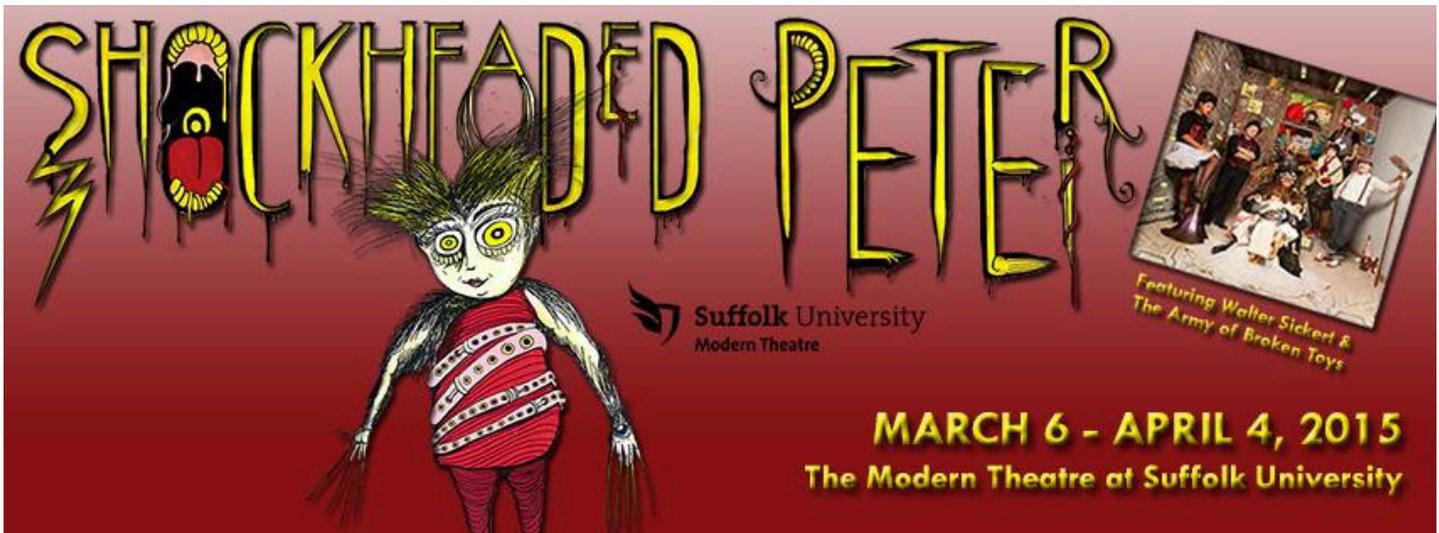


## Curricular Connections

A guide for teachers and students to Company One Theatre's Production:



Dear Educators and Students,

We are pleased to share with you our Curricular Connections Packet for Company One Theatre's production of SHOCKHEADED PETER, a New England Premiere produced with Suffolk University at the Modern Theatre. We've developed these materials for you to explore the world of the production and we encourage you to adapt the packet to suit your needs.

Enclosed you will find:

- Articles on:
  - An Evolution of Storytelling: From Fable to Fairy Tale
  - German Children's Stories and *Der Stuwwelpeter*
  - Stage Musicals and the Music of SHOCKHEADED PETER
- Lesson plans on:
  - Personal Fairy Tales
  - Sound Design: Live Soundscapes

Throughout this packet you will find excerpts from the production, photos from rehearsal, and images that help to highlight central ideas and themes. The lesson plans will provide creative opportunities for students to engage with these themes and connect with the world of SHOCKHEADED PETER. More content and updates about the production can be found on our production and education blogs online:

Production Blog: [shockheadedc1.wordpress.com](http://shockheadedc1.wordpress.com)  
Education Blog: [c1stageone.wordpress.com](http://c1stageone.wordpress.com)

If you have any questions about this packet, or are interested in reserving group tickets, please contact us at [stageone@companyone.org](mailto:stageone@companyone.org).

See you at the theater!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Interview With The Director of SHOCKHEADED PETER.....	Page 3
An Evolution of Storytelling: From Fable to Fairy Tale .....	Page 7
German Children’s Stories and <i>Der Struwwelpeter</i> .....	Page 10
LESSON PLAN: Personal Fairy Tales .....	Page 13
Music on the American Stage .....	Page 16
SHOCKHEADED PETER & Musical Collaboration .....	Page 20
LESSON PLAN: Sound Design: Music & Effects .....	Page 23
Resources .....	Page 26

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR OF SHOCKHEADED PETER**

*Company One Theatre Dramaturg Ilana M. Brownstein and SHOCKHEADED PETER Director Steven Bogart (who previously worked with Company One as the director of Obehi Janice's FUFU & OREOS in last season's XX PlayLab) took some time out of rehearsal to talk about his connections to SHOCKHEADED PETER, how his history as a teacher informs his work, and the power of collaboration.*

**IMB: I've long thought of your work as being aligned with the style of SHOCKHEADED PETER. Did you know the piece before coming on board this project with us?**

SB: I was familiar with the Tiger Lillies first. I'd seen them perform with the Dresden Dolls, and I liked their biting satirical songs. I saw their SHOCKHEADED PETER in New York ages ago, and loved everything about it – how dark it was, and how funny. Years later, when Shawn called me and asked me if I wanted to talk about collaborating with Company One Theatre on a new production with Walter Sickert and The Army of Broken Toys, and there was no question.

