

ENCHANTMENT THEATRE COMPANY  
PRESENTS

*Aladdin*  
*and Other Enchanting Tales*



*A Study Guide for Classroom Teachers*

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Dear Teachers,

Thank you for taking your class to see our production of *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*. We hope you all enjoy it!

We believe that experiencing theater is essential for children to thrive, and it is the initiative taken by teachers like you that enables so many children to see our productions who may not otherwise have this unique opportunity.

We have provided this study guide to help you bring your theater experience into the classroom should you have time for special activities before or after your class trip. In addition to the information and activities in the beginning of the study guide, there are supplementary materials included at the end with additional activities and more detailed information about theater.

We hope you find our suggestions fun, educational, and adaptable to suit your varying needs.

Thank you again and we look forward to seeing you at the show!

Sincerely,

The Staff of Enchantment Theatre Company

*This study guide was prepared by Sara Nye,  
Jennifer B. Smith, and Faith Wohl*

Visit Enchantment Theatre Company at [www.enchantmenttheatre.org](http://www.enchantmenttheatre.org)

## Synopsis of *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*

Enchantment Theatre's *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales* is based on the Company's original symphony concert piece, *Scheherazade*, inspired by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov's tone poem of the same title. Our stage version uses Rimsky-Korsakov's music, which has been adapted for this production by composer Charles Gilbert.

The frame story and heart of the *Tales* is about a storyteller, Scheherazade, who, to save her life and the lives of her fellow citizens, tells a new story each night to her ruler, the Sultan. Because of his wife's treachery, the Sultan has vowed to exact revenge on all the women in his kingdom. Each day Scheherazade delays her death by weaving tales that at first captivate the Sultan and then ultimately transform him into a wise and compassionate leader.

As the writer Jorge Luis Borges said about the *Tales*: "I think that the reader should enrich what he is reading. He should misunderstand the text; he should change it into something else." Borges is acknowledging the transformative aspect of the stories; how they keep morphing, changing the reader's perspective and, as they've traveled through time and civilization, have been added to and told in new ways. In keeping with this tradition, Enchantment has approached these stories by staying true to their intent, but with a fresh perspective.

In our telling of the tale, Scheherazade weaves her stories to save her brother, a mischievous young man who playfully takes a golden peacock feather from the Sultan's prized bird. The Sultan is a bully, who rules the people on his whims. Influenced by his evil counselors, the Sultan condemns the brother to death, but delays the execution when he discovers the magic in Scheherazade's tales. He demands she tell him her stories, and as each tale unfolds, the Sultan changes into its hero, becoming Sinbad, Aladdin, and the Kalandar Prince in turn.



*The Kalandar Prince and the Dragon-Lady*

On the first night Scheherazade tells the Sultan the story of Sinbad. Sinbad is shipwrecked, and his adventures, including a battle with a Cyclops and the rescue of a magical bird, are so fascinating that the Sultan asks her to tell another story the following evening. Night after night, Scheherazade tells the Sultan a new tale, and he is so entertained that he keeps asking for more. Scheherazade next tells the story of Aladdin; Aladdin must confront an evil Sorcerer to get back the magic lamp, the genie who lives inside it, and the beautiful princess whose heart he has won. Finally Scheherazade tells the Sultan the story of The Kalandar Prince. The Prince is turned into a monkey by a powerful Dragon-Lady and the brave Princess who loves him must defeat the Dragon to release the Prince from the spell. After a fearsome battle, the Princess destroys the Dragon and the Prince is transformed back to himself.

These stories teach the Sultan about power and greed, justice and forgiveness, and kindness and love. The Sultan is at last transformed; he forgives Scheherazade's brother, dismisses his counselors, and acknowledges his love for Scheherazade. Through these magical tales he discovers his true capacity to love and to forgive.



*The Sultan and his wife*

## About the Story



*The Sultan and Scheherazade*

*Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales* is based on the *Tales from the Arabian Nights*, a compilation of fairy tales, fables and myths from Persia, India, Mesopotamia, Turkey and Egypt. These fabulous stories, many over 1000 years old, have influenced such great Western storytellers as Chaucer, Dante, and Shakespeare. The uniqueness of the tales is not only in their fantastic elements—genies and sorcerers, giants, and flying carpets—but in their intent; that stories can create new possibilities for empathy and understanding in people’s lives; that they can change us by opening up a new way of “seeing.”

One of the most interesting parts of the *Tales* is its storytelling structure. The play begins by introducing Scheherazade and the Sultan and presenting both a problem—the Sultan has condemned her brother to die—and a dubious solution—Scheherazade will tell the Sultan

enlightening and miraculous tales in hopes that he will let go of his anger. Scheherazade’s plan works, and the Sultan is transformed and happy once again. This is a story in itself; it has a beginning, middle, and end. However, it is a frame story surrounding multiple other stories. The tales Scheherazade tells the Sultan every night each have their own beginnings, middles, and ends. These various tales create layers of plot points and character development, leaving it to the audience to travel among them and eventually return to reality. Depending where we are in the play, that reality can change too. At the end of each of Scheherazade’s tales, the audience returns to the world of Scheherazade and the angry Sultan. At the end of the play itself, audience members return to their own world. Enchantment adds another layer to this structure, blurring the line between what is real and what is not, by allowing the character of the Sultan to play the hero in each story Scheherazade tells. When we watch this, we ask ourselves, is the Sultan merely imagining himself in these roles, or has Scheherazade magically transported him to the worlds of her tales?

