brought to us by Cahoots NI, a professional children’s touring theatre company based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The Company combines the visual potential of theatre with music, magic and illusion to create entertaining and inspiring theatre for children. The company tours extensively throughout Ireland, as well as internationally, expanding the imagination and artistic creativity of children around the world.

THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

*Egg* is based on a children’s book, *Egg and Bird*, by Alex Higlett, which tells a story of the relationship between child (Egg) and adult (Bird).

Alex Higlett studied Graphic Design and Illustration at Bath School of Art. This quirky and original book was runner-up in the 2004 Macmillan Prize for Illustration.

A NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, PAUL McENEANEY

“I came across this lovely book entitled *Egg and Bird* and ideas for the show developed from there,” says Cahoots NI founder and artistic director, Paul McEneaney, who is one of the most highly respected illusionists and directors of children’s theatre worldwide.

“It’s been conceived to be a really magical experience, drawing children in close to the gorgeous little set and telling them a story of friendship and wonder and tender loving care.”

Cahoots NI Artistic Director, Paul McEneaney
Image: culturenorthernireland.org

Cahoots NI is a professional theater company from Belfast, Ireland. Map: CNN.com.
EXPLORING EMOTIONS

In EGG, the birds experience a lot of emotions, more than just happy, sad, mad, or afraid... just like you!

Can you add three more words to describe the emotions in these pictures? The first one has been done for you.

content

peaceful

happy

relaxed

joyful

lonely

angry

scared

proud

During the show, what emotions do you see the birds have? How can you tell what they are feeling?
LIFE CYCLE OF A BIRD

A bird is born and grows up, just like you! But their life cycle is a little different...because it begins with an EGG. Cut out these pictures and arrange them to show the life cycle of a bird. Stick them onto a large sheet of paper and add arrows and captions.

Images courtesy of Scholastic.
9. Ask your birds to turn back into human children and join you to talk about what we just learned.
10. Ask volunteers to demonstrate some of their activities in front of the rest of the class and invite classmates to guess what they are doing.

Follow-up Questions:
1. How did we guess our classmates’ bird activities correctly?
2. What was the student performer doing with their face or body that showed what was happening?
3. What did you like best about this activity?
4. What kind of bird were you?
5. If you were a real bird, what kind would you be?
6. Did anyone decide to be an egg? What was that like?

2) PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

Goal: To prepare young students for what may be their very first performance experience.

Explanation: In this activity, lead a class discussion that a) accesses students’ prior knowledge of performances and b) prepares for them what to expect when they visit the theater to see Egg.

Activity:
1. Ask students about their experiences with performance (watching older siblings in a school play, going to a concert, etc.)
2. Share the journey with them step by step. Talk about:
   ◊ Going into a special ‘theater’ space.
   ◊ Being an ‘audience’. They are a very important part of the performance. The actors need them.
   ◊ What is the job of the audience? To look and listen.
   ◊ What is going to happen? They will be watching ‘actors’ tell a story using their bodies.
   ◊ A performance usually finishes with clapping.

Follow-up Questions:
1. Why do you think going to a performance is a special experience?
2. Why is it important to look and listen during a performance?
3) WALK LIKE A...

**Goal:** Students will experiment with focus and non-vocal acting techniques to convey a character.

**Explanation:** The three actors in *Egg* don’t say a word, but they speak volumes about friendship, nature, family, social development and community values. In this activity, students will explore how actors use their bodies to convey a character.

**Materials:**
- A prop, such as a stuffed animal or colorful item from the classroom (tip: pick a familiar item so that the novelty does not cause distraction)
- Painter’s tape, to mark out start and finish lines on the floor

**Activity:**
1. Clear desks or move to a room with a larger open space. Pre-tape on the floor “start” and “finish” lines.
2. Have students face you. Introduce the idea of focus (thinking hard about just one thing). Show students how to focus by asking them to focus on your selected prop. Slowly move it and watch to see if your students’ eyes are following. Coach students to hold their focus on the prop.
3. Ask students to focus on the floor, then the ceiling, then their own hands, then you. Tell the class they have just shown you that they can control their focus and that they are ready to become actors!
4. Line students up so that they can safely cross the room from the “start” line to the “finish” line.
5. Tell them that this activity will challenge them to use one of their main actor tools: their body. As such, they will not be making any noises with their voices.
6. When students are ready, tell them that their acting challenge is to “walk like a…” without touching another student. Ask one student to demonstrate walking like a frog.
7. Continue the game with additional prompts. Ask students to cross the room walking like a: frog, elephant, butterfly, gorilla, duck, giant pig, snake, horse, lizard, rabbit, penguin, turtle, eagle, dinosaur, kitten, lion, puppy, old dog, a melting ice cream cone, a person on the moon…

8. As you go, remind students not to make animal noises: “No voices! Show me what you are with your body!” “If you are choosing not to control your voice, please sit over here where you can observe the activity.”
9. As time allows, invite students to suggest animals or things to “walk like”.

**Extension Idea:**
If students are cooperative and appropriately engaged, give students an additional challenge. Have two students start from each line, meet in the middle, and interact with the other student without speaking as their animal.

**Follow-Up Questions:**
1. What is focus?
2. What were you focused on for this activity?
3. What was your favorite thing to act like? Why? What other things could we walk like if we do this activity again?
4. Was it hard not to use your voice? Why?
5. Did our class cooperate well and work as a team? How can you tell?
POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever seen an egg hatch? Where? What happened?

