

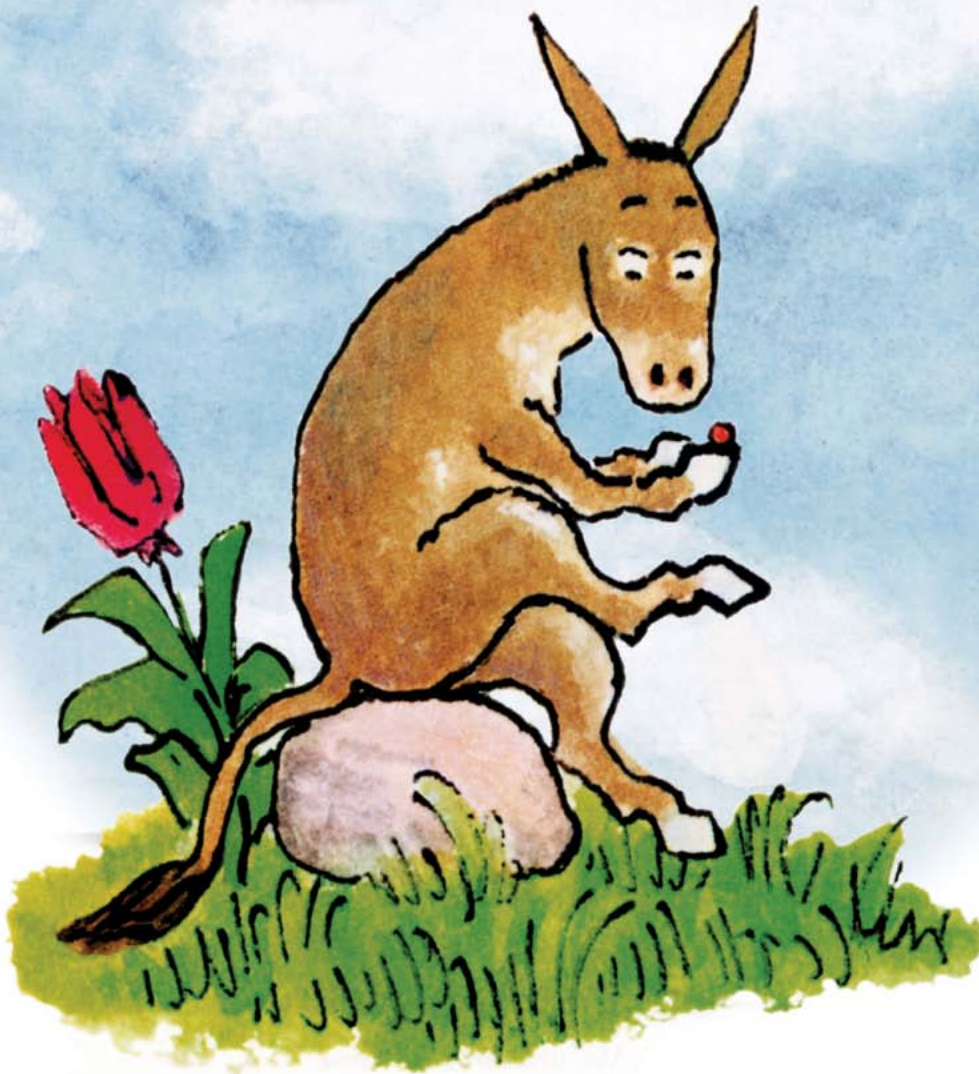
OVATIONS OFFSTAGE

presents

A Study Guide for the
School-Time Performance

“Sylvester and the Magic Pebble”

Tuesday, October 18, 2011 • 10 AM
Merrill Auditorium, Portland



PORTLAND
OVATIONS



Study guides are also available
on the Portland Ovation website at
http://portlandovations.org/offstage/study_guides

Welcome to Portland Ovations

Each year since 1931, Portland Ovations, formerly known as the PCA Great Performances, has brought a dynamic season of exceptional performing artists to Portland, Maine, including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway.

