

THE STORIES OF LEO LIONNI
SWIMMY, AND INCH BY INCH
FREDERICK,

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia



2013-2014

HOT SEASON FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
TEACHER GUIDEBOOK



SEASON SPONSOR



A Note from our Sponsor

For over 125 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

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Thank you, teachers, for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.

Jim Schmitz
Executive Vice President
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Dear Teachers,

Using three of Leo Lionni's beloved stories, Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia creates an experience like no other. The company's unique adaptations of children's literature have introduced millions of youngsters on four continents to the magic of live theatre.

Leo Lionni's exquisite collage works are ideally suited for stage adaptation. The three Caldecott Honor books Mermaid has chosen for its tribute, *Swimmy*, *Frederick* and *Inch by Inch*, are among Lionni's most beloved works. *Swimmy* is a tiny fish in the vast ocean who uses ingenuity to fend off danger. *Frederick*, a mouse who is a poet from the tip of his nose to the end of his tail, makes everyday life an artful experience. The story of *Inch by Inch* features a lovable inchworm who measures everything, including a robin's tail, a flamingo's neck, a toucan's beak, a heron's legs, and a nightingale's song.

Along with the visual storytelling, the show uses spoken narration, taken word-for-word from the original storybooks, and music that has been written especially for the production. We know children and adults alike will giggle with delight at this spectacular production.

TPAC Education

The entire presentation is about one hour long. Included at the end of the performance is time for the students to interact with the performers. The puppeteers will come back onstage to demonstrate to the audience how some of the puppets work and how they create some of the special effects.



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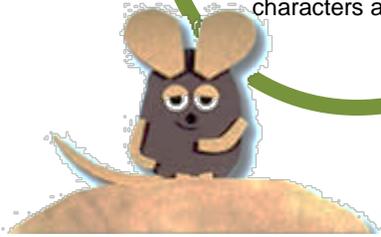
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All production photos by Margo Ellen Gesser.

About the Production

All of the puppets in this performance are manipulated by only TWO performers! How do you think they are able to play so many characters at once?



Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia uses three of Leo Lionni's Caldecott Award winning books to create a wonderful performance for all ages. Mermaid Theatre employs a variety of theater techniques to bring Lionni's stories to life. This production will include different styles of puppetry, inventive music, special lighting, projected images, and recorded narration. The show's creators chose to use different styles for each of the three stories. See below for information on each story, and the following page for information on the original music created for this performance.

Swimmy

Deep in the sea lives a happy school of little fish. Their watery world is full of wonders, but there is also danger, and the little fish are afraid to come out of hiding . . . until Swimmy comes along. Swimmy shows his friends how—with ingenuity and team work—they can overcome any danger.

Creating *Swimmy* – This story uses two dimensional shadow puppets made of colored plastic film. The puppets are behind a large translucent screen that is lit from behind, so all the colors and textures can be seen by the audience. To create the water texture, Mermaid Theatre scanned images directly from the pages of the book so they can project them onto the screen.

Frederick

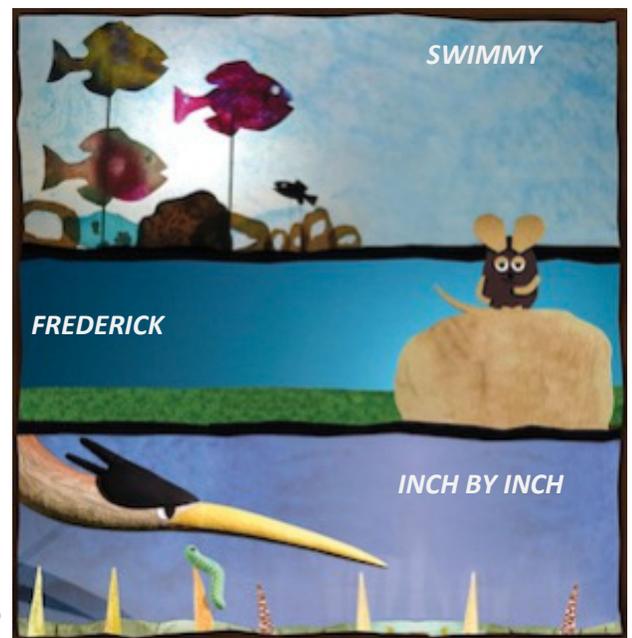
While the other field mice work to gather grain and nuts for winter, Frederick sits on a sunny rock by himself, gathering “sun rays,” “colors,” and then “words.” And when the food runs out, it is Frederick, the dreamer and poet, whose endless store of supplies warms the hearts of his fellow mice, and feeds their spirits during the darkest winter days.

