

PLAYTIME POPPY AUDIENCE GUIDE



WELCOME!

We are so glad you're joining us for this Playtime Poppy production!

Since 1951, Playtime Poppy has presented theatre for children and families. We know that the memories created in the theatre last a lifetime, especially when children and adults share their experiences with each other. Use this guide to spark conversation, creativity and learning!

HOW TO BE A GREAT AUDIENCE

Attending the theatre is different than watching a movie or television. The actors and audience share the experience together. Being a good audience member involves showing respect for the actors' hard work – AND enjoying your experience to the fullest!

- Arrive at the theatre on time.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- Silence cell phones to minimize disruptions to the actors and other audience members.
- Applaud! It's welcomed and encouraged at appropriate times to show your appreciation of the performers' choices.
- Participate (sing, speak, move etc.) when the performers invite you to do so.
- Be a good listener and keep your focus on the performance. You won't want to miss any of it!



ABOUT THE PLAY



Reeling

by Barry Kornhauser

Music Composed by Michael Koerner

Winner of the 2006 IVEY Award for Playwriting

Synopsis:

In the spirit of the silent movie era, *Reeling* brings the timeless style and joy of vintage film to the stage. Without a single spoken word, *Reeling* tells the story of the Little Fellow, based on the film persona of silent movie great Buster Keaton. His marriage proposal turned down by Beloved, the Little Fellow heads to the big city to make something of himself, and winds up in a motion picture studio where he is mistaken for the big-shot director. Comic mayhem ensues with an impossibly happy ending, as our hero and his girl literally escape the chaos into the silver screen. Riffing off of Keaton's genius, *Reeling* is not so much a silent movie on stage as a theatrical interpretation of the genre, a celebration of the human spirit and the enduring power of art.

As CTC Artistic Director Peter Brosius noted: *"What a great thing for kids to know, that no matter what befalls you – and things will befall you – you can keep putting one foot in front of the other [even in slap shoes] and find a way to laugh. ...Through persistence, through laughter, through blind faith and a wee bit of optimism, you can make it."*

"The show's roots lie in the time-transcendent soil of the pratfall and the struggle of the little guy to make good. From that fertile ground comes laughter – and wisdom – that rings loud and clear."

- St. Paul Pioneer Press

Show vocabulary

Beloved – a dearly loved person

Foley artist – a person who creates sound effects for movies or radio

Predicament – a difficult, embarrassing or unpleasant situation

Reel – 1. a cylinder on which film can be wound 2. to lose one's balance and stagger

Slapstick – comedy based on deliberately clumsy and humorously embarrassing events

Theatre vocabulary

For a list of theatre terms and vocabulary, visit:

<https://quizlet.com/42804/theatre-vocabulary-flash-cards/>

Reeling is based on the silent films of actor, comedian, director, producer, screenwriter and stunt performer, **Buster Keaton** (1895-1966.) Keaton started performing at the age of three with his parents who were vaudeville actors. He started working in silent films in 1917 and became known for his daring slapstick stunts, his serious "stone face," and his iconic pork pie hat.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Children get the most out of a theatre experience when they:

- ✓ **CONNECT** to experiences in their own lives
- ✓ **MAKE CREATIVE CHOICES** that reflect the choices they see on stage
- ✓ **REFLECT** after the performance with others

CONNECT

- Create a list of all the ways you communicate with others nonverbally. Why do people use gestures or body language to communicate? [SL.3.2]
- Think of your favorite movie. What sound effects or music do you hear? How do sound effects and music help tell the story? [SL.3.2] [MA:Pr4.1.3]



MAKE CREATIVE CHOICES

- Buster Keaton was known for creating humor by transforming objects in unexpected ways. Choose an object and imagine different ways it could be transformed into something else. [TH:Cr1.1.3.b]
- Act out a familiar routine (making dinner, brushing teeth, playing baseball, etc.) without using any words. How do your body and face express action and emotions? Write a “script” for your scene by describing each action carefully. [TH:Cr3.1.3.b] [W.3.3]
- Become Foley artists! Create sound effects for a favorite short story that is read aloud. Use words in the text and illustrations for inspiration. [RL.3.1]
- Select a wordless story book. (See pg. 4 for suggestions.) How do the illustrations tell the story? How would you act out scenes from the story using the illustrations as a guide? [RL.3.7]