In addition to our live performances, we bring the exhilaration of the performing arts out into our community with season-long educational and outreach programs called Ovations Offstage.

Ovations Offstage creates those magical resonating moments when artists and audiences connect. Whether it's an unexpected "art happening," a workshop or masterclass with a visiting artist, a lively community discussion, or a pre-performance lecture, Portland Ovations invites you to join us as we explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

Portland Ovations...

- believes that cultural enrichment should be accessible to all
- provides quality live performances and education experiences
- engages our community with integrity and compassion
- collaborates with other arts organizations, nonprofits, education systems and the business sector to promote cultural enrichment and lifelong learning
- celebrates the power and virtuosity of the performing arts
- sustains a staff and board who are thoughtful, committed, enthusiastic and fiscally responsible



"Sylvester and the Magic Pebble" Study Guide

This guide includes information about the specific performance you and your students are about to see; contextual background about the art form; broader historic and cultural connections; suggested activities designed to engage and sustain your students' interest before, during, and after the show; as well as a number of resources to help you extend your exploration. Also included are connections to Common Core State Standards.

Use of this guide will help your students to anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your live performance experience.



Artists



About the Company

Enchantment Theatre Company has produced original theater for school groups and families since 2000, when it was established as a non-profit arts organization in

Philadelphia. The company presents only original work based on classic stories from children's literature, using its signature blend of masked actors, pantomime, magic, large scale puppets, and original music. Enchantment has quickly become known for high quality imaginative productions, not only in its home city, but throughout the United States and the Far East.

Enchantment has toured its original productions all over the world, appearing each year in more than 30 to 40 states. It has performed in such sophisticated urban arts venues as the Lincoln Center in New York and the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, as well as in small town high school auditoriums and even performance tents. The company has also toured the Far East six times, performing in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. Enchantment has also shared the stage with more than 60 orchestras nationwide to present special symphonic works that pair great stories with great music for the benefit of school and family audiences. Enchantment is now celebrating its 10th Anniversary Season as a non-profit company resident to Philadelphia. In the past 10 years, Enchantment has performed in its home city at the Annenberg Center, Prince Music Theater, and the Suzanne Roberts Theatre, in addition to sharing the Kimmel Center stage with The Philadelphia Orchestra as part of its symphonic work series. It is also in Philadelphia that the company's arts education program, *The Magic of Masks* continues to thrive, offering class field trips at reduced ticket prices, in-school artist-in-residency programs for public schools, and a theatrical summer camp program.

Artists, cont.

Mission

Enchantment Theatre Company exists to create original theater for young audiences and their families. We do this through the imaginative telling of stories that inspire, challenge and enrich our audience, on stage and in the classroom. We focus on timeless stories that involve personal transformation to demonstrate that the possibility for change and redemption exists in each of our lives.

Meet the Cast of *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* at Enchantment Theatre Company's website: <http://www.enchantmenttheatre.org/touring/sylvester-cast.html>

Performance

This production of *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* 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 half-masks to help them portray different characters.

Mime:

Mime is acting without speaking or making any noise. In *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, the performers act out the story with their bodies and gestures, but they do not speak.

Words and Music:

There is recorded narration throughout the show to help the audience follow the story. Original music, composed by Charles Gilbert especially for this production, adds to the atmosphere. Listen for the changes in the music when Sylvester travels to the woods; when his parents go to the police station; when the family is at home.

Puppets:

Some of the characters in the story are played by actors wearing masks and costumes. Other characters—the Chicken family, the Ducks and various animal children—are played by puppets. Rod puppets (manipulated by sticks) will be the primary puppet device you'll see.

Projection/Animation:

Technology helps create the scenery and atmosphere, using video projections and animation to create Sylvester's world.