Creating *Frederick* – The story of *Frederick* is told using two dimensional mice puppets covered with felt fabric. These fuzzy creatures move across a raised surface of fabric grass and rocks. The puppeteers are visible throughout the performance, and black light is also used on parts of the set to make certain objects stand out.

Inch by Inch

A small green inchworm is proud of his skill at measuring anything—a robin's tail, a flamingo's neck, a toucan's beak. Then one day a nightingale threatens to eat him if he cannot measure his song. Children will enjoy the clever inchworm's solution and delight in finding the tiny hero on every page. Every inch the classic, this was the first of Lionni's books to win the Caldecott Honor.

Creating *Inch by Inch* – Creating this story on stage was a challenge, due to scale. The inchworm sizing would decide the creation of the entire piece. Finally deciding to make the inchworm a foot long and making the other puppets match in scale, the puppets were created! This story uses three dimensional puppets, and the puppeteers are visible throughout this story.



Notes on Music for this Production

Although it is likely too much information to share with younger students, it is suggested that you look through the information on this page, as it will give you an excellent background on what to expect in the show musically.

Excerpted from Mermaid Theatre's guidebook, written by Steven Naylor, composer

This production is made up of three delightful stories by Leo Lionni: *Swimmy*, *Frederick*, and *Inch by Inch*. There are many elements involved in establishing the sound world for each story, including ingredients beyond the music and the story text. The style and pace of narration, the narrator's voice quality, and any natural sounds or ambiances we use, all make an essential contribution to the end result.

Swimmy

The inspiration for the overall flavor of the music for *Swimmy* comes very much from the visuals of the book. The director, Jim Morrow, and I both felt that there was a resonance of Asian visual culture to the images, though not necessarily specific to one culture. Taking this as a starting point, I tried to create a sound world that made reference to multiple Asian music styles, but was still a unique sonic environment of its own for the story. Among the instruments in the score are several wooden flutes (with the Japanese shakuhachi being the most identifiable), and Burmese gongs.

Each of the creatures that *Swimmy* encounters has a particular sonic signature, created sometimes by a specific instrument, sometimes by a particular musical motif – and at times by a combination of the two.

I also created a particular kind of water ambience that is used in this story to simulate the feeling of being underwater, hearing the surf and waves moving overhead. The combination of this ambience and the unusual instruments helps to place the story in its own special world.

Frederick

All five of the characters in *Frederick* are mice, and the story takes place inside and outside a single location. As a composer, that immediately told me that I needed to create a very consistent kind of sonic world for this story, with both a strong sense of character and a strong sense of place.

For the character music, I chose mostly plucked string sounds. Pizzicato strings produce short, high energy sounds – a good match a group of energetic little mice. The musical style itself draws some of its inspiration from the flavor of Eastern European folk dance, by using repeated rhythmic patterns and modal scales.

During winter, the plucked string palette begins to include harp; this keeps some consistency of sound for our mice, but places them in a gentler sonic space, reflecting the more introspective time of year.

There are two wind instruments featured in the score for this story; flute is used mostly during the happier times, while the more melancholy sound of the English horn helps create a change of mood as winter evolves and the supplies run out.

I used an active birdsong ambience to help set the story in a pastoral location; the ambience fades out as the mice enter their winter quarters, but it returns again, symbolically, as Frederick warms their spirits with thoughts of sun and flowers.

Inch by Inch

The music for this story presented an interesting challenge. I needed to create a theme that has strong rhythm, particularly for the measuring sequences, and a strong and unique sense of character for the Inchworm – but also one which would lend itself to being merged in some way with the eclectic motifs and styles of the many birds he encounters on his measuring adventure.

My solution was to use a quirky blend of pizzicato strings, muted electric guitar, and another style of guitar picking sometimes called 'chicken picking' for the Inchworm's music. Whenever he is doing his measuring, this odd little ensemble is also supported by bits of eccentric percussion.

