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# David Gonzalez's "Sleeping Beauty"

THURSDAY • MARCH 2, 2017 • 10 AM • 60 MINUTES  
HANNAFORD HALL, USM PORTLAND CAMPUS



Photo: Myles Aronowitz



## WELCOME

Portland Oventions has brought a dynamic season of exceptional performing artists to Portland, Maine, including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway since 1931. Portland Oventions believes that cultural enrichment should be accessible to all and provides quality live performances and education experiences. Oventions collaborates with other arts organizations, nonprofits, education systems and the business sector to promote cultural enrichment and lifelong learning and celebrates the power and virtuosity of the performing arts.

In addition to live performances, we bring the exhilaration of the performing arts out into our community with season-long educational and outreach programs called Oventions Offstage. Oventions Offstage creates 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 Oventions invites you to join us as we explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Oventions Offstage is made possible in part with support from New England Foundation for the Arts, Culture Club Portland, National Performance Network, Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, The Onion Foundation, Unum, Sam L. Cohen Foundation, Bank of America, Maine Arts Commission, Confucius Institute at the University of Southern Maine, and Dead River Company.



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## David Gonzalez's "Sleeping Beauty" STUDY GUIDE

This guide includes information about David Gonzalez's "Sleeping Beauty" broader cultural and literary connections; suggested activities designed to engage and sustain your students' learning before, during, and after the show; as well as a number of local resources to help you extend your learning. Please note connections to Common Core State Standards.

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

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

- Reading Literature
- Reading Informational Texts
- Writing
- Speaking & Listening
- Language
- Maine Learning Results: Theatre
- Movement
- Character
- Improvisation

# David Gonzalez's "Sleeping Beauty" STUDY GUIDE

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David Gonzalez and musician Daniel Kelly in "Sleeping Beauty"

## On Stage

Storytelling is one of the oldest art forms. We respond to stories, we imagine ourselves inside them and when a special story comes our way, we hold onto it and want to hear it over and over. And, because there is always something a little different each time the tale is retold, a very old story is rich with layers, motifs and variations.

*Sleeping Beauty* is one of those old stories, a fairy tale passed down by word of mouth for hundreds of years and fixed in form by scholar and poet Charles Perrault in 1697. Contrary to some rumors, *Sleeping Beauty* is not just a story about a beautiful, passive girl waiting for her prince to come and wake her with a kiss. So much activity occurs in this story: the christening of the long-awaited princess, the invited fairies bestowing their magical gifts, the uninvited fairy casting her evil spell, the discovery of the dreaded spindle, the passage of time, and the brave prince battling his way through the forest of briars. There are also underlying universal themes including those of fear, joy and struggle. Perhaps that is why children and adults have enjoyed this story all these years.

Now the classic fairy tale is told once again in David Gonzalez's innovative and poetic presentation. An entertaining narrator, Gonzalez combines the ancient art of storytelling with a variety of techniques to involve the audience. He incorporates quirky, rhymed verse, live music, projection images, and the most extraordinary device of all—our imaginations to create a world in which our beautiful (and funky) princess is awakened by true love's kiss...or not. Gonzalez, whose storytelling has been engaging imaginations for over a quarter of a century, was inspired for this piece by the unlikely combination of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and Dr. Seuss. He calls his *Sleeping Beauty* "poetical theater" where "the word meets the pulse, the pulse meets the music, the music meets the image, and it all meets the child."

If you think you know all there is to know about *Sleeping Beauty*, you are in for a wonderful and magical surprise.



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## In the Spotlight

*I never set out to be a storyteller. I just kept following my points of inspiration, and it keeps taking me down these crazy roads.* David Gonzalez

David Gonzalez brings a rich background to the stage. He is a poet, actor, musician, and a master storyteller. He was a recipient of the Helen Hayes Performing Artist of the Year award in 1998, and in 2006, was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for his version of *The Frog Bride*. Gonzalez also hosted WNYC's *New York Kids* for eight seasons, appeared on Bill Moyers' documentary *Fooling with Words* and was featured at the 2008 National Storytelling Festival. Recently, he received the great honor of being named the Joseph Campbell Foundation Fellow for 2010.