Performance

Directed by Leslie Reidel

Artistic Director, Resident Director

Leslie Reidel has dedicated the last 25 years of his professional life to both the preservation of classical theatre and the development of young audiences. He holds a bachelor's degree from Muhlenberg College and a Masters of Fine Arts from Temple University. He served as a member of the MFA faculty at Temple University and was a founding member of the Professional Theatre Training Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Delaware. His directorial credits include *The Walnut Street Theatre*, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, the Madison Civic Rep, the Pennsylvania, Utah, Colorado, and Fort Worth Shakespeare Festivals and 12 years as the resident director of the Great American Children's Theatre. His most recent creations with Enchantment Theatre Company are *Scheherazade*, which premiered with The Cleveland Orchestra in October 2008, and *The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon*, which premiered in Philadelphia in December of 2009 and has toured nationally twice. Leslie is Professor of Theatre at the University of Delaware where his recent projects have included Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, and Pinter's *The Homecoming*. In 2009, he received his fourth grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to take a group of teachers from all over America to Stratford, England to study Shakespeare in performance. He is a member of The International Shakespeare Conference.

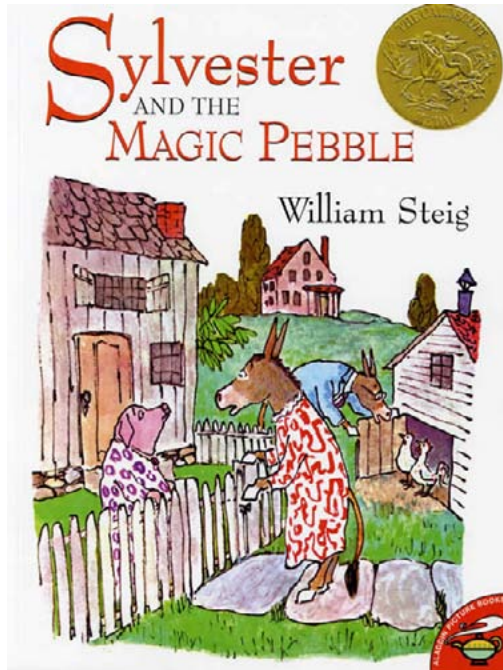
Music by Charles Gilbert

The music used in this production was composed by Charlie Gilbert, Director of the Ira Brind School of Theater Arts at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He created musical arrangements and additional music for Enchantment Theater Company's production of *The Velveteen Rabbit* in 2007 and for the entire score of Enchantment's *Harold and the Purple Crayon* in 2009. He has countless composition credits to his name. The music for *Sylvester* is designed specifically to underscore the action and to help the performers tell the story.

Watch composer Charles Gilbert talk about the process of creating the music for *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* watch the video at: <http://youtu.be/t7hZNb3wjMM>

Adapted by Leslie Reidel, Jennifer Blatchley Smith, and Landis Smith

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble



Sylvester and the Magic Pebble is a children's picture book written and illustrated by William Steig. *Sylvester* won a Caldecott Medal in 1970, the first of many Caldecott and Newbery Medal honors for Steig. It tells the tale of a donkey, Sylvester who collects pebbles "of unusual shape and color." One day he happens to come across a pebble that grants wishes. Immediately afterward, a lion scares Sylvester, and as a defense he wishes himself into a rock, the only thing he could think of at the moment. Unfortunately, the magic pebble falls off the rock, and Sylvester is unable to revert to his donkey form as the pebble must be in contact with the wisher to work. The rest of the story deals with the resulting aftermath: Sylvester's personal attempt to change back into his true self and his parents' search for their only son.

Summary adapted from Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sylvester_and_the_Magic_Pebble

Read the book or watch a film adaptation of *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*:

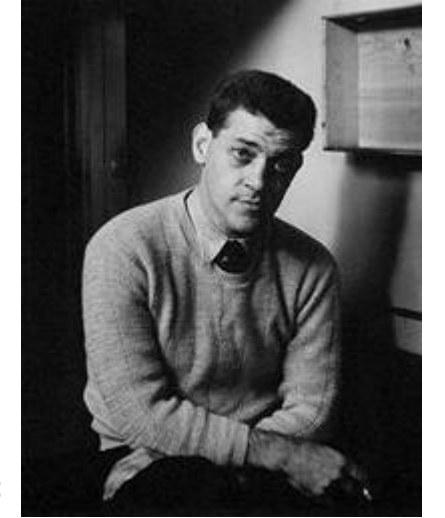
***Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* by William Steig (Windmill Books, 1969).**