Each of the birds he measures has its own musical style and motif, for example steel drums for a toucan's beak, or a tango accordion for a pheasant's tail.

Before the Show

Read the Books!

Create a reading experience that students will never forget!

Materials needed: Items that represent each story (ideas listed below); copy of the three stories – *Swimmy*, *Frederick*, and *Inch by Inch*.

Note: This is written to include all three stories together in the initial experience. However, you could choose to separate this into 3 parts, having a separate experience with each book.

- Put out 3 groups of items in your room for students to observe and touch. Each group of items will represent one of the stories. (For example, for *Swimmy*, you could include a few toy fish (small and large), something to represent water (a glass of water, blue fabric, etc.), coral or seaweed, images of the animals in the story (lobster, jellyfish, etc.) or even an aquarium; for *Frederick*, you could have several “harvest” items like nuts, berries, or corn, a toy or puppet mouse, a picture that shows all 4 seasons, a box of crayons or something similar to represent the colors, and a book of poems; and for *Inch by Inch*, you could use a ruler, a piece of string 1 in long, feathers, a music note, images of the birds from the story, and a worm. These are just a few ideas - the specific items used are up to you.)
- Let students look at and touch the items and consider how they might fit together. What do they think and feel about each item? Do they have anything in common? Can they think of a reason they would be together? Some students that are already familiar with the stories may guess the titles. Don't say yes or no if they observe this out loud.
- After all of the students have had the chance to look at each grouping, bring them back together. Tell them each group represents a story you are going to read this week. Ask them to describe what they saw and felt and to predict what each story will be about.
- Leave the items in view during the week while reading the stories.
- During the week, read each story. After each story, ask students to identify the items that they found in the story. Did any students already know the story and guess what they were? Why do they think you chose the items you did to represent the story? Would they have picked something different?

Talk about the Show!

- After reading the books, start talking about the show they will see. Which story are they the most excited about seeing onstage? What part or character are they looking forward to seeing come to life? Do they think the show will look like the pictures from the books?
- Share information about the music in the show. What sounds do students think they will hear in the play?
- Mermaid Theatre uses puppets and props to create the scenes from the books. What do they think the puppets will look like? Give your class puppets (or make some) and ask them to tell a story using the puppet.

Lesson 1 – My Own Fable

- Objectives:**
- The student will summarize and retell a fable orally.
 - The student will compare animal characteristics to personal traits.
 - The student will compose their own fable.

Materials needed: Leo Lionni's *Frederick*, copies of the fables on the following page cut into strips (1 fable per student) with the moral cut off

Part One:

- Hand out copies of the fables on the following page without including the moral – 1 fable per student. Fables are often passed on orally. Students should read their fable and work on understanding the story for retelling – not word for word, but to tell a summary to someone else.
- After giving them a few minutes, ask students to mill around the room and tell their story to at least 3 people – each repetition will gain confidence and fluency and gives them a change to correct and elaborate.
- Ask students to return to their seats, and as a class discuss the elements of a fable. (In most fables, animal characters act like humans (personification). Explain that a fable teaches a moral (or lesson) about humans. Also, emphasize that a moral is drawn from what happens in a fable.)
- One at a time, discuss each fable and ask students to identify a moral for each.

Part Two:

- Read *Frederick*. Ask: Can you think of a time you felt like one of the animals in the story? Have you worked hard to prepare for something? Are you a dreamer and a poet?
- Can students identify the elements of a fable in this story? What lesson(s) do they think this story teaches?
- When Leo Lionni is asked which character from all of his stories he is most like, his response is “Of course, I am Frederick.” Why do you think he would say this? If students could choose to be any animal in a story which would they choose? Why? What traits do they have in common with the animal they chose?
- Students will now use this animal character and write their own fable. Tell them to use the statement “Don’t put off till tomorrow what you can do today” as the moral in their story. (You may wish to let older students choose their own lesson, or use this one as well.) How will their animal character teach this lesson?

Many of Leo Lionni's tales fall into the genre of literature known as the fable. Short tales with a big message, fables seek to teach readers a lesson in values and behavior, often using animals to teach by example. Fables deliver their messages in story form. While some fables are as short as half a page, the fables of Leo Lionni extend to picture-book length, providing a satisfying story with a message.