**IMB: Did you know the original tales by Heinrich Hoffman at all?**

SB: Only after I'd seen the Tiger Lillies treatment of them. When I finally saw the originals, I felt like I was looking at very twisted Hallmark cards. I was drawn to the stories and verses immediately, and I was surprised to find that the Hoffman stories were different than what the Tiger Lillies had created from the source material. Certainly the versions in SHOCKHEADED PETER are darker and more physical, but it's in service of calling attention to the psychological violence that Hoffman alarmingly advocated as punishments for misbehaving children.

**IMB: Were there any counter-texts or external resources that have guided your thinking about this piece?**

SB: When I start a project, I don't try to find answers right away. I like going down the rabbit hole, and for this, one thing that popped up was Bruno Bettelheim's excellent book, "The Misuses of Enchantment." I'd first read it years ago. He talks about how fairy tales speak to us on deeply unconscious levels, and help us sort out existential anxieties like violence and fear. Fairy tales, he argues, let us acknowledge that the world can be scary and dark, and also guide us healthily past those fears. SHOCKHEADED PETER is in essence a set of twisted fairy tales. Like the Tiger Lillies did, I struggle with Hoffman's intentions in creating these stories of punishing children who misbehave, and I'm interested in that critique of 19<sup>th</sup> century child rearing practices. But for me (and I think for the original creative team on SHOCKHEADED PETER) they're not just confined to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They may look slightly different, but those practices have infiltrated our modern approaches to childhood.

**IMB: I know that your interest in SHOCKHEADED PETER is about more than just a love of the Tiger Lillies. As someone who has spent the majority of his professional life working with and mentoring young people, it has hit particularly close to home for you.**

SB: We're so concerned with making children into good citizens, but in that effort we end up punishing them, oppressing them, stifling growth and imagination — whether that takes the form of harsh punishments, or of keeping them so close (as helicopter parents do) that they never develop autonomy. In this respect, SHOCKHEADED PETER became quite personal for me because I taught in public school for 30 years as an artist. I believe that everyone has the right to explore the human condition, whatever that means – it can be dark and scary or wonderful and hopeful. Mostly it's all of these. In schools, I was trying to always let students know that the spectrum of experience is worthy, to support them in their desire to explore fully, and I was constantly running into obstacles from parents and administrators. It's hard to allow teenagers to experiment with being human, it can terrify us. This piece speaks to our fear about what WE want

children to be in the world, and how often we don't give them the freedom to be who they really are, in all their complexity. I believe that young people have the capacity to be bold and brave in the creation process. I spent decades seeing the damage that can be done to young people who are stifled, and how creative freedom can turn that around for them.

**IMB: SHOCKHEADED PETER was originally a devised, non-traditional musical built around a specific band and a group of visually-driven performance artists. A current production can't re-create the original, nor should it — you've had to set up the conditions for the creation of something new. How has working with Walter Sickert and the Army of Broken Toys made that possible for you?**

SB: First, It makes total sense to do this project with the Toys – is there any other group of musicians in town who could take this on? The musical was created with the Tiger Lillies' aesthetic at its core, something that's Victorian-derived, but with a hard modern edge. There is no one else like them. To do a production here and now, you want a band that has a similarly wholly unique aesthetic. The Toys are driven by Walter's visual art, which can be harrowing, but also whimsical. His pieces are wonderfully cartoonish and outsized and colorful, but all these terrible things are happening in them with eyeballs, and blood dripping, and squid tentacles. It's constructed to pull you in with its playfulness, but then it's so dark! I love that tension, and it fits SHOCKHEADED PETER perfectly. I also appreciate how every band member is, in his or her own right, an exceptional artist with widely varied influences. Their energy is raw and riotous with all these textures and unexpected instrumentations. They're a mix of accessible and aggressive, with a highly theatrical performance style. Everything they do feels like an event.

**IMB: What makes this piece necessary for you, right now?**

SB: I read somewhere that by the time we grow up, we've been told no over 60 thousand times, and yet simultaneously, we're told to follow our dreams. You can be anything you want, as long as adheres to middle class aspirations. I have questions about that. Over the past 20 years, it's clear that people are more and more frightened by all sorts of things – language, content, subject matter – we're afraid to say things and express things with young people. We're afraid to let them experience the smallest freedoms of childhood, like just walking to the park by themselves. This is a wild piece that argues: we don't want this. You're killing us. You're killing the child inside, our expression and life and creativity. It's about the psychological violence we do to one another around censorship and oppression, and it captures this raw energy without spoonfeeding the message, which I appreciate. I think it has something important to say to today's culture. It speaks to the child within — who we were when we were innocent and filled with wonder, as well as with darkness, and our hands were slapped by adults out of fear. What are we all so afraid of?

## AN EVOLUTION OF STORYTELLING: FROM TABLE TO FAIRY TALE

Storytelling has always played a central role in society; narratives enable humans to learn about themselves and the world that they inhabit. Tales were told to mark an occasion, set an example, warn about danger, procure food, or explain what seemed inexplicable. Tales were meant to provide entertainment. They were told to recount and immortalize historic events. Tales were cautionary, they were lessons. Stories were family histories passed down orally from one generation to the next, and were used to communicate knowledge and experience in social contexts. Ancient storytellers were wise and respected leaders. Telling effective, relevant stories became a vital quality for anyone who wanted power to determine and influence social practices.