***Sylvester and the Magic Pebble... And More Magical Tales* (Scholastic Video Collection/New Video Group DVD, 2005).**

DVD includes *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* (by William Steig, narrated by John Lithgow), *Possum Magic* (written and narrated by Mem Fox, illustrated by Julie Vivas, music by Yothu Yindi), *Princess Furball* (by Charlotte Huck, illustrated by Anita Lobel). Special features include *The Wizard* by Jack Kent and a Spanish version of *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*.

William Steig

William Steig (1907-2003) was a cartoonist, illustrator and author of award-winning books for children, including *Shrek!*, which the DreamWorks movies are based. Steig was born in New York City. Every member of his family was involved in the arts, and so it was no surprise when he decided to become an artist. He attended City College and the National Academy of Design. In 1930, Steig's work began appearing in *The New Yorker*, where his drawings have been a popular fixture ever since. He published his first children's book, *Roland the Minstrel Pig*, in 1968.



In 1970, Steig received the Caldecott Medal for *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. His books for children also include *Dominic*; *The Real Thief*; *The Amazing Bone*, a Caldecott Honor Book; *Amos & Boris*, a National Book Award finalist; and *Abel's Island* and *Doctor De Soto*, both Newbery Honor Books. Steig's books have also received the Christopher Award, the Irma Simonton Black Award, the William Allen White Children's Book Award, and the American Book Award. His European awards include the Premio di Letteratura per l'infanzia (Italy), the Silver Pencil Award (the Netherlands), and the Prix de la Fondation de France. On the basis of his entire body of work, Steig was selected as the 1982 U.S. candidate for the Hans Christian Andersen Medal for Illustration and subsequently as the 1988 U.S. candidate for Writing.

Stieg also published thirteen collections of drawings for adults, beginning with *About People* in 1939, and including *The Lonely Ones*, *Male/Female*, *The Agony in the Kindergarten*, and *Our Miserable Life*.

He died in Boston at the age of 95.

Adapted from MacMillian Publishers, <http://us.macmillan.com/author/williamsteig>

More by William Steig

William Steig has written and illustrated many books; here are some recommendations from the Portland Public Library's Sam L. Cohen Children's Library:

WILLIAM STEIG
The Amazing Bone



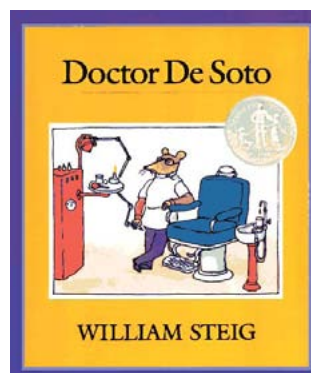
The Amazing Bone

It's a bright and beautiful spring day, and Pearl is dawdling on her way home from school. Most unexpectedly, she strikes up an acquaintance with a small bone. Pearl and the bone immediately take a liking to each other, and before you know it, she is on her way home with the bone in her purse, left open so they can continue their conversation. But the trip home turns out to be surprisingly treacherous. Can a pig and a small talking bone outwit a band of robbers and a hungry fox? In the world of William Steig, anything is possible.

Doctor De Soto

Since he's a mouse, Doctor De Soto refuses to treat "dangerous" animals—that is, animals who have a taste for mice. But one day a fox shows up and begs for relief from the tooth that's killing him. How can the kindhearted De Sotos turn him away? But how can they make sure that the fox doesn't give in to his baser instincts once his tooth is fixed?

Those clever De Sotos will find a way.