The character of the Sultan represents the danger inherent in one person gaining too much power. The Sultan is the head of his government, and he has ultimate power simply because he is the Sultan. When he decides to put Scheherazade’s brother to death for petty mischief no one dares risk disagreeing with him except Scheherazade. However, she realizes that in order to change the powerful Sultan’s mind, she must utilize another source of power—words. Scheherazade empowers herself by choosing to align herself with the stories she tells, stories that ultimately teach the Sultan how to forgive.

The role of women in this production is an extremely important one. Scheherazade is a young woman whose bravery saves her brother and turns her Sultan into a just ruler. Scheherazade’s goodness, confidence, and desire to prove to the Sultan that he can achieve forgiveness help her succeed. She also believes in the power of a story to impact its audience. She is not only the hero of our play, but also a champion of the performing arts’ ability to affect change. Scheherazade is a strong female figure—an important role model for young children.

Tales like Scheherazade, Sinbad, Aladdin, and The Kalandar Prince open up the world of 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian literature to a larger audience; characters journey throughout this world, experiencing kindness from others, arriving at a place of forgiveness, or even learning the importance of good triumphing over bad. The stories ultimately show that many decisions these characters confront are, at their heart, not so different from decisions people in our own world must make. When faced with betrayal, do we all choose forgiveness right away? In this show, audiences will marvel at demons and genies, magic and love, adventure and the warmth of home. These tales demonstrate the importance of oral story-telling and the sheer power of a tale told well.

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

*Language Arts:* Classic Literature, Oral Storytelling, Inductive Thinking from Observation of Non-Verbal Language, Comprehension; *Social Studies:* Social Interaction, Listening, Justice and Forgiveness, Transformative Power of Loving Relationships, Woman as a Figure of Wisdom and Power; *Classical Music; Persian and Asian Culture/History; Geography*

## About the Show

This production of *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales* uses a number of theatrical devices to bring the story to life. Here are some of the things you and your students can expect to see:

**Masks:** In the show, all of the actors wear masks to help them portray different characters. Masks have been used in theater since its earliest beginnings, and they help to transform the actor and transport the audience to another world. The Sorcerer and Aladdin (right) are wearing masks.

**Mime:** Mime is acting without speaking or making any noise. In *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*, the performers act out the story with their bodies and gestures, but they do not speak.

**Magic:** Enchantment Theatre Company uses magic to enhance the magical aspects of the stories we tell and to keep our productions engaging and surprising.

**Music:** In addition to a recorded voice that provides important narration, the music will support the action of the stories and sometimes serve as the voice of the characters. The symphonic music of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, arranged by Charles Gilbert especially for this production, creates an epic atmosphere for these stories.

**Puppets:** Some of the characters in the story are played by actors wearing masks and costumes. Other characters are played by puppets, like the Genie (below left).



*The Sorcerer and Aladdin at the entrance to the cave*



*The Genie, Aladdin, and the Magic Lamp*

**Note:** Very young children may be confused or even frightened by the characters wearing masks. Show them the production photos throughout this study guide so they know what to expect. Another way to prepare is to have students experiment with masks in class. Have them silently act out different characters, actions, and emotions while wearing simple masks, and see if classmates can guess who or what they are portraying. Talk about different ways we can communicate without using words or facial expressions. A few scenes in the show are performed in low light. Prepare children who are afraid of the dark by encouraging them to talk about their fears. Ask them to guess what parts of the story might take place when the stage is darker.

## Classroom Activities

### Before You See *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*

#### Activity One: Understand the Story

- Read *The Arabian Nights* illustrated Junior Library edition, published by Grosset & Dunlap Inc., a member of Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers. Also see page 3 of this study guide for a story summary.
- Discuss reactions to the story and characters.

#### Questions for Class Discussion:

1. Who is the main character of this story? Who are the other characters?
2. What are some words to describe the Sultan at the beginning of the story? Explain.
3. What are some words to describe Scheherazade at the beginning of the story? Explain.
4. Why does Scheherazade tell the Sultan stories?
5. Can you list the 3 stories Scheherazade tells the Sultan?
6. Who does Sinbad meet during his adventures? Which characters delay him from returning home? Which characters help him?
7. What does Aladdin wish for when the Genie appears?
8. How does the evil Sorcerer trick Aladdin?
9. In the tale of The Kalandar Prince, why do you think the Princess wanted to save the Prince?
10. List 3 magical things that happened in any of these stories. What made them magical to you?
11. How does the Sultan feel at the end of the story? Explain.
12. In question 4 you thought about why Scheherazade told the Sultan these stories. Did Scheherazade accomplish this goal? Explain.
13. Scheherazade tells the Sultan stories so he doesn't feel angry or upset anymore. What are some things that make you feel better?
14. If the story kept on going, what do you think would happen?

