

EDUCATORS GUIDE

Ugly Duckling

This guide is geared toward teachers of grades PK - 5.

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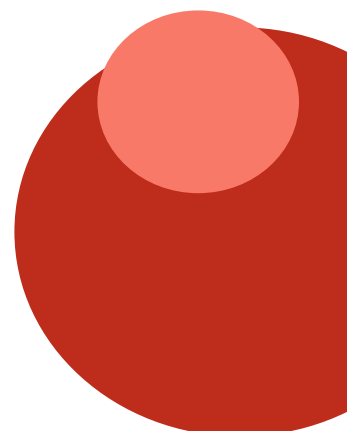
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About This Guide

Use this guide to help your students anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your live performance experience. This guide is geared toward teachers of PK - 5.

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The great thing about the arts is that they can often evolve to meet their context. That means that many of the activities shared are flexible to a lot of different contexts depending on how you choose to frame them in your class. We know that you all are experts on your classroom and your students and so we invite you to use these lessons and activities as guideposts and adapt them to fit your classroom management style, range of student ability, and time constraints.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ICON KEY



Educators, we invite you to share with us what you did in your classroom around this guide or the production. You can email eschildkret@portlandovations.org or reach us via [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

We want to hear and see what great learning is happening in your classrooms.

Introducing the Performance

WHAT TO EXPECT

Here's some information about *The Ugly Duckling* to help prepare your students for the performance.

The Performance

- The performance is about 60 minutes long.
- The show takes place in a public park with a pond. Trees, reeds, and a park bench help the audience to imagine the park and the pond.

The Performers

- There are three actors in the play, and they play several different parts. They use puppets and costume pieces like hats and shirts to show when they're playing a different character. Actors also use different types of movement to help make each character unique.

The Music

- The show includes lots of singing and dancing. Actors sometimes accompany themselves on the Ukelele and drum sticks or a box drum.
- Sometimes the music is slow and calm; other times it is fast and exuberant.

The Lights

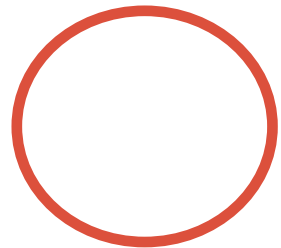
- General stage lighting is used throughout the performance.
- There are some scenes that take place at night with dim lighting. Look for the glittery moon when it is night time.
- There is a scene where blinking Christmas lights represent snow and ice.

Resources

- Plan your visit to Merrill Auditorium: <https://www.porttix.com/plan-your-visit/merrill-auditorium/>
- [Learn more about accessibility at Portland ovations: https://portlandovations.org/about/accessibility/](https://portlandovations.org/about/accessibility/)
- Get the latest health and safety information for Portland Oventions productions: <https://portlandovations.org/about/health-safety/>

ABOUT TUTTI FRUITTI

For over 30 years, Tutti Frutti has created high-quality, inventive theatre performances for children and their families from their base in Leeds in the UK. Tutti Frutti's productions are either brand-new stories or fresh adaptations of much-loved fairy tales and fables which they tour around the UK to schools and theatres, as well as internationally in the USA, Hong Kong and Singapore. They also deliver projects – sometimes live, sometimes digital – working with a range of partners in Leeds and across the UK. Their work brings together diverse and highly skilled children's theatre practitioners who have a capacity to be playful to create fantastic, distinctive, and carefully crafted theatre for children. Tutti Frutti Loves sharing highly physical theatre and live music with welcoming and enthusiastic audiences of children, and are delighted to be touring *The Ugly Duckling* in the United States. Learn more about Tutti Frutti and their work on their website: <https://tutti-frutti.org.uk/>