Closure – Have students share their fables with a partner before turning in to the teacher.

Extension: Leo Lionni's stories have many similarities to Aesop's fables. Use a Venn Diagram to compare a Leo Lionni book to one of Aesop's fables.

Fables for Students

Give each student one of the fables below and follow directions on the previous page.

The Ant and the Grasshopper

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling away?"

"I am storing up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."

"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food now, and plenty of time until winter." But the Ant went on its way and continued its work. When the winter came Grasshopper had no food and was dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer.

Moral: It is best to prepare ahead for days of necessity.

The Stag at the Pool

A stag saw his shadow reflected in the water, and greatly admired the size of his horns, but felt angry with himself for having such weak feet. While he was thinking on this, a lion appeared at the pool. The stag began running, and kept himself with ease at a safe distance from the lion, until he entered a wood and became entangled with his horns. The lion would quickly catch him now, and the stag reproached himself: "Woe is me! How have I deceived myself! These feet which would have saved me I despised, and I gloried in these antlers which have proved to be my end."

Moral: What is most truly valuable is often underrated.

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

A wolf found it difficult to get into a group of sheep to find his dinner. But one day the wolf found the skin of a sheep that had been thrown aside, so it put it on over its own pelt and strolled down among the sheep. The lamb that belonged to the sheep, whose skin the wolf was wearing, began to follow the wolf in the sheep's clothing; so, leading the lamb a little apart, he soon made a meal off her, and for some time he succeeded in deceiving the sheep, and enjoying hearty meals.

Moral: Appearances can be deceiving.

The Crow and the Pitcher

A crow, half-dead with thirst, came upon a pitcher which had once been full of water; but when Crow put its beak into the mouth of the pitcher he found that only very little water was left in it, and that he could not reach far enough down to get at it. He tried, and he tried, but at last had to give up in despair. Then a thought came to him, and he took a pebble and dropped it into the pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped it into the pitcher. He continued doing this until at last, he saw the water mount up near him, and after casting in a few more pebbles he was able to quench his thirst and save his life.

Moral: Perseverance, intelligence, and hard work are the key to success.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

A shepherd-boy, who watched a flock of sheep near a village, found it funny to trick the villagers. He brought them out three or four times a day by crying out, "Wolf! Wolf!" When his neighbors came to help him, the boy simply laughed at them, for there was not really a wolf around. The wolf, however, did truly come at last. The Shepherd-boy, now really alarmed, shouted in an agony of terror: "Please help! The wolf is killing the sheep!" But no one paid any heed to his cries, believing this to be another trick. The wolf destroyed the entire flock.

Moral: There is no believing a liar, even when he speaks the truth.

The Fox and The Crow

A fox once saw a crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree.

"That's for me, as I am Fox," the fox thought, and he walked up to the foot of the tree.

"Good day, Mistress Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking today: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds."

Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox.

Moral: Don't trust flatterers.

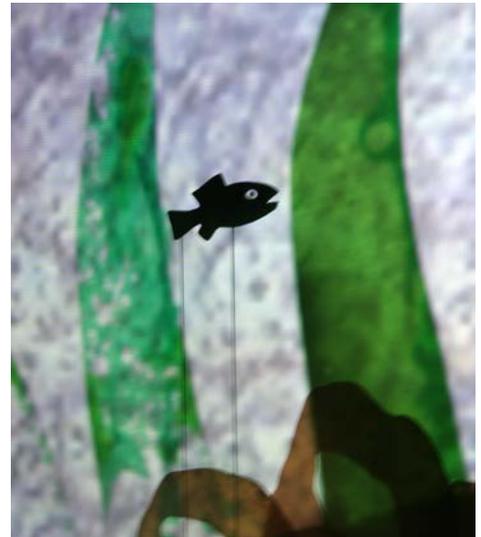
Lesson 2 – Everyday Courage

Objectives: The student will identify examples of everyday courage.
The student will propose solutions for handling personal fears.