One of the oldest known genres of storytelling, the fable, began with Aesop in 600 B.C. Archaeologists discovered didactic narrative works on clay tablets and in scripts that resemble the fable in form as well as subject matter. The stories, although not called **fables** at that time, were short and primarily featured animals, which exemplified a moral. As the fables were spread and transformed by different cultures, inanimate objects, mythical creatures, and even

humans were often added to the cast of characters. Still, for the most part, animals dominated the stories and were involved in “human” conflicts that they had to resolve. The conflicts had to be adjudicated in such a way as to potentially establish ethical guidelines or principles of fair play. In this regard, fables contributed to the civilizing process of all societies and the constitution of the humanities.



The **Fairy Tale** is a sub-genre of folktale. It tends to be longer, more descriptive, and more complicated than other types of folktales: legends, myths, and fables. As fairy-tales evolved, they borrowed and used motifs, themes, characters, expressions, and styles from other narrative forms and genres. Although large numbers of fairy tales were written in 17th century France, most of the tales which are still told and retold now are far older in origin. Many of the stories, which were not originally intended for children, were edited and changed, removing the darker and more gruesome elements of the stories. Classic fairy tales such as “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Cinderella,” or “Beauty and the Beast,” can be traced to tales of antiquity that concern rape, sibling rivalry, and mating. Some of the more popular fairy tale authors include Charles Perrault, his niece Marie-Jeanne L’Héritier, Madame d’Aulnoy, Hans Christian Andersen, The Brothers Grimm, and Giambattista Basile. Perrault’s fairy tales were created at the point in history when more and more European writers began composing explicitly for children. The majority of the tales still courted favor primarily with adults, but there was an overwhelming tendency in these fairy tales to provide models of behavior for the schooling of upper-class children. The fairy tales were cultivated to assure that young people would be properly groomed for their social functions. Fairy tales are predicated on a human disposition to social action. Almost all fairy tales involve a quest. Therefore, their focus has always been on the struggle to transform themselves and their environment and make the world more suitable for living in peace and contentment. Though very different in form, the stories we tell and hear today explore similar notions of justice, belonging, and equity. From rap music and spoken word, to social media trends like Instagram, Vine, and Snapchat, all storytellers strive to make themselves and their stories relevant, because if they succeed, those stories will stick in the minds of their listeners, who may tell these stories later and contribute to the replication of stories that form cultural patterns.

## **Written Examples:**

### **> *Odysseus and the Cyclops* from the *Odyssey* by Homer**

<http://mysite.pratt.edu/~morourke/dda514/stories/OdysseusCyclops.htm>

“On finding a large cave, Odysseus and his men entered the cave, where they helped themselves to the food and drink they found there, and fell asleep. After a time, a Cyclops, whose name was Polyphemus, returned to the cave. Leading his flock of giant sheep into the cave, he rolled a huge stone against the mouth of the cave to close the entrance. On finding Odysseus and his men in the cave, the Cyclops became enraged, grabbed two of the men, smashed their heads against the rocks, ate them, and fell asleep. Odysseus dared do nothing to the Cyclops, since only the Cyclops was strong enough to move the stone away from the mouth of the cave.”

### **> *Fair Goldilocks* by Madame d’Aulnoy**

<https://archive.org/stream/fairytalesmadam00dgoog#page/n44/mode/2up>

“There was once a king’s daughter who was so beautiful that nothing in the whole world could be compared with her. And because she was so beautiful they called her Princess Goldilocks; for her hair was finer than gold, wonderfully fair, and it fell in ringlets to her feet. Her only covering for her head was her curly hair and garland of flowers; her dresses were embroidered with diamonds and pearls; and no one could look on her without loving her.”

### **> *The Man and the Serpent* Aesop. Fables**

<http://www.bartleby.com/16/>

"A countryman’s son by accident trod upon a Serpent’s tail, which turned and bit him so that he died. The father in a rage got his axe, and pursuing the Serpent, cut off part of its tail. So the Serpent in revenge began stinging several of the Farmer’s cattle and caused him severe loss. Well, the Farmer thought it best to make it up with the Serpent, and brought food and honey to the mouth of its lair, and said to it: “Let’s forget and forgive; perhaps you were right to punish my son, and take vengeance on my cattle, but surely I was right in trying to revenge him; now that we are both satisfied why should not we be friends again?” “No, no,” said the Serpent; “take away your gifts; you can never forget the death of your son, nor I the loss of my tail.” “INJURIES MAY BE FORGIVEN, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN”

### **> *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* from the *Thousand and One Nights***

<http://www.bartleby.com/16/>

"He told his son the secret of the cave, which his son handed down in his turn, so the children and grandchildren of Ali Baba were rich to the end of their lives."