#### Activity Two: Prepare for the Play

Enchantment Theatre Company's production of *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales* is an **adaptation**. That means that Enchantment Theatre Company read different versions of the stories of Scheherazade, Sinbad, Aladdin, and The Kalandar Prince and then had to come up with ways to make the story come to life on stage!

#### Questions for class discussion:

1. Define "adaptation" with your class. (Synonyms: adjust, modify, convert, transform).
2. Ask your class to identify some fairy tales that they know (*Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pinocchio*, etc.). Find a story with which most of the class is familiar and discuss all the different adaptations of that story.
  - a. How many of you have seen a movie, play, ballet, or cartoon of the *Cinderella* story?
  - b. How many have you have read the story in a book?
  - c. What was different about these adaptations? What was similar?
  - d. Do you know which adaptation came first?
3. Have you ever read a book and then seen the movie adaptation of that book? How were they alike? How were they different? Which did you prefer and why?
4. The performers will be acting out the story of Scheherazade, the Sultan, and all the characters that appear in the stories Scheherazade tells.

- a. What do you imagine the play will be like? What will it look like/sound like?
  - b. How do you think watching the play will be different from reading the story?
5. Define the following (reference page 5): masks, mime, magic, music, puppets. You will see all of these during the play.

## ***After You See Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales***

### **Activity One: Respond to the Play**

- Review the performance and ask students to describe with as much detail as possible what they remember. What types of costumes did they see? How many characters were in the story? How did the actors transform themselves to play different characters? What kind of music was used?
- Ask the students to help make a list of different things that happened in the performance. Write these down on the board.

### Questions for Class Discussion:

1. Who is the main character in the story? How do you know that?
2. How did you feel about not being able to see the actor's faces completely?
3. Did you have to use your imagination when you watched this play? Explain.
4. What happened in the story that was surprising? Exciting? Funny? Scary?
5. How was the play different than the story you read in class (if you read the story prior to seeing the play). How was it the same?
6. Did the music help tell the story? How? How else did the actors show how they were feeling or what they were doing without words? (see Activity Two for more)
7. List characters that were portrayed by actors. Then list some that were portrayed by puppets.
8. Lots of bad things happen to the characters in these stories. What do you think the Sultan learned from listening to their experiences?
9. Name a time you forgave someone. Did you feel better afterwards or worse?
10. Can you name someone in your life who listens well like the Sultan? Can you name someone who is brave like Scheherazade?



*The Grand Vizier brings Scheherazade to the angry Sultan*

## Activity Two: Discover Theater in the Classroom

In *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*, the actors were able to communicate ideas and feelings without using words. Discuss with the students how the actors let the audience know what was happening, even when they weren't using their voices.

Use the following activities to explore the possibilities of communicating without speaking:

1. **Invisible Object:** Imagine you are holding a very heavy bowling ball. Pass it around the circle without speaking and without dropping it! Think about how you have to stand to hold a heavy object, what your muscles feel like, how slowly you have to move. Give prompts like, "Be ready for it! It's heavy. Make sure your neighbor has it before you let it go!" When it's gone all the way around, try passing around a very light feather, a hot potato, a live frog. "Don't let it get away!" Don't say what it is you are passing, have the students guess based on how you handle the imaginary object.
2. **Without Words:** Ask students to think of actions or gestures they use to communicate. For example, can they think of ways to act surprised using only their face? Can they say something without using any words? Without speaking, try saying:

Hello!

Yes! / No!

I'm sleepy

I'm scared

I'm going to sneeze

It's over there

I love you

I don't know

I'm hungry

Go away! / Come here!

That's funny!

Where are you?

My stomach hurts

3. **Tableau:** Now try to communicate a larger idea as a group. Still without talking, your students will have to create a tableau, or a frozen picture, of a place or activity of your choosing. They should try to do different things from each other. For example, if the activity is recess, not everyone should be playing kickball. You should see people frozen in mid-run, sitting and laughing together, throwing a ball, etc. Try the following:
  - a. At recess
  - b. In the desert
  - c. Having a picnic
  - d. Getting ready for school
  - e. Everyone is a dinosaur looking for food
4. **How Do You Move?** Make a space in the classroom for the students to move freely. Tell the students they are standing on a towel on a very hot beach and in order to get to the ocean they must walk through the scalding hot sand. Ouch! How do they move across the space? Other suggestions for environments to move through:
  - a. A sidewalk covered with chewed bubble gum
  - b. A frozen pond
  - c. A very steep hill
  - d. A pond scattered with stepping stones
  - e. The surface of the moon
  - f. A giant bowl of Jell-O

5. **More Mime:** Extend the space exploration to include other imaginary activities:
  - a. Carefully paint a door. After finishing, open the door and step through it without getting any paint on your clothes.
  - b. Build a snowman. The teacher should be able to tell how big the snowman is by how the student uses the space.
  - c. Eat an ice cream cone. At some point, the ice cream should fall on the floor. How do you react to this?
  - d. Rake leaves into a large pile. Admire the size of the pile, make sure no one is looking, and then jump into it.
6. To conclude, ask the students to list the ways they saw one another communicate without using words (through facial expressions, movement, gesture).