Materials needed: paper and drawing utensils, *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni, glass jar filled with rice and an egg

Instructional Procedures:

- Start class by writing one word on the board – COURAGE. (For students who can't read, simply tell them the word you are discussing today.)
- What is courage? Ask students for feedback. (Doing the right thing even if it is difficult. Facing your fears with confidence – being brave. Courage doesn't mean you don't feel fear, but not letting the fear control you.)
- Read *Swimmy* to the class - In what ways did Swimmy demonstrate courage?
- Discuss: We know it takes courage for people to do big things, like a firefighter rescuing someone trapped in a burning building, but there are many other kinds of courage too, right? There are everyday kinds of courage that normal, ordinary people exhibit all the time, like being the first to say I'm sorry, or going to bed without a nightlight.
- Ask students to identify which action is courageous:
 - ✓ Fighting or walking away from a fight
 - ✓ Doing something dangerous because others are or not participating even if someone calls you chicken
 - ✓ Teasing and bullying someone or standing up for someone who is being mistreated
 - ✓ Blaming others for your mistakes or accepting responsibility
 - ✓ Only looking out for yourself or helping others
 - ✓ Quitting when things get tough or working hard even when it's difficult
 - ✓ Lying to your teacher or parents about breaking something or telling the truth about the accident
- Demonstrate the concept with "The courageous egg" – Place an egg in the middle of a glass jar, completely covered in rice. Explain that the egg represents any one of them. One day the egg's friends start making fun of other people - the egg doesn't like it so he tells them to stop (tap the top of the rim, the egg will rise up from the rice a little with each tap). Next, the group of friends starts excluding others from their games (tap the rim) and they start telling lies (tap the rim). Each time the egg refuses to go along with his friends and stands up for what's right (tap again). Continue until the egg has completely risen above the rice. Tell the students it takes courage to do the right thing when others are not. A courageous person will rise to the top and stand out from the rest!
- What are ways students can show courage in their lives? In what ways do people you know demonstrate courage? How are these things similar or different? How have you demonstrated courage in the past? Encourage students to come up with examples of everyday courage (admit mistakes and learn from them, don't give into peer pressure, tell the truth, try new things even if you might fail, do the right thing even when others are not).
- There is one feeling that must be present to demonstrate courage. Ask the class to name that feeling. It is fear. Explain to the class that you can't demonstrate courage without having fear. Have students write down one thing they are afraid of. Then, ask them to think of ways to overcome that fear. Emphasize that we all have fears. What is important is our response to our fears.
- Now ask students to draw a picture of themselves being brave as they face their fear. They should label their drawing with the following sentences, filling in the blanks. "I used to be afraid of _____, but then I tried _____. Now I am courageous!"



Closure – Discuss the concept that everyone is capable of courage – do students agree or disagree? Have students create a gallery of their drawings by laying them all on a table or on the floor where the class can walk around all of the drawings and discuss them. Have students share their drawings and ideas with each other.

Extensions and activities for older students:

- Act out the story of *Swimmy*, but create different endings – what are some other solutions that Swimmy could use to help them escape the large fish?
- Role play some typical situations which require taking a courageous stand against a group or an individual. After each improvisation have a discussion. What important principle or issue was at stake? How well did the individual stand up? What could he/she have done better? What did you learn from this?
- Profiles in Courage - Have students identify acts of courage by people in the news or by people in your school or community. Then have them make a presentation to the class and conduct a discussion. What do these selections have in common? What are their differences? What can the students learn about themselves from the selections they made? What have they learned from the people they selected?
- Write a Letter to Fear – Ask students to personify fear – what does their fear look like? The sound of his/her voice? What clothing does fear wear? Does fear get along with his/her parents? Now that fear is a person, address fear by name – what do you need to tell fear?



Lesson 3 – Planning Ahead

Objectives: The student will determine items needed to perform various tasks.
The student will role play as mice preparing for winter.
The student will perform for classmates.

Materials needed: *Frederick* by Leo Lionni, small items to represent animal supplies (for example, you may choose to use brown pom-poms to represent nuts, multicolored buttons to be berries, yellow pipe cleaners to be straw, etc.)

Instructional Procedures:

Read the story *Frederick* to the class. Discuss the idea of planning ahead. Why do the mice have to plan ahead for winter months? What are some examples of things you need to plan ahead for? For example, to write or draw, you need paper and a pencil or crayon, and a flat surface to work on. To mail something, you need an envelope, stamp, address, and the letter.