## GERMAN CHILDREN'S STORIES AND *DER STRUWWELPETER*

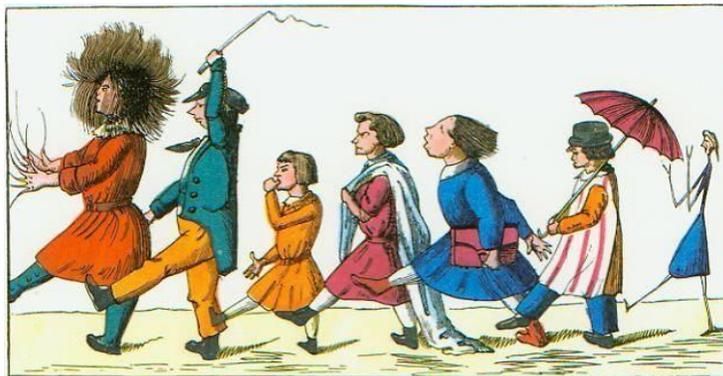
In Europe, tales were written in a standard “high” language that the lower classes could not read, as a form of entertainment and education for members of the ruling classes. At first, fairy tales were written and published for adults and were considered somewhat dangerous. In most European countries it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that fairy tales were published for children because of their “vulgar” origins. By the beginning of the nineteenth century when the Brothers Grimm set about to celebrate German culture through their country’s folk tales, the literary fairy tale had long since been institutionalized and authors assumed different ideological and aesthetic positions within the genre. The danger, of course, was that as more people learned to read and write, they would easily develop a consciousness that could not be controlled. This is why children’s literature became so important during the nineteenth century, and why a book like *Der Struwwelpeter* had such a significant reception and resonates with us today.



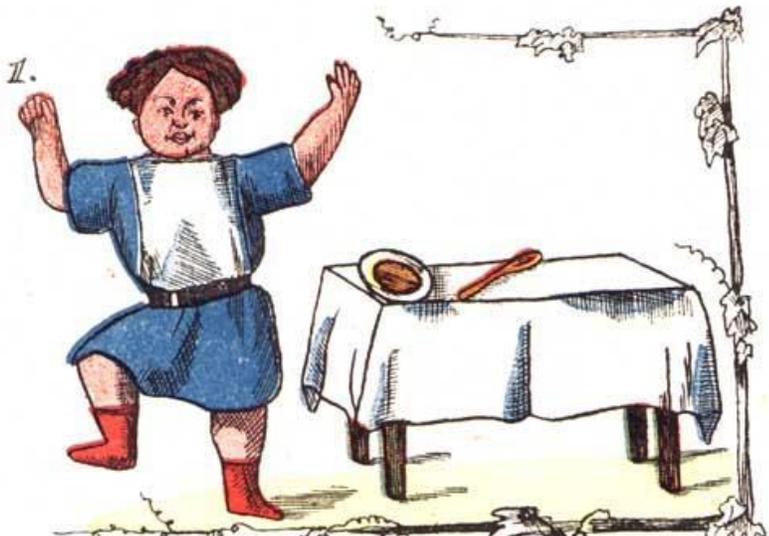
*“See Slovenly Peter!  
Here he stands,  
With his dirty hair and hands.  
See! His nails are never cut;  
They are grim’d as black as soot;  
No water for many weeks,  
Has been near his cheeks;  
And the sloven, I declare,  
Not once this year has combed his hair!  
Anything to me is sweeter  
Than to see shock-headed Peter.”*  
- Slovenly Peter



*Der Struwwelpeter* was one of the bestselling illustrated children's book of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It was written by **Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann**, a German psychiatrist and author in 1845. In Germany, *Struwwelpeter* was especially valuable for the middle-class socialization process because it was among the first books with pictures to be created for the three-to-six-year-old age group. The explicit drastic punishments that the children experience in the stories were to be held before the eyes of children (and adults) as warnings of what awaited them if they were to make the same mistake. Through humor, Hoffman tried to minimize the power that his father had held over him while also pursuing a new strategy to gain control over his own son. Slovenly Peter was first intended as a Christmas present for his son Carl, but its acclaim became inevitable. Though there were many other kinds of literature being produced for children during the middle of the nineteenth century, no other book of its kind unleashed a series of imitations that celebrated corporal punishment in the way it did. The production of SHOCKHEADED PETER responds to both the book's popularity and the perpetuation of child abuse and victimization in Western Society. Whereas Hoffmann sought to minimize brutality and perhaps even apologize for it, the skits and songs of SHOCKHEADED PETER seek to unnerve us. It is through the process of gazing at a picture telling a story or illustrating a lesson that a child learns what to do in specific situations. Therefore it is also important to ask what adults did and do learn from *Struwwelpeter*, a question at the heart of the SHOCKHEADED PETER production.



## 7. THE STORY OF AUGUSTUS WHO WOULD NOT HAVE ANY SOUP.



Augustus was a chubby lad;  
 Fat ruddy cheeks Augustus had;  
 And every body saw with joy  
 The plump and hearty healthy boy.  
 He ate and drank as he was told,  
 And never let his soup get cold.  
 But one day, one cold winter's day,  
 He scream'd out — "Take the soup away!  
 O take the nasty soup away!  
 I won't have any soup to-day."



Next day, now look, the picture shows  
 How lank and lean Augustus grows!  
 Yet, though he feels so weak and ill,  
 The naughty fellow cries out still —  
 "Not any soup for me, I say:  
 O take the nasty soup away!  
 I won't have any soup to-day."



The third day comes; Oh what a sin!  
 To make himself so pale and thin.  
 Yet, when the soup is put on table,  
 He screams, as loud as he is able, —  
 "Not any soup for me, I say:  
 O take the nasty soup away!  
 I won't have any soup to-day."

Look at him, now the fourth day's come!  
 He scarcely weighs a sugar-plum;  
 He's like a little bit of thread,  
 And on the fifth day, he was — dead!