In addition, Gonzalez is a music therapist, having earned his Ph.D. from New York University where he taught for 10 years. Plus, he still finds the time to conduct workshops for teachers.

Gonzalez tells stories the old fashioned verbal way but with a modern twist which he calls "poetical theater." While facing the audience to tell his story, he incorporates music, image projections, lighting, and dance. He conceived this approach while reading Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* to a friend's youngster. "That delicate intimacy of reading together with a young child, of completing, rhymes and lines touched me deeply and made me remember the joy I knew as a child and when I was a young parent reading to my own little ones. In that moment, I knew that I wanted my *Sleeping Beauty* to have a sense of precious interactivity and co-conjuring."

This is just what happens in his presentation of the famous fairy tale. As he rhymes through his story, audiences are caught up in his tale and listen intently. When he pauses, they keep the rhymes going by filling in the right words. "Creativity," Gonzalez has said, "is

a birthright...a defining characteristic of being human." We have the story. Gonzalez brings out the story's life from within us.

Interestingly, Gonzalez took his musical inspiration for his *Sleeping Beauty* not from the famous Tchaikovsky music of the same name but, rather from J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. "With their passion, intelligence, grace, and power, they (the variations) truly are magnificent. The first movement, the Aria, is the root of all the variations. Its gentle poise and sense of longing and redemption are stunning.

I wanted my *Sleeping Beauty* to have that quality of delicate passion, precision and grace and asked my collaborators to listen intently to it and to make their work on the project accountable to its charms. I said to them, 'Our *Sleeping Beauty* should leave the same impression on the children who see it as the Bach does to us.'



Photo: Myles Aronowitz

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## Theater Talk

Here are some words associated with David Gonzalez's *Sleeping Beauty*:

**storyteller** - a person who tells stories for entertainment.

**pianist** - a person who plays the piano.

**invitation** - a request to be present at an event.

**virtue** - moral excellence, always good.

**reject** - to refuse to take or use.

**spindle** - a round stick with tapered ends used to form and twist the yarn in hand spinning or the long, slender pin by which the thread is twisted in a spinning wheel.

**spinning wheel** - a small machine for spinning yarn or thread which was an improvement over the spindle used alone.

**squiggly** - shaped like a short wavy twist or line, a curlicue.

**precocious** - mature or talented at an unusually young age.

**curious** - having a strong desire to learn; something that is very strange or unexpected.

**flute** - a woodwind instrument with a high musical range.

**manners** - polite behavior.

**patient** - steadfast despite difficulties, willing to wait for an outcome.

**thorn hedge** - a thick, high planting of bushes with thorns.

**dove** - a small white bird, often a symbol for peace.

# David Gonzalez's "Sleeping Beauty" STUDY GUIDE



David Gonzalez and musician Daniel Kelly in "Sleeping Beauty"

## Storytelling: An Art for all Ages

Storytelling is an art form that reaches back before recorded history when people exchanged tales in the shadowy light of the fire. Before the written word, oral tradition was the only way to pass on information and knowledge. That is why every culture in the world has its own storytelling tradition. Stories were used to teach people to behave properly toward one another and to describe the consequences of ignoring the social mores of a particular culture. Stories were told of gods, great deeds, adventures of the past, or the sacrifices and labors of heroes and heroines who overcame evil against great odds. Stories also explained the natural events that people saw every day like the sun rising and setting or the reasons for nature's fury as expressed in storms, earthquakes and smoldering volcanoes. Tales even described spiritual journeys and visions, and many of the stories were fairy tales