- Give students the following examples and ask them to provide the items that would be needed.
 - ✓ If I wanted to make a garden, I would need.....(seeds, gloves, tools)
 - ✓ If I wanted to bake a cake, I would need....(oven, cake mix, bowl, spoon, apron)
 - ✓ If I wanted to drive a car, I would need...(car, keys, gas, license)
 - ✓ If I wanted to go swimming, I would need...(bathing suit, towel, suntan lotion, location to swim)
- Ask the students consider how a mouse like Frederick and his friends prepare for winter. What other animals might have to prepare for winter? Invite the students to imagine they are animals preparing for winter and to think about what they would have to do to prepare for winter, including the extra challenges many animals have in adapting to winters (cold, lack of food, and, for some animals, vulnerability).
- Now invite students to act out the preparation for winter as a mouse (or other animal of teacher choosing). They should begin by huddling to form small groups of 3 or 4.
- Tell them that winter is coming and they need to prepare. What items did the mice in *Frederick* collect to prepare for the winter? (berries, nuts, straw, and corn) Have items placed around the room for them to “collect” for the winter to represent berries, nuts etc. (suggestions above in ‘Materials’)
- Each small group should collect items and then crawl into the ‘den’ (you may choose to use large cardboard boxes, or simply have students crawl under their desks or tables) for their long winters.
- Now, ask each group to practice doing this again on their own, considering how little mice might move, what expressions they might make, and what noises they might make. Ask them to practice acting out the winter preparation to perform for the class.
- After a few minutes, invite the students to act out the winter preparations their animals might make, one group at a time.

Closure - Ask the students to return to their seats and use their journals to draw a labeled picture of the mice preparing for winter.



Lesson 4 – Musical Birds

Objectives:

The student will analyze a musical piece, looking for instruments, communication, and character. The student will experiment with sounds and design sounds to represent characters.

Materials needed: *Carnival of Animals* “The Aviary” musical piece and a way to play it to the class, varied musical instruments and items that can be used to make sounds, *Inch by Inch* book by Leo Lionni

Warm Up:

- Read *Inch by Inch*. Discuss: The inchworm is asked to measure many things on many different birds during this story, including a song. Ask students to consider - Why do birds sing? (For the same reason humans create sounds – to communicate!)
- Do all birds make the same sound? (No, each species of bird has its own song, and even within a species birds sometimes have different “accents” like humans from different areas.) Ask students to imitate a bird song or whistle that they have heard.

Instructional Procedures:

- Play “The Aviary” section of music for students from *Carnival of Animals*. Discuss: What do students hear? Does the music sound like birds? In what ways? What did the composer do to create a soundscape of the birds? (Music is quick and fluttering, reminiscent of the birds as they flutter and fly from tree branch to tree branch.)
- Play part (or all) of “Aviary” again and ask the students to pretend their hands are little birds. Have them flutter and fly their “birds” to the music. Model movements that represent quick rhythms and high pitches if needed.
- Discuss: In any musical piece, each instrument has its own important role in communicating mood, lending to the tempo (beat), supplying melody, etc. *Carnival of the Animals* is a set of orchestral character pieces, each of which is meant to describe a particular animal, usually by mimicking the sounds it makes or characterizing the way it moves or carries itself. What role did certain instruments play in communicating mood in the piece you heard? Do students hear several different instruments in the piece? Can they identify any instruments? (Teacher note: This piece includes strings, piano and flute: The high strings take on a background role, providing a background like jungle sounds. The cellos and basses play a pick up cadence to lead into most of the measures. The flute takes the part of the bird, with a trilling tune that spans much of its range. The pianos provide occasional pings and trills of other birds in the background.)
- The play you are going to see has very specific sounds created just for the performance as well. Each story has its own style of music and recorded narration of the text from the book. For *Inch by Inch*, the creators needed to choose sounds that would represent each bird and the inchworm, and help to create the character. Discuss: What kind of sounds do you think an inchworm might make? What kind of sounds might the birds make? Would students make these sounds fast or slow? Loud or quiet? High pitched or low pitched?
- A musician can create musical instruments out of almost anything. Ask your students to look around your classroom to see what ‘instruments’ they can create from the materials there. Consider the sound of a closing door, the rustling of a piece of notebook paper, the clicking of a pen, and the squeak of sneakers on a floor. Create a list as a class of sounds that can be created by classroom objects.
- Once you have a list of sounds, supplement these items with varied musical instruments for your students to use as well. (If you don’t have any instruments, talk to your music teacher and ask to borrow some!) Make sure you have varied options that make many different sounds.