About the Performance

“Ugly” is a very unusual duckling. His feathers are the wrong color, his neck is too long, and even his beak is the wrong shape. The other ducklings in his family—Fluffy, Pecky, Chripy, and Waddles can’t understand why he can’t chirp, peck, and waddle as well as they can. Ugly’s sibling, Fluffy tries to teach Ugly how to be a good duckling, but he just can’t seem to get it right. When he realizes he doesn’t fit in with his family, Ugly looks for advice from other animals in the park hoping to find somewhere he belongs. A goose tells him to be tough and self-reliant. A Dog tries to teach Ugly to do tricks to please people. A Cat advises him to be cold and aloof. But none of these ways of coping with the world feel right to Ugly. When Ugly sees a flight of swans, he dreams about being one of them, elegant and beautiful. He thinks about the “curse” of being born ugly and decides that it is the people who label him that way who are the problem—they’re ugly on the inside, not him.

As winter comes, Ugly doesn’t return to the nest. The other ducklings grow up and fly away, but Mummy Duck still misses her Ugly Duckling. When the swans come by the pond, Mummy Duck asks them if they’ve seen her duckling. Ugly realizes that his mother never stopped looking for him and rushes out to greet her, but she doesn’t recognize him---he has transformed into a beautiful swan. Ugly decides to fly off with the swans, but he promises his mother he’ll come back.

Next spring, Ugly returns to the nest to see Mummy Duck, who is waiting for a new clutch of eggs to hatch. One of them looks very different from the others. Mummy Duck and Ugly wonder who’s about to bust out of their shell this time...

THEMES

- Finding self-confidence and self-acceptance
- Learning every family is unique

CHARACTERS

- The Ugly Duckling (Ugly)
- Mummy Duck
- Fluffy
- Goose
- Swan
- Cat



Actors in “Ugly Duckling”, photo by Brian Slater

Being an Audience Member

An audience member is a part of a larger community – an audience – and you all work together to create your theater experience. Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform. Sharing their hard work and joy with you is one of the best parts of being a performer. 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 talking from the audience can be distracting. A theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers can be heard throughout the auditorium. The cast of *Ugly Duckling* highly encourage clapping, laughing and cheering at the parts of the play that you enjoy.

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? How many can you name?
- What kind of responses might an audience give to different types of performances?
- 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?



The interior of Merrill Auditorium

Essential Questions

Who wrote The Ugly Duckling?

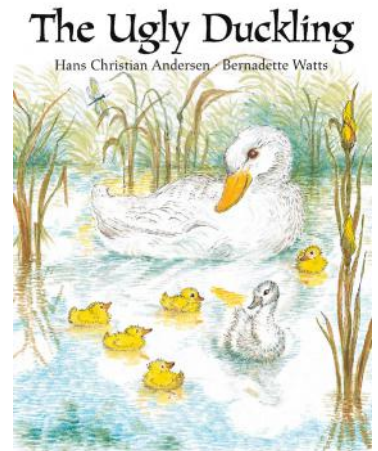
Hans Christian Andersen was a Danish author and poet. Although he was a prolific writer of plays, novels, and poems, Hans Christian Andersen is best known for writing innovative and influential fairytales. He was born in 1805 in Odense, Denmark. His father died when he was 11, and although he wasn't from a wealthy family, he was educated at a boarding school for the privileged. He began writing in 1819 but was discouraged by his teachers. In 1835, Andersen published his first book of fairytales, "Tales, told for Children," which included the story, "The Princess and the Pea."

Some of Hans Christian Andersen's most famous fairytales include, "The Little Mermaid," "The Emperor's New Clothes," and of course, "The Ugly Duckling." His stories have inspired books, plays, ballets, and both animated and live-action films. Many of these adaptations are classics in their own right.

The Danish government declared Andersen a "national treasure" when he was in his late sixties. To honor him, they started constructing a statue of Andersen in the King's Garden in Copenhagen to commemorate his 70th birthday. Andersen lived to see his birthday, but died four months later. Over a century later, you can still see tributes to Andersen's legacy in Copenhagen, including a second statue along the street named after him (H.C. Andersen's Boulevard), and a sculpture of the Little Mermaid at Langelinje Pier.