characterized by elements of magic, enchantment and the supernatural. In stories, fools could become wise, the poor could become wealthy and perseverance and goodness could be rewarded. Stories were told for lessons, for laughs, for tears shed, and fears ignited or assuaged. The stories were passed down generation after generation by storytellers. Through the ages, as stories grew in complexity, storytelling developed from a skill into an art. The master storytellers of the community were those who told stories most effectively, using the tools of gesture, voice, movement, rhythm, and humor. They understood that a tell-able tale needs a strong plot, well-developed characters, believable dialogue, action, imaginative resolution, and colorful expression. They knew that different stories appeal to different audiences and may require different methods of telling. They incorporated music to create or change a mood

or to help tell longer stories. The language of oral tradition has a different, more immediate beauty than the polished, carefully crafted expression of literature that is written to be read. The storyteller must be constantly aware of the audience and be able to tailor a story on-the-spot to achieve the desired response and communicate the message. The plot of the fairy tale or folk tale handed down for generations can be sparse. The vision and skill of the storyteller adds the poetry, brings the characters to life and makes us care about their destinies. In the hands of master storyteller David Gonzalez, the art form is continuing to develop and flourish. Gonzalez's *Sleeping Beauty*, for example, combines great storytelling with live and electronic music, dance, projected images, and exquisite lighting to create a new spin on this beloved classic fairy tale.

# David Gonzalez's "Sleeping Beauty" STUDY GUIDE

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## In the Classroom

### Before the Performance

1. Read *Sleeping Beauty* to the class or ask older students to read the story aloud. (See "Delving Deeper" on page 9.) Then, develop the story of *Sleeping Beauty* by discussing specific events in the sequence they occur. Ask each student to select one of the events discussed and draw a picture of it. As the students work, play a recording of J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. (See "Delving Deeper" on page 9.) Display the drawings around the room as a gallery for students to explore on their own.
2. "Fairy Tale from Life" is an arts integrated resource of Verizon's Thinkfinity.org. In this lesson from ReadWriteThink, picture books provide the basis for an analysis of fairy tale elements before students write their own original stories. [readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/fairy-tales-from-life-42.html](http://readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/fairy-tales-from-life-42.html)

### After the Performance

1. Discuss with students what they liked about the performance and if it differed from any other theatrical experience they have had. What techniques did David Gonzalez use to make the story interesting? Did his presentation have any surprises in it? What were they? How did he accomplish them?

### Teaching Science Through Theater (K-8)

By Sharon J. Sherman, Ed.D.

Encouraging the growth of theatrical creativity in children is an excellent way to deepen their understanding of the subjects they study in school. Guiding them in the script writing process is a way to bring the curriculum to life and make it more meaningful and engaging. Learning about the environment through theater can deepen their understanding of their world.

Reuse, recycling and reducing waste help us preserve our precious natural resources. Each day, children come to school with lunches packed at home. At the end of the lunch period, waste containers in schools everywhere abound with items such as paper and plastic bags, Styrofoam, empty juice cartons, plastic utensils, and more. You can use theater to encourage your students to think about bringing environmentally friendly packed lunches to school.

Begin the creative writing process by asking your students to write short plays about a class that will lead a school-wide campaign to reduce waste in the lunchroom. You can divide the class into teams of four to six students who will work together. In order to convince their schoolmates of the importance of reuse, recycling and waste reduction, teams should begin their work by doing research on the topic. How many trees are cut down each year from the use of non-recycled paper? How many plastic bottles are discarded each day? What happens to a juice box after it is put in the trash? Students will enhance their information literacy skills as they do their research. They will also deepen their understanding of the topic.

Once the research phase is completed, the groups can begin to write their plays. Ask them to select the main characters and define their characteristics. After that, they should select the secondary characters and define their roles. Then, it is time to set the scene for the play. Beginning with the first act, have your students visualize what is going to happen. Which characters will speak and what will they say to each other to get the message across? Continue developing the story line until the first draft is written. Once the drafts are done, have the groups rehearse their plays. Then, it is time for presenting their productions. Ask the class to critique each performance in a constructive manner.