## History of the Tales

There have been many versions of the *Arabian Nights*, also known as *The Thousand and One Nights*. Scholars talk about various stages of development through which this manuscript passed: a 10<sup>th</sup> century Persian edition called *Hazar Afsana* (One Thousand Legends), a 10<sup>th</sup> century Arabic version entitled *Alf layla wa layla* (One Thousand Nights and A Night, or One Thousand and One Nights), a 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century Syrian copy that is now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and various translations and additions through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1704, Antoine Galland translated into French the Syrian copy of the *Nights*. Though the original copy did not include two of the tales we have incorporated into our production—Sinbad and Aladdin—Galland’s version did. He wrote that he heard these “orphan tales” from a Syrian Christian storyteller from Aleppo, so he included them in



*The Wood Nymph and Sinbad*

his translation. The first English translation, called *The Arabian Nights’ Entertainment*, appeared in 1706. In 1984, Muhsin Mahdi published an Arabic edition of the *Nights* primarily based on the Syrian Paris copy, and in 1990 Husain Haddawy translated Mahdi’s edition into English.

“Alf layla wa layla” in Arabic more accurately means a large number of nights, an exaggeration, but Mahdi believes that once the first English translation appeared, English and Europeans began to want an edition that lived up to its name, an edition with literally one thousand and one stories. Through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, various Arabic versions therefore appeared, some of which were very different from each other and from the oldest known manuscripts. It seems authors were indeed trying to keep up with this demand for one thousand and one nights of stories, and so were supplementing existing editions with popular tales from Arabic, Persian, Indian, Egyptian, or Mesopotamian folklore.

With so many stories added to the canon of the *Nights*, it would be nearly impossible to create a stage production incorporating all of them, but the one common factor in all the varied editions is the frame story of Scheherazade and the Sultan. Enchantment maintained that structure by keeping the tale of Scheherazade as the focus of the show. The Company decided that the stories of Sinbad, Aladdin, and The Kalandar Prince were accessible to children, and *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales* took shape.

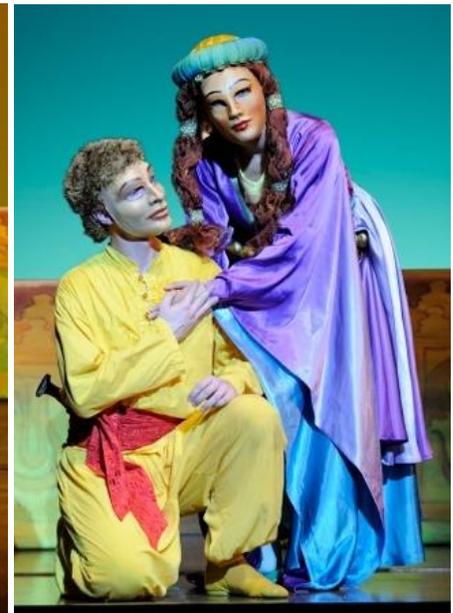
## Introducing Enchantment Theatre Company

Enchantment Theatre Company is a professional non-profit arts organization based in Philadelphia whose mission is to create original theater for children and families. For over 30 years, the Company has performed throughout the United States, Canada, and the Far East, presenting imaginative and innovative theatrical productions for school groups and families. Originally a privately-owned touring company, in 2000 Enchantment put down new roots in Philadelphia, where it was reestablished as a resident non-profit theater. While dedicated to serving its home community, the Company also maintains an extensive national touring schedule that includes performances on its own and in collaboration with the nation's finest symphony orchestras.

In its home city, Enchantment has reached audiences of about 12,000 per year through its innovative and imaginative presentations of literary classics for children. Its newest Enchantment Everywhere program takes portable productions directly into local community venues, providing many more opportunities for local audiences to see our work. On tour across the United States each year, the Company reaches more than 150,000 people in 35-40 states. Based on extensive experience, about 80% of the Company's touring audience is comprised of children from 5-12 who delight in the company's fantastic life-size puppets, skilled masked actors, original music, and startling feats of magic and illusion. It is to their infectious laughs, astonished gasps, and enthusiastic applause that Enchantment is dedicated.



*The Sultan and his soldiers*



*The Sultan and Scheherazade*

# *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*

## **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

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## Additional Pre-Show Activities

### Explore Imagination

When you hear a story read to you, you imagine what the characters look like and what they're doing. You use your imagination to create the story in your mind. When Enchantment created its adaptation, the artists and designers who worked on the show used their imaginations in the same way. They asked themselves: What will the characters look like on stage? What kind of masks will they wear? What about their costumes and props? Which characters will be puppets, which will be actors? How will we show the different environments from the story? How will the Genie emerge from the lamp? How will the Dragon-Lady turn into a dragon? What will the music sound like?

Having an active imagination can help you in many ways.