Where does the story, The Ugly Duckling, come from?

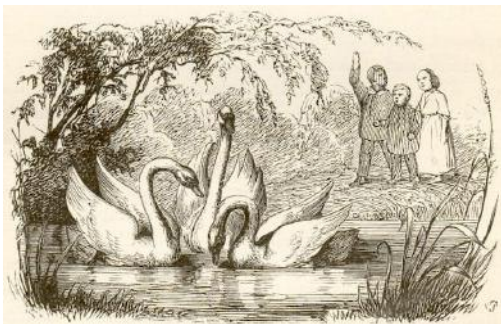
People who study Hans Christian Andersen's work believe he wrote The Ugly Duckling based on his own life and his own feelings of loneliness. As a boy, he was teased for his appearance and his high-pitched voice. Themes of loneliness, and finding the place you belong run through Andersen's work. It was only later in his life that Andersen would become a "swan" --an author known and loved all over the world.



*Book Cover Illustration
by Bernadette Watts*



*Hans Christian Andersen,
1869*



*Illustration by Vilhelm Pedersen,
Andersen's first illustrator*

How do artists turn a written story into a play?

The process of taking an existing story and turning it into something else, like a play, is called adaptation. Playwright, Emma Reeves adapted Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale *The Ugly Duckling* into a musical for Tutti Fruitti. Adaptation involves lots of reading, research to decide what stays the same and what changes. Read the authors' note from Emma Reeves below to learn more about the decisions she made in adapting *The Ugly Duckling*.

Adapting the Ugly Duckling by Emma Reeves

When [the director] Wendy first suggested "The Ugly Duckling" to me, my first thought was, that sounds like fun! Familiar with the song version made famous by Danny Kaye, I remembered *The Ugly Duckling* as a comic, bubbly, and ultimately uplifting piece about identity and finding your own place in life. I thought it would be a marked contrast to my previous work for Tutti Fruitti, *The Snow Child*, which was based on a Russian folk tale with a distinctly melancholy edge.



Emma Reeves

But when I came to read Hans Christian Andersen's original story, I was struck by the potential darkness lurking in the material. Could anything be sadder, especially for a child, than to be rejected by your mother, brothers and sisters? And will the Ugly Duckling really be better off living as a swan? After all, at the end of the story, he's only just met them! When it comes to building relationships with people you love and who love you, is biological heritage really the only important thing?

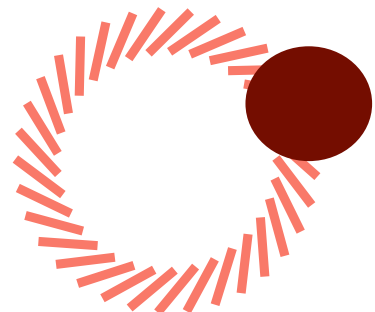
The longing to find someone like-minded was reflected in Andersen's own desire to be accepted by the literary establishment—but in the end, although he did achieve the respect he craved, it didn't really make him happy. Discovering that you're really a swan isn't really the end of a story, but the beginning of a new one.

We talked about these ideas, and the themes of fitting in, bullying, and self-discovery in a research and development session with Wendy and the team. We also had a great deal of fun trying out elements of design, movement, and puppetry and attempting to channel our own inner ducklings and/or swans.

Perhaps as a result of my early exposure to the Danny Kaye song, I was keen to have a strong musical element in the show, including both funny and moving songs and dances.

What emerged from our research and experimentation was a desire to balance the plaintive side of Ugly's search for identity with as much humour and playfulness as possible. As Ugly struggles to find his place in the world, a swan mis-categorized as a duckling, he looks for answers everywhere—he even attempts to follow the well-meaning advice of dogs and cats.