*Sharon J. Sherman, Ed.D. is Dean of the School of Education and Professor of Teacher Education at Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ.*



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## Delving Deeper

### Books to Share with Children

Muller, Martina. *Sleeping Beauty: A Grimm's Fairytale with Illustrations*. Floris Books, 2001.

*Sleeping Beauty* (Disney). Golden Books Publishing Co., 2004.

### Film/DVD

*Sleeping Beauty*. Walt Disney Studios. 1959.  
(The Platinum edition of the Disney DVD contains a documentary about Tchaikovsky's life that was broadcast on Walt Disney Presents, 1960.)

### Books for Teachers

Travers, PL, and Charles Keeping. *About Sleeping Beauty*. McGraw-Hill, 1975.

### Websites

[pit.edu/~dash/type0410.html#grimm](http://pit.edu/~dash/type0410.html#grimm) - Various versions of the Sleeping Beauty story.

[youtube.com/user/davidgonzalez2020](https://youtube.com/user/davidgonzalez2020) and [davidgonzalez.com](http://davidgonzalez.com) - Samples of David Gonzalez's *Sleeping Beauty*.

[cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=152&id=1771](http://cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=152&id=1771) - A website all about sleep for youngsters. Includes why we sleep and getting enough sleep.

### Music

Bach: *Goldberg Variations* by Johann Sebastian Bach. Arte Nova Classics, 2008.



## THEATER ETIQUETTE

Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform and each performance calls for different audience responses. Lively bands, musicians and dancers may desire audience members to clap and move to the beat. Other performers require silent focus on the stage and will want an audience to applaud only when they have completed a portion of their performance. As you enjoy the show, think about being a part of the performance.

- What are the differences between attending a live performance and going to a movie or watching television?
- What are some different types of live performances? Name a few as a class.
- What kind of responses might an audience give in each circumstance?
- What are the different cues that a performer will give you so that you know how to respond? For example, might they bow or pause for applause?

Also, remember that a theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers or paper rustling can be heard throughout the auditorium. You are part of a community of audience members and you all work together to create your theater experience.

# Student Response Form

Please guide your students through this form. Students may write and/or draw pictures to respond to the performance.

**PERFORMANCE:** David Gonzalez’s “Sleeping Beauty” • March 2017

**SCHOOL NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **GRADE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VISUAL RESPONSE:**

Draw your favorite moment from David Gonzalez’s “Sleeping Beauty” below.

What did you really like about the performance?

What would you tell other kids about the performance?

Please print your name below to give Portland Ovarions permission to use your comments in future promotions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Your Name Here

**MAIL RESPONSES TO:**  
Ovarions Offstage  
50 Monument Sq, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl.  
Portland, ME, 04101

# Teacher Response Form

Please take a few moments to fill out and return this form after the performance. Your response to our School-Time Performance Series helps us plan for the future. Include any comments from class discussion as well!

**PERFORMANCE:** David Gonzalez's "Sleeping Beauty" • March 2017

**SCHOOL NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What made this a valuable experience for your students?** (If it wasn't, why not, what can we do better?)

**How did this live performance connect to or enhance your curriculum?**

**If you used this guide... did the study guide help you in preparing for and reflecting upon the performance with your students? Why or why not? OR if you knew about the guide but opted not to use it, tell us why you chose not to use it.** (We want to design the guides so that they are helpful tools for teachers—your feedback is key!)

**Tell us about planning the trip:** How did you hear about this School-Time Performance? How was the process when arranging transportation?

**Tell us about the trip itself:** How was the arrival and dismissal process? Were all of your specified seating needs met?

**What types of performances would you like to see in the future? (topics/themes, genres, specific artists, etc.?)**

**A number of generous individuals and organizations make it possible for us to offer these School-Time Performances at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you'd like them to know in terms of your experience or its impact on your class?**

Please sign below if Portland Ovarions has our permissions to use any of your comments in future promotions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign here

**RETURN TO:**

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