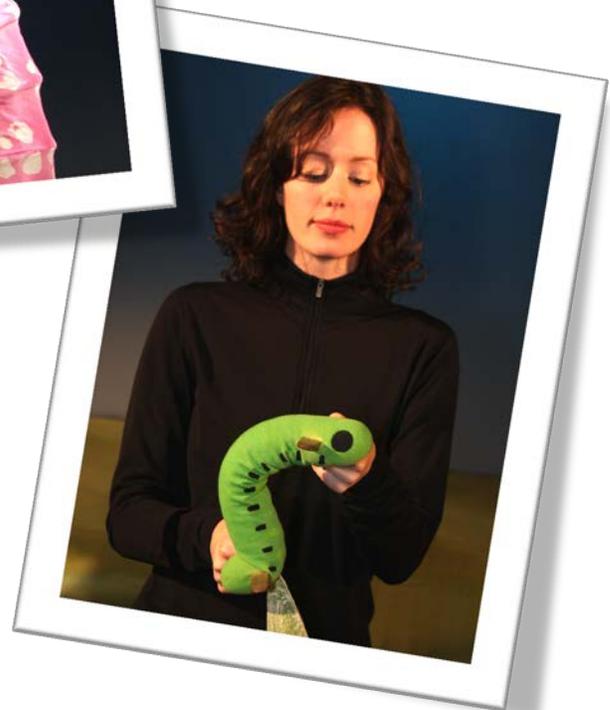


- Again talk to students about what ideas they might have for making inchworm and bird sounds. Then, with a partner, ask students to experiment with some of the objects/instruments. Can they find a sound that sounds like an inchworm? Can they find a sound that could represent birds? (With younger students, this may need to be done as a class with more teacher guidance.)
- Let each pair share their sounds with the class, and discuss. What about each sound would work for the inchworm or birds?

Closure – After listening to them, ask the performers: What title would you give to your piece of music? Ask the students who listened to the piece: What words would you use to describe the sounds made?

Extensions:

- The inchworm is asked to measure a song. Can you measure a song in inches? Are there any ways that you can measure a song? (Time length, sound waves, vibrations, measure or beat) Teach students how to clap a steady beat.
- Bird study – The inchworm measures several birds. Do a study on each type of bird with your students - Robin, Flamingo, Toucan, Heron, Pheasant, Hummingbird, and Nightingale.



More Ideas and Discussion Questions

- Letter to the Author - Write a letter to Leo Lionni. Students can write the letter as a forum to ask questions, or to write about their favorite story and character.
- Frederick is a mouse whose community is working together to prepare for the difficult winter months. Although Frederick has a different way of contributing to the community, it is just as important. What are ways students can contribute to their own community?
- Diary of an Inchworm – ask students to create a diary entry for a “Day in the Life of an Inchworm.” What would happen in a typical day of a worm?
- Discuss: In *Frederick*, one of the things Frederick “gathers” is words, because “the winter days are long and many”. Then when the winter days feel endless, he describes the warmth of the sun and the colors of nature to help pass the time. He is a poet! But all of his words didn’t rhyme. Do poems always have to rhyme? Let’s be poets like Frederick. Write a free form poem about one of the items from nature.
- Author Eric Carle has credited Leo Lionni as an inspiration for his work. Compare and contrast Lionni and Carle’s art work, stories, plots, themes, and characters.
- In the story *Swimmy*, Swimmy teaches his new friends a way to work together to overcome their biggest obstacle. Discuss the word cooperation and what it means. Then have students work together in small groups to accomplish something, like a mural or art project.
- What’s in a bird song? Study bird calls and bird songs and what their sounds mean.
- To keep the mice warm during the winter, Frederick “paints a picture” of the warm outdoors and nature. Based on the idea of painting a picture with words, discuss different comparisons (similes) that can be made about colors and nature. For example – Red like the colored poppies, blue like the small periwinkles, yellow like the golden sun. Ask students to think of some other examples.
- Leo Lionni uses descriptive words in all of his stories. Descriptive language makes writing more interesting. How can you make your writing more descriptive? Talk about some of the descriptive language in *Swimmy*. Give students a list of ‘common’ descriptive words (good, bad, happy, sad, nice, dark, etc.) and ask them to create a list of synonyms for each.