Ultimately, however hard we search for an identity outside ourselves, true happiness can only be achieved by coming to peace with our inner selves. The emotional power of Andersen's story is undeniable and timeless. Our aim is to explore in as playful, entertaining and imaginative a way as possible.



[Watch Danny Kaye as Hans Christian Andersen sing *The Ugly Duckling* \[1952\]:](#)

PRE-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Here are some ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes of *Ugly Duckling*.

Character Trait Statues

What is the difference between a character trait and emotions? A **character trait** is the way a person or character in the story acts. It is part of their personality and comes from inside them. We learn what traits a character has by what they say and do. The character's **emotions** are usually temporary feelings that may be a result of an outside force, like an experiment failing, or not knowing the right answer to a problem. We learn about a character's emotions by what they say and do in response to what is happening to them.

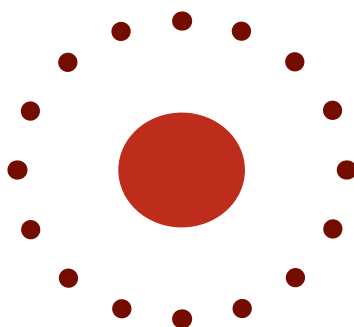
Materials:

- Open Space
- OPTIONAL [Character Trait List](#)

Prodecure:

1. Invite students to think of character traits that they possess. You can brainstorm different ones together or use a list like the one provided.
2. Have each student choose two of their character traits. Invite them to stand in their own space and create a statue (a frozen pose) that represents that character trait.
3. Have everyone in the class observe the other statues and describe how they see the character trait represented.
4. Take photos of each student's pose and then display them in the classroom under their name. Create space for students to share with their classmates when they see them adding their unique character traits to the classroom community.

[Click here for more detailed instructions on Statues.](#)



Parts of a Play

Discuss the parts and people of a theatrical production before attending *Ugly Duckling*.

Materials:

- Parts of a Play Handout on page 15

Prodecure:

1. Use the Parts of a Play handout to learn about Merrill Auditorium and the many different people who work together to create a play – from the script to the costume design.
2. Challenge students to name as many parts of the theater when they arrive at Merrill Auditorium. Invite them to look out for the creativity and artistry of the designers onstage.



Narrative Pantomime

Practice telling a story using only your body. Narrative Pantomime is an activity that you guide students through together, inviting them to act out the physical and emotional journey of a character in a story (silently) using their body in their own space.

Materials:

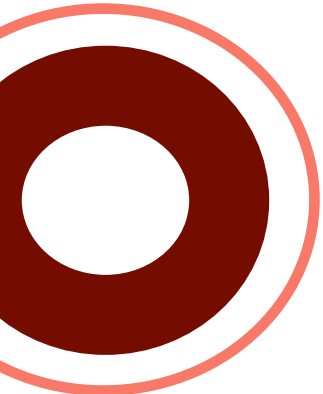
- Open space

Prodecure:

1. Choose any story – ideally one with a clear main character that includes physical action (e.g. Caps for Sale, When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry, etc.)
2. Retell the story in your own words (mostly to shorten it), pulling out the sensory details and action. As you tell the story, invite the students to mirror the emotions and actions through their own body.
3. When you finish, reflect on the experience asking students what did your character do? What did your character feel? How did you show the emotions or actions in your body?



For more detailed instructions on Narrative Pantomime check out: <https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/narrative-pantomime>. Check out these example narrative pantomime <http://www.childdrama.com/narrative-pantomime.html>.



POST-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

1. What is the story about?
2. Who are the main characters?
3. What problems do the characters encounter?
4. How do they create solutions to the obstacles they face?
5. What do you do when you feel lonely?
6. Where do you feel most at home and comfortable? What does the place look, sound, and smell like? Who are the people you enjoy being with when you're there?



Production photos by Brian Slater

Describing What You Saw

Build on the vocabulary you created together in Parts of a Play (Page 15) to reflect on the performance.