# LESSON PLAN: CREATE YOUR OWN FAIRY TALE

## Description

Students will work individually to explore the different vehicles of storytelling and create their own contemporary fairy tale through monologue, song/verse, spoken word, or dance.

## Objectives

- Experience stories from a range of cultures and recognize both the commonalities and distinctions in styles and motifs of storytelling
- Begin to identify key aspects of narratives, such as character, setting, action, conflict, and resolution
- Begin to gain understanding of the impact of storytelling on contemporary behaviors and social norms
- Create and present a contemporary fairy tale

## State Content Standard

- 3.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of the rehearsal process as a means of refining and revising work leading to a finished performance.
- 3.8 Stage informal presentations for a variety of audiences.
- 4.3 Recognize and understand the roles and responsibilities of various technical personnel in creating and producing a theatrical performance.
- 4.5 As a member of a production crew, select and create elements of scenery, properties, lighting, and sound to signify environments, and costumes and makeup to suggest character.
- 4.12 Conduct research to inform the design of sets, costumes, sound, and lighting for a dramatic production.

## Materials

- Sample videos of different forms of storytelling (provided below)
- White board or chart paper
- Access to performance space (i.e cafeteria, auditorium, library, large classroom, etc.)

## Length

Three 60-minute classes:

- Class One: Exploring Narrative and Storytelling
- Class Two: Creating
- Class Three: Creating Cont./Peer Coaching
- Class Four: Presentation (depending on class size, you may need more than one presentation day)

## **Part One: Exploring Narrative and Storytelling**

1. Begin by activating students' existing knowledge about stories. Write the following questions on the board or on chart paper. Have students discuss the questions as a class, and record their comments on the board or chart paper.

- a. What is a story? How is a story told?
- b. Who tells stories?
- c. What makes a good story?

2. Ask students to think about their favorite childhood fairy tales or stories and share. Discuss the following:

- a. When did you first hear this story?
- b. How has this story traditionally been told? (Novel, movie, internet, etc.)
- c. Do you notice any trends between the shared stories?
- d. Does it have a beginning, middle, and end?
- e. What is the conflict?
- f. How is it resolved?
- g. What is the environment?
- h. What did you learn from the story? What was the message or lesson?

3. Ask students to think about their own experiences. If they were to create their own fairy tale, what experiences would inspire them? Discuss the following?

- a. What do I see?
- b. What do I think about that?
- c. What does it make me wonder about?

## **Part Two: Different ways to tell stories**

1. Based on the previous discussion, revisit the question: "How is a story told?" Ask students to brainstorm all the ways in which they think stories can be told. Write the responses on the board.

2. Have students watch the following video samples:

### **Music/song:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjNTu8jdukA>

### **Spoken word/monologue:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQucWXWp3k>

### **Dance/movement:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWZGAExj-es>

3. Discuss with students the different types of storytelling in the videos.

- a. Was the story clear?
- b. What is the conflict?
- c. Is there a beginning, middle, and end?
- d. What is the lesson?
- e. How did form affect the story?

4. Students will then work individually to create their own fairy tale or story. They must choose a form of storytelling from the video examples (monologue, song/verse, spoken word, or dance) or an example discussed in the beginning of Part Two. Their stories must include the following:

- a. A clear beginning, middle, and end
- b. Some sort of conflict
- c. A message or lesson

*Presentations should be no longer than 5 minutes*

### **Part Three: Creating Cont. and Peer Coaching**

1. Students will get into groups of 3-4 and share their work in progress with one another. Students will have 30 minutes to share each of their pieces and discuss the following as a group:

- a. Is the story clear?
- b. Does it have a beginning, middle, and end?
- c. How does the form of storytelling (music, dance, or monologue) affect the story? What does it add to the story that other forms wouldn't?
- d. What is the story's lesson?

2. Students should also feel free to use this time to ask questions or get specific feedback on something they're struggling with.

3. Students will then have the remainder of the class to work individually on refining their projects. Teachers are encouraged to participate in individual and group coaching throughout the creation process.

### **Part Four: Presentation**

Students will have ten minutes to set up, rehearse, and/or troubleshoot possible sound/space issues. The rest of the class will act as an audience for one another.

### **Assessment**

1. Facilitate a class discussion after each presentation, based on the following questions:
  - a. Does the story have a beginning, middle, and end?
  - b. Who is the main character?
  - c. What is the problem to solve?
  - d. How does the problem get solved?
  - e. What did I learn from it?
  - f. What do I still wonder about?
2. Evaluate each students' level of inventiveness, originality, and complexity of design.
3. Assess the level of participation, collaboration, effective use of rehearsal time, and readiness of the individual.

## MUSIC ON THE AMERICAN STAGE



*Oklahoma!*, written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein in 1943, stands out as one of the first Book Musicals of American Theatre.

incorporated music into the presentation and structure of their tragedies and comedies. Centuries later, popular forms like Opera and Ballet would use music in very different, culturally unique approaches: Operatic productions set the action and dialogue of the story to music in a grand and presentational manner, while ballet, with no speaking or singing, tells the story through highly stylized dancing and choreography set to music.