WILLIAM STEIG
AMOS & BORIS

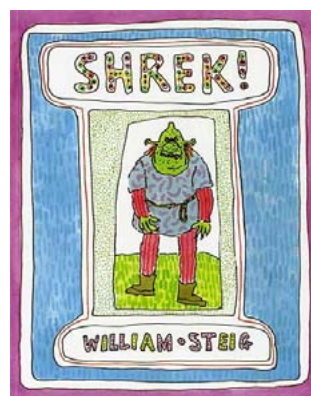


Amos and Boris

Amos the mouse and Boris the whale: a devoted pair of friends with nothing at all in common, except good hearts and a willingness to help their fellow mammal. They meet after Amos sets out to sail the sea and finds himself in extreme need of rescue. And there will come a day, long after Boris has gone back to a life at sea and Amos has gone back to life on dry land, when the tiny mouse must find a way to rescue the great whale.

Shrek!

Before Shrek made it big on the silver screen, there was William Steig's SHREK!, a book about an ordinary ogre who leaves his swampy childhood home to go out and see the world. Ordinary, that is, if a foul and hideous being who ends up marrying the most stunningly ugly princess on the planet is what you consider ordinary.



William Steig

CDC?



CDC?

To figure out William Steig's word puzzles you need merely read the letters, numbers, and symbols aloud. If at first the messages aren't clear, there are clever pictures accompanying each one to give you hints. Some are easy, some are hard, but all are a hilarious treat when the phrases are decoded.

The Art of William Steig

The online exhibit "From the New Yorker to Shrek! The Art of William Steig" (based on a 2008 exhibit at the Jewish Museum in New York) presents many resources, including videos of Steig drawing and reading his stories aloud and a wide range of his artwork from magazine cartoons to beloved children's books.

<http://www.thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/Steig>

Listen to a podcast about the exhibit and its accompanying catalogue:

http://yalepress.yale.edu/yupbooks/podcast/addendum_steig.mp3

Learn more about the exhibit: "Worlds Outfoxed by a Wily Inner Child" by Edward Rothstein in New York Times, March 3, 2008.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/03/arts/design/03conn.html>



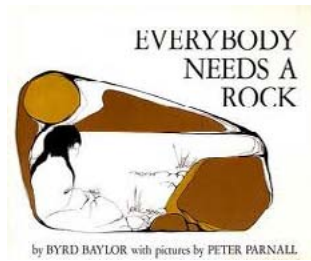
Big Sister
From "Small Fry: Park Playground" series, published in *The New Yorker*, April 18, 1953



"I got my first haircut at Ditchick's Barbershop"
Final illustration for *When Everybody Wore a Hat* (2003)

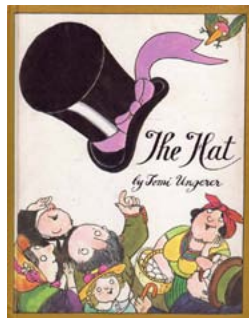
Additional Resources

If you like Sylvester, check out these other picture books recommended by the Portland Public Library Sam L. Cohen Children's Library.



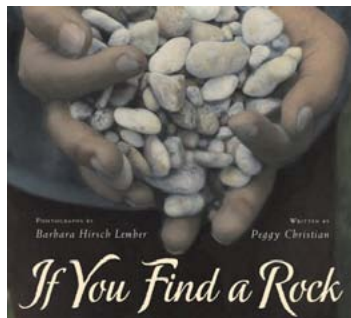
Everybody Needs a Rock by Byrd Baylor and illustrated by Peter Parnall (Atheneum, 1974)

With her spare, poetic prose, the author gives us ten rules for picking our own special rocks, leading us through smell, taste, feel and sight.



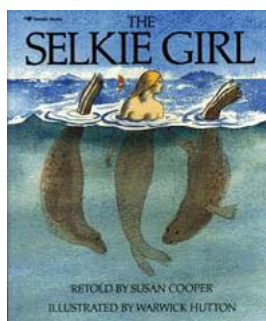
The Hat by Tomi Ungerer (Simon & Schuster, 1982)

A handsome black top hat changes penniless Benito Badoglio's life.