Discussion Questions for After the Show

- What was your favorite part of the performance?
- Did the performance look like pages out of the book?
- If you could jump into any page of a book, which one would you choose?
- Was it easy to forget the characters were puppets? Why or why not?
- Do you think it was easy for only two people to move all the parts? How do you think they do it?
- What was similar about the show and the book? What was different?
- What was the best part of seeing the story told as a live performance?

About the Author

About Leo Lionni



Photo from Scholastic.com

Leo Lionni was born in Holland in 1910 of Dutch parents, and although his education did not include formal art courses (in fact, he had a doctorate in economics from the University of Genoa), he spent much of his free time as a child in Amsterdam's museums, teaching himself to draw. He emigrated to the US in 1939 with his wife and two young sons, where he became involved with the world of graphic arts.

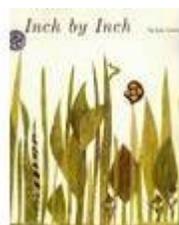
Lionni launched his career as an author/illustrator of books for children in 1959. Originally developed from a story he had improvised for his grandchildren during a dull train ride, *Little Blue and Little Yellow* was the first of what is now a long list of children's picture books. Leo Lionni wrote and illustrated more than 40 highly acclaimed children's books. He received the 1984 American Institute of Graphic Arts Gold Medal and was a four-time Caldecott Honor Winner for *Inch by Inch*, *Frederick*, *Swimmy*, and *Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse*.

Other books by Leo Lionni

In addition to Swimmy, Frederick and Inch by Inch, Leo Lionni wrote a lot of other books! Here are just a few of his other titles:

Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse
The Alphabet Tree
The Biggest House in the World
A Color of His Own
Colors to Talk About
Cornelius: A Fable
An Extraordinary Egg
Fish is Fish
Geraldine, the Music Mouse
The Greentail Mouse
I Want to Stay Here! I Want to Go There!: A Flea Story

Let's Make Rabbits: A Fable
Little Blue and Little Yellow
Mouse Days: A Book of Seasons
Mr. McMouse
On My Beach There are Many Pebbles
Pezzettino
Six Crows: A Fable
Theodore and the Talking Mushroom
Tico and the Golden Wings
Tillie and the Wall
Una Piedra Extraordinaria



About Mermaid Theatre



Founded in 1972, Mermaid Theatre's unique adaptations of children's literature have delighted more than four million young people on four continents. The company ranks among North America's most respected theatres for the young, and has won widespread recognition for its important ambassadorial role. Mermaid regularly crosses Canada and the United States, and has represented Canada in Japan (nine times), Singapore (six times), South Korea (four times), Mexico (three times), Australia, England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Holland, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam and Taiwan. Taped narration featuring outstanding international artists facilitates performances in English, Spanish, Korean, Japanese, French, Cantonese and Mandarin.

Closer to home, Mermaid's Institute of Puppetry Arts offers puppetry instruction at both community and professional levels. The Institute's imaginative curriculum-based touring programs entertain and inform students and teachers throughout the region, as well as encourage educators to incorporate the performing arts in the teaching of science.

Mermaid Theatre's emphasis on imaginative design elements, original music, and challenging texts provides a rich opportunity to acquaint young spectators with the visual and performing arts as well as with the pleasures of reading. In addition to its international engagements, Mermaid Theatre regularly tours throughout Nova Scotia with specially designed programs designed to stimulate classroom learning as well as enthusiasm for the art of puppetry. Mermaid's puppetry programs at all levels as well as its dynamic Youtheatre activities offer vital outreach opportunities.

For more information, visit the company's website at <http://mermaidtheatre.ca/>

Production Studio

Mermaid's Production Studios are at the center of their flagship productions. From design to prototypes to final construction, every aspect of the shows is imagined and built by the company's dedicated team. Every puppet, handle, curtain, set piece, stand, and road case is custom built by Mermaid Theatre at their own production studio.



Mermaid Theatre Fun Fact

*During an average season,
Mermaid presents more than 400
performances for 200,000
spectators!*

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