Contemporary musicals evolved out of the traditions of musical comedies and revues of the 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, which featured mostly music, comedy routines, and elements of stage spectacle, with little character development or



*Hair*, written in 1967 by James Rado, Gerome Ragni, and Galt MacDermot, defined the **Rock Musical** genre.

sophisticated plot structure. In the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, productions began to combine songs, spoken dialogue, dance, and acting into a cohesive performance genre. Songs are used in musicals theatre as a storytelling device in situations where characters experience emotions so intense that expressing themselves through dialogue is not enough. *Oklahoma!*, written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein in 1943, is one of the first stage musicals to move the genre beyond the spectacle-heavy entertainment of the early 20th Century. All artistic components in *Oklahoma!*—music, story, dance, setting, and design—originated from a central style and aesthetic. It is also one of the earliest examples of a **Book Musical**, a musical play in which the songs and dances are fully integrated into a well-made story with serious dramatic goals that evoke genuine emotions other than laughter.



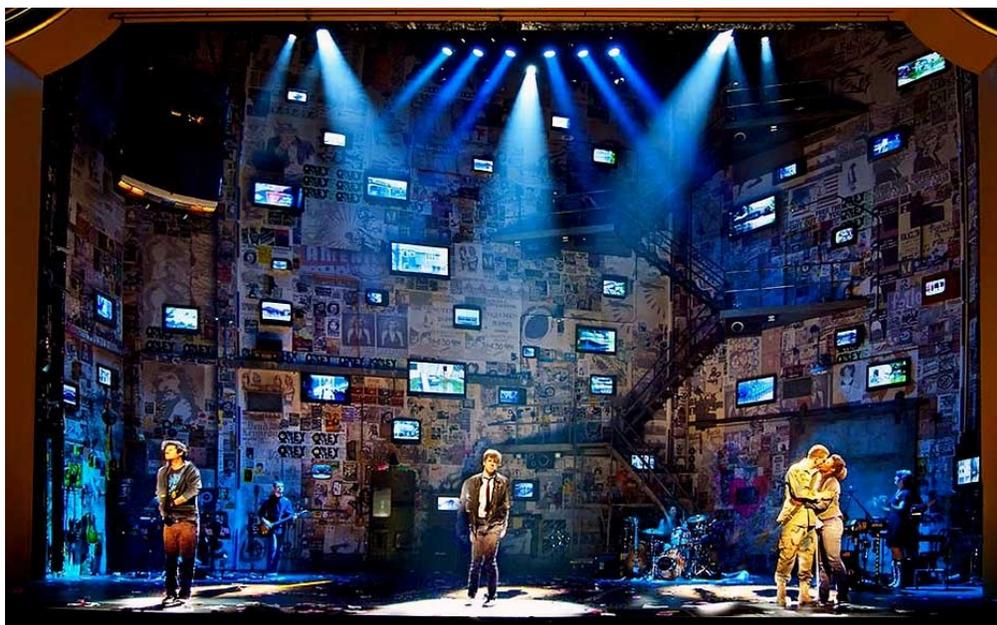
*Into the Woods*, written by Sondheim and James Lapine in 1986, is a prime of the composer's approach to concept musicals.

With the growing popularity of rock music in the 1950's and 1960's, new musicals began to incorporate similar song structures and performances styles on stage. *Hair*, written in 1967 by James Rado, Gerome Ragni, and Galt MacDermot, defined the **Rock Musical** genre. Its use of rock music matched the counter-culture, anti-establishment themes associated with the time and location of the show: 1960's New York City in a community of homeless youth protesting the Vietnam War. *Hair* also lead the way for musical writers to seriously consider creating shows based on broader concepts or themes, as opposed to inventive or witty plots.

Stephen Sondheim, one of musical theatre's most accomplished and revered composers and lyricists, is well known for creating **Concept Musicals**: shows organized around a thematic concept, usually offering ironic views of human behavior and social values. Sondheim's use of musical score reflects this approach by repeating musical themes

throughout the story that connect to specific characters, moods, or emotions. *Into The Woods*, written by Sondheim and James Lapine in 1986, is a prime example of this approach. The plot of *Into The Woods* is a mash-up of popular fairy tales written by The Brothers Grimm, with characters from each story colliding with each other in the process of fighting for their personal hopes and desires. Sondheim's music denotes the passage of time in the story and underscores the moods or revelations of each character; as the plot becomes more complex, the music provides a cohesive theme and arch to tie each story together into an artistic whole.

**Jukebox Musicals** have historically been a successful way to create a show from previously written work or from an established musical genre, such as rock or folk music, with songs adapted or contextualized into a dramatic plot. This approach has grown increasingly popular in a field that thrives on strong creative collaboration and inventive storytelling techniques. In the process of writing a book musical, a script writer, composer, and lyricist are all needed to create a final book and score for actors to rehearse and perform. In many musical productions today, a band or composer who creates the score might perform on stage along with the rest of the ensemble, or the show might be heavily influenced by the band's cultural style and aesthetic. The strong presence of a show's creative source—band, composer, writer—brings a unique theatrical energy and immediacy to the stage, similar to that of a rock concert, in which the audience can experience the very real phenomenon of an artist recreating their own



*Green Day's **Rock Opera**, American Idiot, was first performed in 2009 as a sung-through stage adaptation of their 2004 studio album.*

work live, as though it were the first time.

Incorporating a live band or ensemble of musicians into a show provides countless ways for artists to collaborate, write, and perform new stories. Many productions may look and sound like conventional book musicals but maintain a clear presence or influence from previously written work or established musical genre. With a **Concept Album**, a band may write or compose a set of songs that contain a narrative storyline with the intention of performing them in a theatrical context, with sets, costumes, and props. Green Day's **Rock Opera**, *American Idiot*, was first performed in 2009 as a sung-through stage adaptation of their 2004 studio album. The show, featuring a live band on stage, matches the visual and aural qualities of Green Day's early 1990's punk rock aesthetic seen in their music videos and live rock concerts.