1. Have you ever used your imagination to solve a problem or find your way out of a difficult situation?
2. Have you ever used your imagination to make something ordinary become more exciting (*for example, pretending that the jungle gym is a rocket ship*)?
3. Have you ever had a dream or a daydream that seemed so real you almost *believed* it really happened? Have students share stories in pairs or with the class.
4. Can you think of a time that your imagination "played a trick on you" and you imagined something scary was happening that turned out to be something different (*for example, you thought you heard a burglar in the house but it turned out to be a mouse*)? Have students share stories in pairs or with the class.
5. Have you ever used your imagination to make up an original story or play?

### Use Your Imagination!

1. **Simple Shape:** Draw a simple shape on the black board (*for example, a triangle*) and ask students to look closely. If we use our imaginations, what can this simple shape become? Does it resemble anything (*for example, a mountain, a triangle instrument, a rooftop, a clown hat, a slice of pie, etc*)? Have students come up to the board and add details to the shape to create some of these images. Repeat the exercise with other shapes.
2. **Simple Shape Group:** To follow up with a group shape activity, put students together in small groups and give each group one large sheet of white paper and several basic shapes cut out of colored paper. Ask the students to lay the shapes on the paper in different combinations to create pictures (*for example, a half circle under a triangle to create a sail boat, a triangle over a square to create a house*). When the group is happy with its picture, have them glue the shapes into place.
3. **Scribble:** Ask students to scribble on a sheet of paper with their eyes closed. After a few seconds have everyone open their eyes and look closely at the scribbled page. Ask students, "What does your scribble look like? Can you find an image in the design?" Instruct students to take a crayon or marker and trace the outline of the image they see. Then, ask them to add details to turn their scribble designs to create complete pictures.

4. **Group Draw:** To follow up with a group drawing activity, put students together in small groups and give each student a sheet of paper and a different color crayon or marker. Ask the students to start drawing a dragon. After a short time (5-10 seconds), ask everyone to put their markers down and pass their paper to the left. Each student should end up with a new dragon. Ask the students to pick up their markers and add on to this new dragon. After another 5 seconds, ask the students to put down their markers. Repeat these steps until everyone gets back the dragon they started.
5. **Take a Walk:** Take your class for a walk through the school or outside. Ask them to imagine they are ... and let that change the way they walk:
  - a. Movie stars walking down a red carpet at an awards ceremony.
  - b. Bird watchers searching for a rare, exotic bird in the jungle (like Aladdin, looking for the Sorcerer, the lamp, and the princess).
  - c. Travelers lost in a foreign place (like Sinbad, shipwrecked).



*Sinbad at sea*

## The Role of Music

For *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*, we used the symphonic suite *Scheherazade*, composed by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Charlie Gilbert, Director of the Ira Brind School of Theater Arts at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, then arranged this music to fit our particular production. He created musical arrangements and additional music for Enchantment Theatre Company's production of *The Velveteen Rabbit* in 2007 and the entire score of Enchantment's *Harold and the Purple Crayon* in 2009. He has countless composition credits to his name. The music for *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales* is designed specifically to highlight the original symphonic suite by Rimsky-Korsakov, underscore the action of the tales, and help the performers tell the story without words.

Mr. Gilbert needed to re-score the source material, Rimsky-Korsakov's suite, for several reasons. First, the orchestra composition was simply not long enough, and new material was needed. Second, there were sections where the music needed to be "tailored" to the stage action to maximize the impact of the story and its themes. And, finally, we wanted to find a musical "language" that would match the scale of the theatrical performance, which features a compact, versatile acting company; the big sound of a symphony orchestra would have been out of proportion with what happens onstage.

All the music in this production is based on themes composed by Rimsky-Korsakov, though a few tunes are borrowed from other works. In other cases, Mr. Gilbert took themes from *Scheherazade* and transformed them by setting them in different tempos or with different accompaniments. These arrangements and adaptations were devised and refined over an extended workshop period that lasted for weeks, and resulted from a lively collaboration between the artists of Enchantment Theatre and the spirit of Rimsky-Korsakov.

Much of the credit for the music you are hearing goes to the remarkable instrumentalists who perform it: violinist Carolina Beate, oboist Sarah Davol, pianist Linda Henderson, and percussionist Harvey Price. Their work was recorded and edited by Ron DiSilvestro at Forge Recording. All five of these individuals brought remarkable skill, passion, and attention to detail to their work, and their contributions help make the musical score for *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales* vivid and memorable.

### **Music and Character**

One of the ways the composer helps to tell the story is to create musical “themes” or melodies that occur again and again throughout the play. See if you can find Scheherazade’s theme music.

### **Music and Setting**

The music in a performance can often indicate a new setting. Listen for the changes in the music when Sinbad meets the Sirens, when Aladdin enters the cave, and when we return to the world of Scheherazade and the Sultan.

### **Music and Tone**

The composer has an important job in setting the tone of a play by the music he creates. For example, when Aladdin is in a scary situation, the music is much different than when the Far-Away Princess meets the Prince Monkey.

1. Have you ever seen a scary movie or been to a haunted house? Describe the music you heard. How did the music help make the movie/experience scary?
2. Have you ever been to a circus and heard happy, carnival music? What if you heard that music when you were at school? What would you think was happening?
3. If you were a composer, what kind of music would you write for the scene in which the Far-Away Princess battles the dragon?