REFLECT

- In comedy, a character’s actions often result in surprising results. Name an action by one of the characters in *Reeling* that had unexpected consequences. What did you think would happen? What happened instead? [RL.3.3]



- How do you think the play would be different if the actors spoke words out loud? [SL.3.1] [SL.3.4]
- Describe how the hero overcame challenges. What made him keep trying? [21st Century Skills]
- Create a movie poster for *Reeling* by drawing your favorite moment from the show and using catchy phrases to attract audiences. What do you think audiences would like best? [W.3.1]

[Numbers indicate Iowa Core Standards or Iowa Core Fine Arts Standards.]

RESOURCES

WEBSITES:

Playtime Poppy Children's Theatre

<http://www.playtimepoppy.org>

Jefferson High School Drama Department

<http://jeffersonperformingarts.com/theater/aladdin.html>

Kids' Drama and Puppet Activities

<https://dramaresource.com/drama-games/>

<http://www.kinderart.com/drama>

<https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/tipsheets/five-easy-drama-games>

<http://kidsactivitiesblog.com/66700/26-puppets-kids>

<http://wonderteacher.com/teaching-with-puppet-power/>

Cultural and Thematic Resources

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/buster-keaton-about-buster-keaton/644/>

<https://www.moms.com/great-silent-films-for-kids/>

BOOKS:

Wordless Stories

Silent Movie by Avi, Illustrated by C.B.Modan

That is Not a Good Idea by Mo Willems

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick

Tuesday by David Weisner

Flotsam by David Weisner

Chalk by Bill Thomson

Good Night Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann

Journey by Aaron Becker

Sidewalk Flowers by Jonarno Lawson

Mirror by Suzy Lee

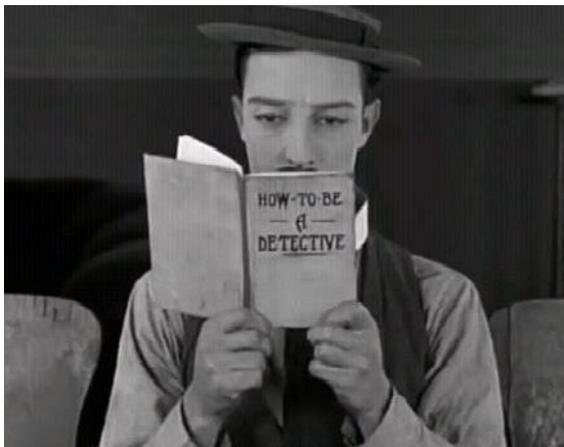
Float by Daniel Miyares

The Lion and the Mouse by Jerry Pickney

Wonder Bear by Tao Nyeu

Changes, Changes by Pat Tobin

Flora and the Flamingo by Molly Schaar Idle



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Jefferson High School Drama Department

Directors: Bryan Schlotfelt & Joe Link

Student Cast & Crew

Season Sponsor:



Matinee Sponsors:



Tuesday Noon Optimists

Media Sponsor:



Playtime Poppy Board of Directors & Volunteers



**Don't forget to learn the
Playtime Poppy Song!**

*"I love to sing
and dance and
play..."*

-Playtime Poppy

For the lyrics and music go to:

<http://www.playtimepoppy.org/about/playtime-poppy-song/>

Since 1951, Playtime Poppy Children's Theatre has presented educational theatre programming for children and families in our community. In partnership with Jefferson, Kennedy, and Washington High Schools, Playtime Poppy presents three children's theatre productions annually. Playtime Poppy provides educational theatre experiences through the Summer Theatre Adventure, Operation Backstage, One Great Line, and special matinee performances for elementary-school aged children and those with special needs. For additional information about Playtime Poppy, please visit www.playtimepoppy.org or follow us on Facebook.