*Walter Sickert & the Army of Broken Toys, though not credited with originating the music, provide an artistic backdrop for the acting and design elements of SHOCKHEADED PETER with their own indie-rock, steampunk, and ostentatiously vaudevillian performance style.*

## SHOCKHEADED PETER & MUSICAL COLLABORATION

The world of SHOCKHEADED PETER is also heavily influenced by the musical genre and visual aesthetics of the show's collaborating musicians: Walter Sickert & The Army of Broken Toys. Originally staged in 1999 with music written and performed by The Tiger Lillies, SHOCKHEADED PETER is an adaptation of Heinrich Hoffmann's 1845 children's book, *Struwwelpeter*, with Hoffman's text used as the basis for lyrics to each song. Similar to Sondheim's *Into The Woods*, SHOCKHEADED PETER is a collection of children's stories by a single author, each with their own lessons about strong morals and good behavior, brought together by broader connective themes, and scored with music that elevates and unifies its collective parts.

***“The songs feature gloatingly gruesome lyrics, adapted from Hoffmann's stories...Yet the music, which captures the flavor of lurid Victorian street ballads without ever merely imitating them, gets under your skin and stays there.”***

*-- Ben Brantley, in a New York Times review of SHOCKHEADED PETER from 2005*

Walter Sickert & the Army of Broken Toys, though not credited with originating the music, provide an artistic backdrop for the acting and design elements of the show with their own indie-rock, steampunk, and ostentatiously vaudevillian performance style. Steampunk is an artistic and literary subgenre of science fiction and fantasy featuring steam-powered technology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as visual or literary context. The music and fashion of this genre draw inspiration from the Victorian lifestyle of that period, with the addition of science-fiction embellishments. The band's attraction to steampunk as a collage of Victorian and industrial imagery is reflected in their creation process, which includes multiple artistic mediums and source material. Sickert, the band's leader, often approaches song creation through non-musical means, either through film, painting, or photography. Edrie, the band's wrangler, explains, “Sometimes [Sickert] draws a song before he really comes up with a tune...Walter's art is intricate, showing cutouts and internal organs while giving a picture of the whole. It juxtaposes things against each other and combines ideas to make something new.”

***“The band throws out these incredible out-of-the-box ideas, and as actors we are able to put them on its feet. It’s the epitome of collaboration.”***

*-- Jake Athyal, Actor in Company One Theatre’s production, on the collaborative process of working with a live band during rehearsals of SHOCKHEADED PETER*



*Walter Sickert & The Army of Broken Toys, the Director, and the Dramaturgical Team met over the summer for a musical workshop.*

The creative process for the current production began months before a final cast was brought together; the band, director, and dramaturgical team met during the summer for a series of workshop rehearsals dedicated to exploring the music of SHOCKHEADED PETER. Months later, at the first rehearsal with the cast and crew, the director shared his initial thoughts about each of the songs and their thematic threads. Rehearsals require a collaborative layering process, with actors and the director devising action based on song lyrics, then adding music—performed live by the band—followed by adjustments and editing of the devised action to fit within the score. The end result is the creation of an intricate, artistically unified production built out of many unique components.

## LESSON PLAN SOUND DESIGN: MUSIC & EFFECTS

### Description

The cast and musicians of SHOCKHEADED PETER work collaboratively to create a unique theatrical experience with music and sound. In this exercise, students will work as a group to design and present a soundscape made of found, live, and created effects that establish environment, mood, action, and character.

### Objectives

- Research and identify examples of effective sound design (included below).
- Compile, design, and present a series of sound effects that communicate a specific location, time, atmosphere, event, or identity.

### State Content Standard

- 3.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of the rehearsal process as a means of refining and revising work leading to a finished performance.
- 3.8 Stage informal presentations for a variety of audiences.
- 4.3 Recognize and understand the roles and responsibilities of various technical personnel in creating and producing a theatrical performance.
- 4.5 As a member of a production crew, select and create elements of scenery, properties, lighting, and sound to signify environments, and costumes and makeup to suggest character.
- 4.12 Conduct research to inform the design of sets, costumes, sound, and lighting for a dramatic production.
- 9.8 Evaluate the effectiveness of the use of a particular technology to achieve an artistic effect.

### Materials

- Sample videos, online clips, or recordings of effective sound design.
- Classroom audio recording equipment (voice recorders, personal smart phones, laptop or desktop computers).

### Length

Two 60-minute classes:

- Class One (Research and Devising)
- Class Two: (Designing and Presentation)

### Part One: Research

Share the following clips, or other found footage and recordings, of effective sound design. Ask students to list the sounds they hear in each clip. Viewing can alternate between playing the clip with just sound, or without sound, in order to discover how music and effects are integrated into the action on screen. Use the following questions to process the content and prompt discussions about the design process.