*The Far-Away Princess and the Prince Monkey*

To illustrate the role of music in storytelling, try the following activities:

1. Ask your students to recall a personal experience (*for example, a family vacation or the first day of school*). Ask one student to tell his/her story to the class. After he/she is finished, have the same student retell the same story. This time, play a dynamic track of music (preferably instrumental) to underscore the story. Ask the class how this music affected the story. When you attend the performance, encourage your students to pay attention to the music, and remember how the music created different moods within the piece.
2. Get the entire class up and away from their desks. Play a piece of music and ask everyone to move or dance how the music makes them feel. Does it make you want to sneak? Look for something? Skip? Does it make you feel sleepy? Angry? Scared? After a minute or so, play a different piece of music with a vastly different mood. Switch at least one more time.

## Jobs in the Theater

Students and teachers can visit Kids Work, a website that allows children to explore a variety of different jobs in the theater community: <http://www.knowitall.org/kidswork/>.

1. What kind of jobs do you imagine people have at the theater? Can you name five different kinds of theater jobs?
2. When your class comes to the theater, look around to see what kinds of jobs people are doing. You will see someone in the box office, ushers, and actors. There are also people doing many jobs you don't see: the stage manager who calls the cues for the show; the lighting technician who runs the lights; the director who directed the actors in rehearsal; the costume designer; the designers who created the masks, puppets, and magic equipment; the people who publicize the show, answer the phones, and sell the tickets.

## Additional Post-Show Activities

### Storytelling and Writing

Try these writing exercises to get your students writing and illustrating their own stories. Talk about the following important parts of a story: setting, introduction to characters, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution.

- **Group Storytelling (Listening, Speaking):** Tell a story as a group with each student telling just one line at a time. You can begin the story to set-up the adventure, but you never know where it will go. For example: "One day, Hawthorne School's fourth grade class (substitute your school and class) decided to go on a walk to Blue Creek Park (substitute a location near you)." Go around the room with each student contributing one line. Remind students to listen to what has been said and build on what has already happened in the story. Help them move the story along and find an ending.
- **Writing a Story in Pairs (Writing, Reading):** Divide students into pairs. Ask each student to write the first line of a story. Ask everyone to put pencils down after the first sentence. Have students trade papers with their partner, read the first line of their partner's story, and add a second line. Ask everyone to put pencils down and trade papers again. Repeat this process until partners reach a conclusion to both stories. Once they are done, you could have students copy these stories onto blank paper, one or two lines per page, and have them illustrate them.
- **Draw Your Own Tale (Drawing, Visual):** Imagine you are Sinbad. You are on a sailing ship. Draw an adventure you could have on this ship. Where do you go? Who do you meet? What do you find? How do you get home? Can you write captions for each drawing you create?

### Geography

The stories from *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales* come from all over the eastern and middle-eastern part of the world: Persia, Arabia, India, and Egypt. The tale of Aladdin originally comes from China. These ancient and medieval tales give us a glimpse of what life was like for people living that

area of the world during the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. In that time, many of the people living in these regions shared a religion, Islam, and a language, Arabic.

**1. Locate Countries:**

- a. Get a map or a globe and point out the following countries (or see if kids can find them themselves if you point out the general area)
  - i. Persia is actually an old term for what we now call Iran. Locate Iran.
  - ii. Countries that are on the Arabian Peninsula: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia.
  - iii. India
  - iv. Egypt
  - v. China
- b. Now have kids tell you what countries, or even what other American states, they have visited. Find them on the map.

- 2. Celebrate Differences:** Often depending on where people live, people do things differently. For example, kids do not go sledding in a place that never gets snow. These differences make us special. Ask students to think of at least one custom or tradition or even favorite food of theirs. Ask them questions to start the discussion. Where does your family go on vacation? Do you ever exchange gifts with each other? What holidays do you celebrate? Is there something you do every Saturday morning? Every Wednesday night? What do you do in the summer? Have them draw these things that make them uniquely them. When everyone is done, tape the sheets together. It will look like a quilt, with many different squares joining to make something new. Now you have a piece of artwork that celebrates the differences present in the class.

## **Enchantment Mission Statement**

Enchantment Theatre Company exists to create original theater for young audiences and families. We accomplish this through the imaginative telling of stories that inspire, challenge and enrich our audiences, on stage and in the classroom. In doing so, we engage the imagination and spirit of our audience until a transformation occurs and the true grace of our mutual humanity is revealed.

## **Reflecting on Enchantment's Values**

### **Originality**

Everything Enchantment produces for the stage is completely original material. We do not use existing scripts that have been performed elsewhere. Each show is completely created by Enchantment, based on a time-tested classic children's story that is of enduring value. The music is written specifically to support the show; masks, puppets, costumes, and sets are built for our exclusive use.