Materials:

- Pencil, crayons, or markers
- Paper

Procedure:

1. Invite students to draw or write about what elements of theater they observed in the performance. Ask each student to describe two or more elements using theatrical vocabulary (set, actor, costume, stage, etc.).
2. Ask students to compare their observations with a partner and combine them for a more complete description of the performance.



5 Things I Like About Myself Self-Portrait

Create self-portraits with your class that demonstrate what makes each student unique. This activity uses brainstorming and visual art to offer students an opportunity for embodied self-reflection. Consider providing students [THIS LIST](#) of character traits as a brainstorming tool. This exercise can be linked with Character Trait Statues.

Materials:

- 5 Things I like About Myself worksheet on page 18
- OPTIONAL [Character trait list](#)
- Art supplies like crayons, markers, paper, construction paper, scissors, and glue

Procedure:

Invite students to create a self-portrait that shows how unique they are.

1. Use the “5 Things I Like About Myself” worksheet on page xx to get students started brainstorming.
2. As students brainstorm what they like about themselves, remind them to consider things beyond physical traits. What skills and behaviors are they proud of?
3. Once students have their list, gather art supplies and invite students to create a self-portrait that shows those 5 traits.



Take an Anti-Bullying Pledge

Use the play the Ugly Duckling to begin a conversation about bullying. Using the shared experience of watching Ugly Duckling provides an opportunity for students to discuss evidence of bullying in a fictional setting and apply it to their own classroom.

Materials:

- A space for brainstorming (like a white board)
- A large sheet of paper
- Markers or Crayons.

Procedure:

1. Ask the students to identify evidence of bullying in Ugly Duckling. What does bullying look like? How does it make the characters feel? Use these observations to create a definition of bullying.
2. Brainstorm ways everyone can take action to prevent bullying. Use your definition as a starting point.
3. Ask students to share what promises they can make to ensure the classroom is a welcoming space for everyone. Write statements up somewhere students to draw a picture of themselves.
4. Write your anti-bullying promises around the edge of a big sheet of paper, leaving the center open. Once all the promises are on the paper, invite students to work together to create a picture of the class.
5. Display the anti-bullying pledge somewhere in the classroom to remind students of the promises they made.



Teachers, want more arts-based and curriculum driven activities?

Ovation offers in-school workshops! Options include pre-show and post-show workshops to deepen and extend the experience of *The Ugly Duckling* for students, make-your-own-play workshops, and more. Contact us at offstage@ovations.org to learn more.

RESOURCES

- More information on Hans Christian Andersen and his stories: <https://americanliterature.com/author/hans-christian-andersen>
- A list of Adaptations of The Ugly Duckling: https://openlibrary.org/works/OL15155002W/The_Ugly_Duckling?edition=key%3A/books/OL6180254M
- A complete text of The Ugly Duckling as told by Hans Christian Andersen: <https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/68/fairy-tales-and-other-traditional-stories/5107/the-ugly-duckling/>
- Learn more about Tutti Frutti's work: tutti-frutti.org.uk



Production photos by Brian Slater



Portland Ovation, founded in 1931, produces dynamic performing arts events including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway. We believe that cultural enrichment should be high quality and accessible to all. Ovation collaborates with other nonprofit organizations, education systems, and the business sector to promote lifelong learning while celebrating the power and virtuosity of the performing arts. We bring the exhilaration of the performing arts into our communities with free events as part of Ovation Offstage, connecting artists and audiences. Join us at unexpected “art happenings,” classroom workshops, masterclasses, community discussions, and pre-performance lectures to explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

Land Acknowledgment

Portland Ovation's programs are presented on Wabanaki land, home of the Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki and Penobscot Nations, their elders past and present, and future generations.

We encourage you to learn more and take action in support of Maine's Indigenous communities through the following organizations

[Abbe Museum](#)

Maine's premier museum dedicated to indigenous history and culture. Their mission is to inspire new learning about the Wabanaki Nations with every visit.