1. *What words would you use to describe these sounds (e.g. natural, man-made, industrial, whimsical etc.)?*
2. *How does music compliment or punctuate the action on screen? List several examples.*
3. *In cartoons, the sound of the action is fabricated in a studio, not recorded from reality. How do you think some of the effects you listed were artificially created in a studio?*

#### Video Samples:

- Road Runner & Wile E Coyote – “*Chariots of Fur*”  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWdFIXn2Mdo&noredirect=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWdFIXn2Mdo&noredirect=1)
- Tom & Jerry – “*Beach Day*”  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKxqRthhwls](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKxqRthhwls)
- A Prairie Home Companion – Fred Newman SFX  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDn-llZuUiw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDn-llZuUiw)

#### **Part Two: Devising**

Students will work in groups for the rest of the first day to brainstorm and select environments or settings that can be associated with many specific sounds:

- Dentist’s office
- Rainforest
- Carnival or fair
- Shopping mall
- Restaurant kitchen
- Haunted house

After selecting one environment from their list, each group should consider how to recreate the audio experience of being in this location and begin structuring a series of events that can occur in each one. Encourage students to think about a character that exists in these environments and how they would interact with their surroundings.

Final presentations should last 20-30 seconds long, and must include at least one effect from each of the following categories:

- **Found Sound:** An effect from a previously recorded source, on a CD, mp3 download, or other medium. This effect is played in sequence during the presentation. There are no limitations on the effect itself, though it should be something that may otherwise be difficult to create manually or sustain in performance.
  - Cell phone ring
  - Car engine running
  - Ocean waves at the beach

- **Live Sound:** An effect created in the moment by a person or specific action that is indicative of that source.
  - A door opening and closing (made by opening and closing a door).
  - The sound of crying or laughing (created by a member of the group).
  - Someone sweeping the floor (a member of the group sweeps the floor).
  
- **Created Sound:** An effect also performed in the moment by a person or specific action, but is meant to create the sound of something other than what it is.
  - Knocking coconut shells together (sound of a horse galloping).
  - Shaking sheet plastic, metal, or laminated poster (sound of thunder).
  - Crushing potato chips in a bowl (sound of walking through dry leaves).
  - Using a toaster (sound of a cash register opening and closing).
  
- **Musical Sound:** This can be created live or pre-recorded and can be used to score the entire soundscape, or occur only once at a specific moment in the entire design.

After selecting their environment and listing all of its possible sounds, students will assign each other the responsibility of bring music, recordings, props, or equipment needed to create their desired effect to the following class.

### **Part Three: Designing**

Students use the beginning of the second day to discuss, rehearse, edit, and refine their sequence of effects. Circulate throughout that class to check in and confirm each group is following the guidelines of the assignment.

### **Part Four: Presentation**

Each group is given time to set up their own equipment or practice with any classroom-provided audio equipment. The rest of the class, as the audience, closes their eyes for each presentation. Afterwards, the audience shares their feedback and interpretation of the environment and events that occurred.

### **Assessment**

1. Facilitate a class discussion after each presentation, focusing on how each sound and musical cue was successful, on an artistic and technological level, at evoking the desired response from the audience.
2. Evaluate each group's level of inventiveness, originality, and complexity of design.
3. Assess the level of participation, collaboration, effective use of rehearsal time, and readiness of the group for presentation.

## Resources

- Nasty Surprises for Bad Children (and Grown-Ups, Too)  
Shockheaded Peter theatre review by Ben Brantley  
New York Times, February 23, 2005  
[www.nytimes.com/2005/02/23/theater/reviews/23shoc](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/23/theater/reviews/23shoc)
- Humans of Company One  
Interview with Jake Athyal: Actor in SHOCKHEADED PETER  
January 21, 2015, [companyone.org/jakeathyal](http://companyone.org/jakeathyal)
- Elements of a Musical, The Score  
Online article by John Kenrick  
Musicals 101, [www.musicals101.com/score.htm](http://www.musicals101.com/score.htm)
- History of the Theatre  
Oscar G. Brockett and Hildy J. Franklin  
Published by Allyn and Bacon, Boston. 2003
- What is SteamCRUNK?  
Dramaturgical blog post by Ramona Ostrowski  
SHOCKHEADED PETER at C1, December 9, 2014  
[www.shockheadedc1.wordpress.com/2014/12/09/what-is-steamcrunk](http://www.shockheadedc1.wordpress.com/2014/12/09/what-is-steamcrunk)
- Thoughts On Songs  
Dramaturgical blog post by Illana M. Brownstein  
SHOCKHEADED PETER at C1, December 2, 2014  
[www.shockheadedc1.wordpress.com/2014/12/02/thoughts-on-songs](http://www.shockheadedc1.wordpress.com/2014/12/02/thoughts-on-songs)
- The Dramatic Function of Songs in Musical Theatre  
Online article by Larry A. Brown  
Larry A. Brown, July 2007  
[larryavisbrown.homestead.com/files/theater\\_topics/musical\\_theater.htm](http://larryavisbrown.homestead.com/files/theater_topics/musical_theater.htm)
- *It's Better With a Band*  
Magazine article by Rob Weinert-Kendt  
American Theatre Magazine, April 2013  
[www.tcg.org/publications/at/issue/featuredstory.cfm?story=1&indexID=28](http://www.tcg.org/publications/at/issue/featuredstory.cfm?story=1&indexID=28)

- *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*  
By Jack Zipes  
Published in 2001 by Routledge
- *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*  
By Jack Zipes  
Published in 1983 by Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- *Der Strewelpeter*  
By Heinrich Hoffmann  
<http://germanstories.vcu.edu/struwwel/bubeng.html>