*Why is originality important?* It demonstrates, for one thing, our thorough respect for children. We believe they deserve theatrical productions that are as carefully and thoughtfully crafted as shows

created for adults. We want what our audiences see to be consistent with that respect, and different from the commercialized and often superficial products that are generally staged for children. One of our colleagues in Philadelphia, Thea Diamond, Director of Education at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center, says that "mass marketing often panders to our worst instincts, desensitizing children to violence...rather than opening their eyes and hearts, refining their emotions...and transporting them beyond the known to new realms." We couldn't agree more. Thinking through an adaptation of a classic tale from start to finish demands a level of insight into children's needs and perceptions of the world that is not always available in other theatrical productions.

A teacher whose class attended one of our performances said, "Enchantment takes them to a world beyond their current perception of reality," which she said is an experience of particular value for poor urban children.

### **Imagination**

Maybe it goes without saying that a theater company is creative by definition. But we believe Enchantment takes it one giant step further by operating based on a value called *imagination*. To produce high quality children's theater takes extraordinary imagination to combine an array of arts, including traditional theater as well as mime, mask work, music, puppetry, and always, great story telling. Enchantment does this by the highly creative way it brings together the old and new with the best of Eastern and Western theatrical techniques. We believe *imagination* also means being completely open to new ways of doing things, both on stage, in the classroom and even behind the stage curtain. And, in the case of *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*, it means adding new dimensions to the story to make it theatrical in the most meaningful way.

We also know that combining different art forms in exciting and creative ways can stimulate children's imaginations and get them to see the world differently. One young attendee at a recent Enchantment production said that he learned from the show, "If you use your imagination, things might turn out better."

### **Transformation**

This value is embedded right in the company's mission statement, which says, in part, "We engage the imagination and spirit of our audience, until a *transformation* occurs and the true grace of our mutual humanity is revealed." While we're in the business of entertainment, we again want to go one step further. We want children to see that the characters on stage can work through their problems and come to a transformed understanding of themselves and their circumstances. This can give hope to children, a sense of possibility, and the belief that their lives, too, can change for the better.

Love and family relationships are at the core of many of our productions and the vehicle for transformation to a better life. This is an important life lesson for our young audiences, one we teach through the stories we select, the way we stage them for young people and the message that evolves through the development of characters on the stage. This emanates from our fundamental respect for the children we put at the heart of our company's work. A school child attending one of our performances of *Cinderella* told us, "I want my family to see the show. It would probably change their lives forever."

## Community

This value takes two forms in Enchantment’s activities. One is our conscious and continuing attempt to serve the Greater Philadelphia community. The other is our effort to build community by our actions. At Enchantment, we make every effort to reach out to the most underserved people in our home community of Philadelphia—the disabled, the elderly, those for whom English is a second language, the underserved, and the poor. We do this in partnership with community-based organizations that support these groups.

Thea Diamond at the University of Pennsylvania has also said that high quality children’s theater “affirms life and attempts to promote community and harmony.” What better way to operate a theater company than to strengthen the community in which it lives, to draw together families in uplifting shared experiences and to work closely with schools to assure that the arts remain an important part of the education and development of our youngest citizens?

## Introduction to Theater

Theater did not develop overnight; it evolved slowly out of the practice of ritual. Primitive man cultivated certain rituals to appease the elements or to make things happen that he didn’t understand (for example, to make crops grow or to have success in hunting). In Ancient Greece, similar rituals began in honor of Dionysus, the god of fertility, and would include choral singing and dancing. These rituals were so popular, that people began to choreograph, or plan out, the dances more carefully. The songs grew more sophisticated, and eventually included actors speaking in dialogue with one another and with the chorus. Soon, writers wrote full scripts to be performed; entire festivals were organized in honor of Dionysus, and theater as we know it was born.

What makes a theatrical experience? Actors on a “stage” (which might be anything from a huge amphitheater to the front of a classroom) portray characters and tell stories through their movement and speech. But it is still not a theatrical experience until one more very important element is added. It is the presence of an audience—watching, participating, imagining—that makes it truly theater. Theater is the coming together of people—the audience and the actors—to think about, speak of, and experience the big ideas that connect us to our inner and outer worlds.

## Introduction to Masks and Puppets

In this production of *Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales*, actors wearing **masks** portray some of the characters. Though masks are rare in American contemporary theater, they have been used since the very beginning of theater. The early Romans used enormous masks that exaggerated human characteristics and enhanced the actor’s presence in the huge amphitheaters of their day. Greek theater used masks that were human scale to designate tragic and comic characters. Masks have been used in the early Christian church since the 9<sup>th</sup> century and were revived during the Renaissance in Italy with the *Commedia Dell’ Arte*. Theater throughout Asia has used masks to create archetypal characters, human and divine. In Balinese theatrical tradition, for example, masks keep ancient and mythological figures recognizable to a contemporary audience, preserving a rare and beautiful culture. Though used differently in every culture, the mask universally facilitates a transformation of the actor and the audience.