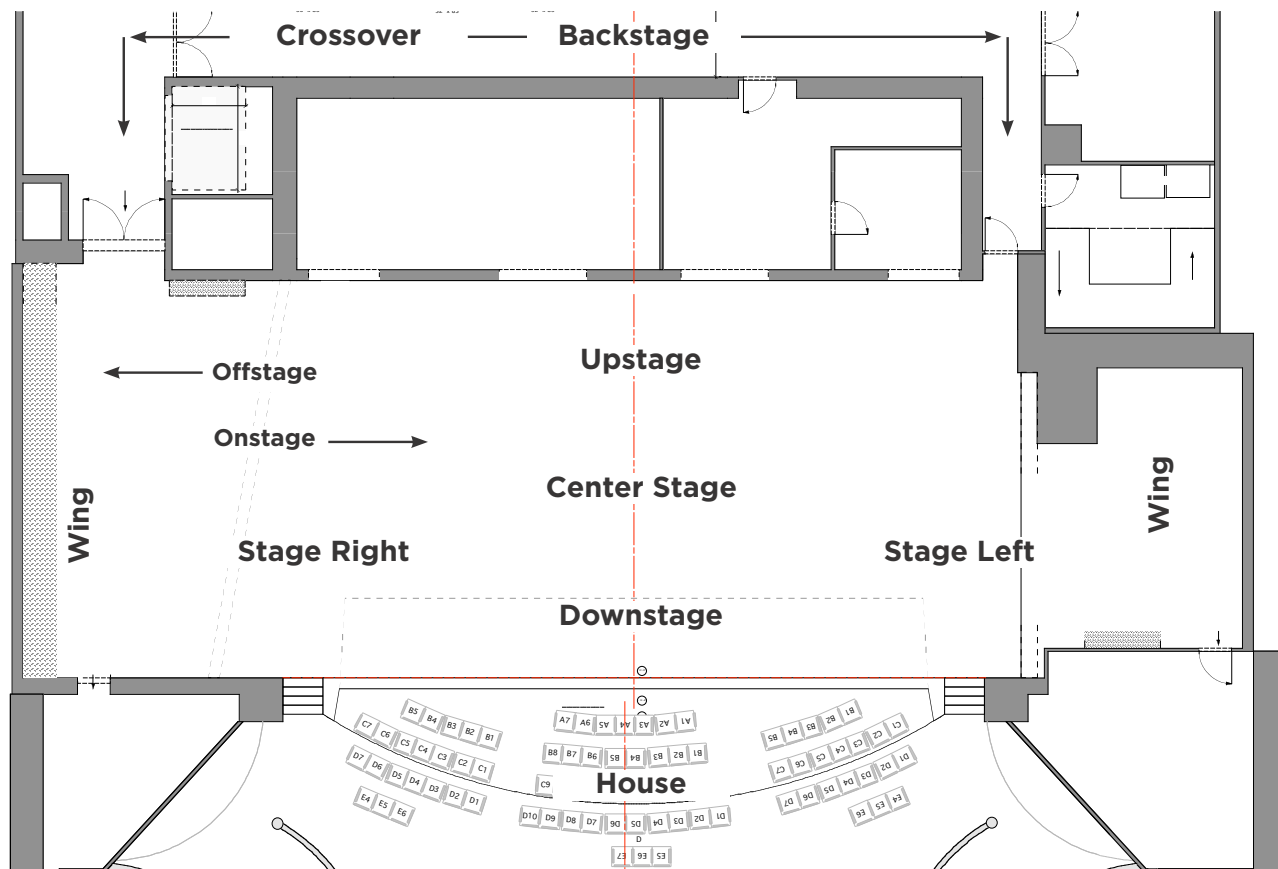