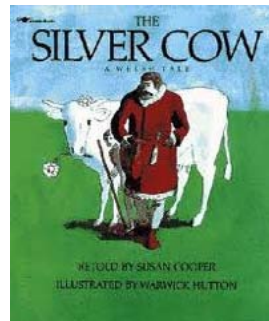
If You Find a Rock by Peggy Christian and illustrated by Barbara Hirsch Lember (Harcourt, 2000)

In this photo essay children find different kinds of rock - these aren't classified by mineral or structure but rather by use: skipping rocks, splashing rocks, climbing rocks, resting rocks.



The Selkie Girl written by Susan Cooper and illustrated by Warwick Hutton (Aladdin, 1991).

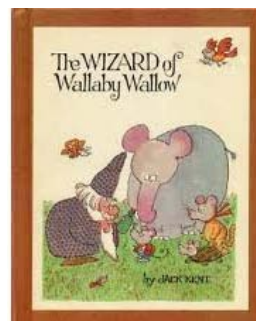
This retelling of the haunting Scottish folktale is "a lyrical text that weaves a tale of sweeping dimension; this is storytelling at its finest. Particularly lovely are Hutton's sensitive and muted water colors."



The Silver Cow written by Susan Cooper and illustrated by Warwick Hutton (Margaret K. McElderry, 1991).

From Wales comes this tale of young Huw, whose lilting harp music enchants

Tylwyth Teg, the magic people of Bearded Lake. From the depths of the black lake comes the gift of a beautiful silver cow; and the cow is magic, for its milk is three times as rich as the milk of an ordinary cow, and she gives three times as much. Huw's father is a selfish and greedy man, and his wealth makes him greedier than ever. Huw tries to make his father see the magic, but he scoffs at Tylwyth Teg...until they seek their revenge. Told with a rhythm that evokes the Welsh language, Susan Cooper has brought new life to this ancient tale. Warwick Hutton's evocative illustrations capture the magic of this fateful story.



The Wizard by Jack Kent (Weston Woods Press, 1989).

A mouse helps a wizard discover what's lacking in his magic spells.

Discussion Points

- In all his young life Sylvester had never had a wish granted so quickly. It struck him that magic must be at work, and he guessed that the magic must be in the remarkable-looking red pebble. What makes something magic? What makes something a coincidence?
- Sylvester is scared when he sees the lion. He could have wished many things like that the lion would turn into a butterfly or a daisy or a gnat, but he panicked and couldn't think. Have you ever had to make a quick decision when you were scared? Was it a good decision? Does fear affect the decisions you make? Why or why not?
- At the end of the story, Sylvester and his parents lock the pebble up in an iron safe. Why would they do this? What would you have done?

Find more discussion points by educator by Mara Gabrielsen at "Questions for Philosophical Discussion" online:

http://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/wiki/Sylvester_and_the_Magic_Pebble

Activities

Use the book to prompt a creative writing project:

At the end of the story Sylvester and his family put the magic pebble away in case they want to use it again some day. Write a story about the next time the pebble is used. Tell what they wish for and what happens when they make their wish.

For more activities and supplementary materials, see the Enchantment Theatre Company's Study Guide for Classroom Teachers available on their website

www.enchantmenttheatre.org or on

Portland Ovarions website www.portlandovations.org



In-School Workshop

Students investigate diverse ways to express and tell stories through words and movement.

\$100 for one-hour in-school workshop with Ovations Offstage educators



Study Guide Connections to Common Core Standards

This guide offers activities for students at multiple grade levels.

Common Core State Standards and ME Learning Standards	Reading Literature	Reading Info Texts	Reading Foundational Skills	Reading History/Social Studies Subjects	Reading Science Technical Subjects	Writing	Speaking and Listening	Language	Visual and Performing Arts
"Sylvester and the Magic Pebble"	RL		RF			W	SL	L	VPA

For more information about Common Core Standards:

Maine Department of Education Learning Standards and Goals,
<http://www.maine.gov/education/standards.htm>

Maine Department of Education Common Core State Standards,
<http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/commoncore/index.html>

Common Core State Standards Initiative, <http://www.corestandards.org/>

Maine Department of Education Learning Results Visual and Performing Arts,
<http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/vpa/index.html>

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