*“A mask allows the actor to submerge his ego in the service of an archetypal role whose significance dwarfs his own personality...The power of the mask is rooted in paradox, in the fusion of opposites. It brings together the self and the other by enabling us to look at the world through someone else’s face. It merges past and present by reflecting faces that are the likenesses of both our ancestors and our neighbors. A mask is a potent metaphor for the coalescence of the universal and the particular, immobility and change, disguise and revelation.”*

*-Ron Jenkins, “Two Way Mirrors” Parabola Magazine, Mask and Metaphor Issue*



*Sinbad and the Cyclops battle over the jeweled egg*

In Enchantment’s productions we often don’t want to be limited by the size and shape of an actor to portray certain characters...so we use **puppets**. Similar to masks, puppets also have a long and esteemed history. They have been used to represent gods, noblemen, and everyday people. In the history of every culture puppets can be found, from the tombs of the Pharaohs to the Italian marionette and the English Punch and Judy. The Bunraku Puppet Theater of Japan has been in existence continuously since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the early days of Bunraku, the greatest playwrights preferred writing for puppets than for live actors.

Puppets are similar to the mask in their fascination and power. We accept that this carved being is real and alive, and we invest it with an intensified life of our own imagining. Thus, puppets can take an audience further and deeper into what is true. Audiences bring more of themselves to mask and puppet theater because they are required to imagine more. Masks and puppets live in a world of heightened reality. Used with art and skill, they can free the actor and the audience from what is ordinary and mundane, and help theater do what it does at its best: expand boundaries, free the imagination, inspire dreams, transform possibilities, and teach us about ourselves.

## **Introduction to Magic**

To early humans, the world was filled with magic—stars glittered and constellations moved, lightning flashed and fire appeared out of the sky, nature went through cycles of death and rebirth. Ancient people wished to understand and control their world the same as people do today. Shamans and priests used magic in their ceremonies to assuage the gods, gain support of nature, and give their tribe a sense that they could control their fate. Those who performed magic became both revered and feared. As humans evolved, both holy men and con men were associated with the word “magic”: soothsayer and sorcerer; wise man and wizard; mystic and fortune-teller; prophet and trickster. Over time the practice of the magical arts transformed into the religion, art, and science that we know today.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century magic developed into an art form, practiced to entertain and enchant. Magicians performed sleight of hand and illusion to dazzle their audiences, using misdirection, invention and skill. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries magic flourished and elaborate magic productions toured the

world. Today magic continues to delight audiences by skillful performers who take on personas both mysterious and comic. Enchantment Theatre uses magic to enhance the magical aspects of the stories that it tells and to keep our productions engaging and surprising.

Discovering and learning about the art of magic is possible for everyone. There are books and magazines in libraries that explain and teach the principles and practices of the art. But one aspect of magic that makes it quite special is that there is a secret to how it's done. The tradition of keeping magic a secret exists to preserve the foundation of this extraordinary art form and to keep it surprising and special for each new generation.

## Experiencing Live Theater

### Preparing Your Students to be Audience Members

A theater is an energetically charged space. When the “house lights” (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, everyone feels a thrill of anticipation. By discussing appropriate audience behavior as a class ahead of time, the students will be much better equipped to handle their feelings and express their enthusiasm in acceptable ways during the performance.

Audience members play an important role—it isn't a theater performance until the audience shows up! When there is a “great house” (an outstanding audience) it makes the show even better, because the artists feel a live connection with everyone who is watching them. The most important quality of a good audience member is the ability to respond appropriately to what's happening on stage. Sometimes it's important to be quiet, but other times, it's acceptable to laugh, clap, or make noise!

### Here Are Some Key Words to Keep in Mind:

**Concentration:** Performers use concentration to focus their energy on stage. If the audience watches in a concentrated, quiet way, this supports the performers and they can do their best work. They can *feel* that you are with them.

**Quiet:** The theater is a very “live” space. This means that sound carries very well, usually all over the auditorium. Theaters are designed in this way so that the voices of the actors can be heard. It also means that any sounds in the audience—whispering, rustling papers, or speaking—can be heard by other audience members *and* by the performers. This can destroy everyone's concentration and spoil a performance. Do not make any unnecessary noise that would distract the people sitting around you. Be respectful!

**Respect:** The audience shows respect for the performers by being attentive. The performers show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their best possible work. Professional actors always show up for work ready to entertain you. As a good audience member, you have a responsibility to bring your best behavior to the theater as well. Doing so shows respect for the actors—who have rehearsed long hours to prepare for this day—and the audience around you.

**Appreciation:** Applause is the best way for an audience in a theater to share its enthusiasm and to appreciate the performers. At the end of the program, it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain drops or the lights on stage go dark. During the curtain call, the performers bow to show their appreciation to the audience. If you really enjoyed the performance, you might even thank the artists with a standing ovation!

**Common Sense:** The same rules of behavior that are appropriate in any formal public place apply to the theater. If audience members conduct themselves in orderly, quiet ways, with each person respecting the space of those around him or her, everyone will be able to fully enjoy the performance experience.

Some simple rules are:

- Enter the building quietly.
- Food and drinks are not allowed.
- Radios, tape recorders, video recorders, and cameras are not allowed.
- Turn off cell phones.
- Use restrooms before the show.
- Do not get up to use the restroom during the show unless there is an emergency.

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