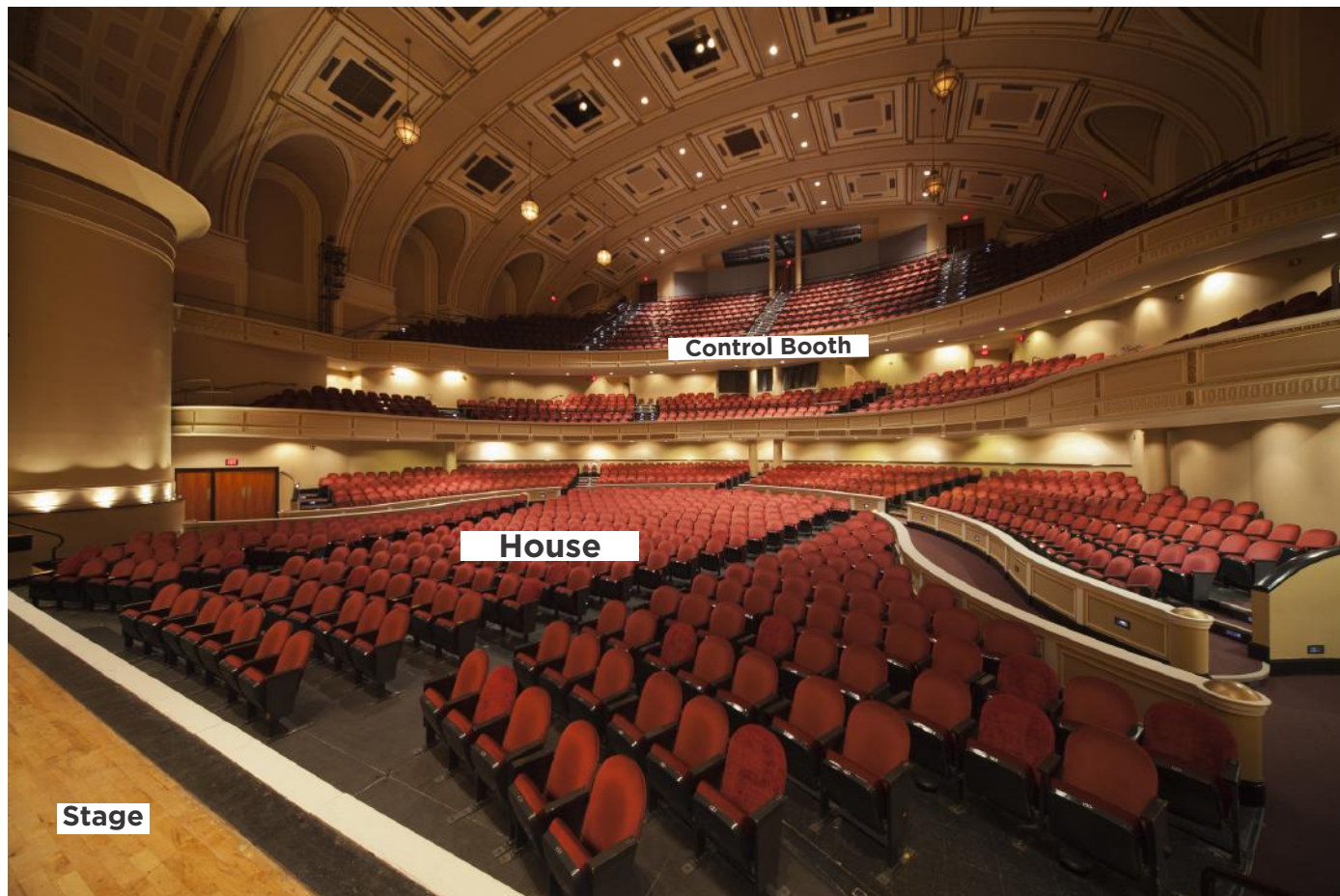
[Maine-Wabanaki Reach](#)