2. Have you ever wished that you were a bird? What would be the best part about being a bird? The worst part?

3. In the play, birds did things that usually only humans do. Can you recall those activities? Why did this show have birds doing human things?

4. What are the things the actors did that real birds do? What else do you know about birds?

5. What was your favorite part in the show? Why?

6. What were some of the emotions or feelings that you saw in Egg? When did you see the emotions? How did the actors show what they were feeling without using words?

7. What did you see the birds do that showed that they were friends with one another? What are ways that you show that you are a friend to someone?

8. Imagine you were a bird in a nest. If you had to leave the nest, would you be the bird to go first? Or second? Or last? Why?

9. For the birds, flying away and leaving the nest is part of growing up. What are things that you can do now that you couldn’t do before? What are other ways that you know that you are growing up?

10. Why do you think the birds choose to fly away? What motivated them? Did they all want to fly right away? If not, why?

11. The last bird works to protect the egg. Who in your life helps protect you? Do you have someone or something that you protect?

12. The play ends with the egg alone in the nest. What do you think happens to the egg?

13. If you had to give this show a new name, what would you call it and why?

1) WRITE A LETTER

Goal: To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

When: After the performance.

Explanation: After the show, students will write letters to Des Moines Performing Arts donors whose support keeps Applause Series tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:
   - What was the show about?
   - What parts of the show were most exciting?
   - Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
   - What did the characters find? What did they learn?

2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors.

Letter Starter:

Dear Des Moines Performing Arts Donors,

Thank you for helping my class go to the Temple Theater to see Egg.
My favorite part of the show was...
While watching the show I felt... because...
I have drawn a picture of the scene when...
This experience was special because...

3. After writing the letter, students can illustrate a scene from the performance.

4. Last, mail the letters to us and we’ll make sure they get to the right people.

Des Moines Performing Arts
Attn: Education Department
221 Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

Follow-Up Discussion Questions:

1. What did you choose to share in your letter? Why?

2. How does receiving a letter make you feel?

3. How do you think the recipient of your letter will feel when he or she receives your letter? Why?
POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

2) A BIRD’S EYE VIEW

Goal: Students will collaborate on a wall-sized mural to depict the world perspective of a bird.

Explanation: In Egg, all the action takes place in and around the nest. In this activity, students will explore the birds’ unique habitat and perspective using visual art.

Materials:
* Crayons
* White paper for drawing, four pieces per student
* A large “canvas” such as an expanse of wall or a large white roll of butcher paper

Activity:
1. Ask students: What was the setting of Egg? Where did all of the action take place? Was there really a bird’s nest with birds in it on the stage? What did the show’s designers use to show a nest?
2. Give students each four sheets of blank paper and crayons. Ask them to draw while you talk and walk around, giving 3-5 minutes for each drawing:
   - Draw what a real nest looks like. What is it made of? What colors are you choosing? Is there anything in your nest?
   - Now let’s move to another sheet of paper and draw where your nest is located. Is it in a tree? Could it be other places too? Can you draw the tree or roof or birdhouse or telephone pole (insert student ideas) on this next sheet of paper?
   - On your third piece of paper, draw the bird or birds who live in your nest. They can be flying, or sitting in the nest, or eating, or anything birds do.
   - Now let’s think about what your bird might see from their nest. Use your fourth piece of paper and draw a picture of anything your bird could see: the ground, a park, a worm, a birdbath, a lake, a house, people...anything a bird might see in real life.
3. After students have had a chance to complete their pictures, ask them to help compose a group picture by putting all of their individual pictures together. Some students may want to cut out their pictures, some might want to tape them to the “canvas” and others may want the chance to redraw their images to scale (i.e. trees larger than birds) on the canvas.
4. As they piece the pictures together, encourage them to be mindful of composition: ask them to choose whether their picture belongs at the top, the middle, or the bottom of the “canvas.”

Follow-Up Questions:
1. What do you think of our giant picture? Are there any parts where you art “goes with” someone else’s? That’s called good composition!
2. Did you like drawing by yourself or making the group picture more? Why?
3. Were you surprised by any of the details or images your classmates contributed? Why?
4. Work with a partner to suggest a title for the group mural. Share your title with the class.

3) DAILY ROUTINE

Goal: Students will practice comparing and contrasting skills.

Explanation: Students will compare their daily routine to the routine of the birds in Egg.

Activity:
1. Ask students to create a list of all of the actions they can remember the birds doing as part of their daily routine.
2. Review the lists as a class. Encourage students to add any actions they missed on their list.
3. Next, ask students to create a list of things they do each day as part of their personal routine.
4. Then, invite students to compare the routines. Ask them to circle common activities on the two lists.
5. For actions that were unique to their personal routine, have them put a star or another shape beside it.

Follow-Up Questions:
1. What activities did you have in common with the birds?
2. What activities or routines were different?
3. Why do think the show had the bird characters performing human actions?
4. What do you like about your routine? What do you dislike? What are the benefits of having a routine?

Part of the birds’ morning routine in Egg.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Fiction Books:

Roly-Poly Egg by Kali Stileman.

An Egg is an Egg by Nicki Weiss.

Non-Fiction Books:

An Egg is Quiet by Diana Hutts Aston, illustrated by Sylvia Long.

Birds, Nests and Eggs by Mel Boring.

The Book of Eggs: A Life-Size Guide to the Eggs of Six Hundred of the World's Bird Species by Mark E. Hauber.

Online Resources:

Information about birds, fun facts, bird watching tips and more.

Information on what birds eat and ideas for creating easy bird feeders.

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES


Egg Study Guide by Cahoots NI.