A Native-led non-profit that supports the self-determination of Wabanaki people through education, truth-telling, restorative justice, and restorative practices in Wabanaki and Maine communities.

Created and written by Dr. Liz Schildkret & Sarah Coleman

Designed by Katie Day

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Alyssa Caggiano

Actor

The person who takes on the role of a character in the performance.



David Levene for The Guardian

Audience

A group of people who watch the performance



Rachel Neville

Choreographer

The person who creates the dance and movement for the performers.



Bryce Richter

Costume Designer

The person who creates the clothes for the performance.



Kelly Maxwell

Director

The person who tells the actors in the play or performance where to move and what emotion to show when they speak.



American Theatre

Dramaturg

The person who works with the playwright and director to help make sure the play makes sense and is accurate.



Youth Academy of Dramatic Arts

Lighting Designer

The person who creates what kind of light will be onstage during the performance.



Young Playwright's Theater

Playwright

The person who writes the script for the performance.



Point Park University

Set Designer

The person who creates what the stage will look like including what walls and furniture will be onstage.



Sound Designer

The person who creates the sound and music that is played during the performance.



James Ogden II

Stage Manager

The person who makes sure that all the actors are in the right places and that the lights and sound cues are played at the right moment.

5 THINGS I LIKE ABOUT MYSELF

In our story the Ugly Duckling finds it hard to fit in but after he gets to know himself better, he realises how special he really is! Why don't you have a go?

Below write 5 things that you like about yourself.



.....



.....



.....



.....



.....

We want to know what *you* thought about the performance. You can write your answers below or draw a picture on the back of this page. Thank you!

PERFORMANCE: *Ugly Duckling*

SCHOOL NAME: _____ **TEACHER NAME:** _____ **GRADE:** _____

YOUR NAME: _____ May we use your name when we share your comments?
 Yes___ No___

What did you like about *Ugly Duckling*? Why did you like that part?

What was something that you learned during the performance?

What would you like to tell other kids about *Ugly Duckling*?

What types of performance would you like Portland Ovation to offer in the future? (Feel free to share what type of art you are interested in (theater, dance, music), what cultures you might like to see, what topics the art might connect with, or specific artists.)

We want to know what *you* thought about the performance.

Draw a picture of a part of *Ugly Duckling* that you liked. Thank you!



YOUR NAME: _____ SCHOOL: _____ TEACHER: _____ GRADE: _____

Please scan and email to offstage@portlandovations.org or mail to Portland Ovations 120 Exchange St Portland, ME 04101

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey after you attend the performance. You can also fill it out [online here](#). Your response provides valuable insight on the impact, accessibility, and relevancy of the School-Time Performance Series and will allow us to improve and strengthen the program. Thank you.

PERFORMANCE: *Ugly Duckling* – April 7, 2023

TEACHER NAME: _____ **GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS:** _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____ **CITY/TOWN:** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

1. From your perspective as a teacher, how would you rate *Ugly Duckling*?

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

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

4. What was your primary reason for choosing to bring your students to *Ugly Duckling*?

- ☐ I wanted my students to experience the performing arts.
- ☐ The performance topic fit with my curriculum goals.
- ☐ The date and time of the performance fit our schedule.
- ☐ The ticket price is affordable.
- ☐ Other (please specify):

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

6. Did you use the Educators Guide provided by Portland Ovation before or after attending the performance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Why or why not?

8. What improvements could we make to the Educators Guide to serve you and your classroom better?

9. How would you rate the following components of attending the School-Time Performance?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Reserving & paying for tickets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication about the day of the performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrival at the venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Departure from the venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. What types of performances would you like to bring your students to in the future? (Feel free to share art forms, topics/themes, specific artists, etc.)?

11. A number of generous individuals and organizations make it possible for Portland Ovation to offer these School-Time Performance tickets at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you'd like them to know in terms of your experiences or its impact on your students?