

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Portland Ovarations' 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.

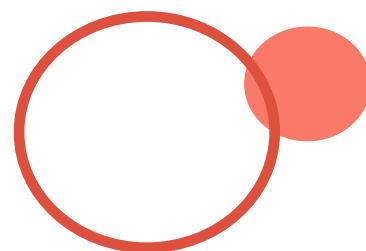
We encourage you to learn more and take action in support of Maine's Indigenous communities through the following organizations

### Abbe Museum

Maine's premiere 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.



## ABOUT PORTLAND OVATIONS

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. Ovarations 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 Ovarations 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.

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## RESOURCES

Plan your visit to Merrill Auditorium  
<https://www.porttix.com/plan-your-visit/merrill-auditorium/>

Learn more about accessibility at Portland Ovarations  
<https://portlandovations.org/about/accessibility/>

Get the latest health and safety information for Portland Ovarations productions  
<https://portlandovations.org/about/health-safety/>



# Audience Guide

## *It's Okay to Be Different:* Stories by Todd Parr

Welcome to Portland Ovarations! I'm so excited to welcome you to Merrill Auditorium for *It's Okay to Be Different: Stories* by Todd Parr presented by the incredible Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia. With beautiful black light puppets based on Todd Parr's illustrations and a delightful original score, this magical production brings three classic books by Todd Parr to life. Join Mermaid Theatre in celebrating the many things that may you unique!

Audience members like you 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. The cast of *It's Okay to Be Different* highly encourage clapping and laughing at the parts of the play that you enjoy.

Thank you so much for joining Portland Ovarations to experience live theater today. I hope you have a wonderful time. After the show, don't forget to tell us about your experience! Find us on social media @portlandovations, or email us at [offstage@portlandovations.org](mailto:offstage@portlandovations.org). I can't wait to hear from you.

Enjoy the show!

Liz Schildkret  
Director, School and Family Programming



## QUESTIONS FOR THE JOURNEY HOME

After you watch the performance, consider these questions.

- Describe a memorable moment from the performance, what parts of the performance are sticking with you?
- What were the stories about?
- What was it like to watch a book come to life on stage? What surprised you?
- *It's Okay to Be Different* celebrates all the things that make us unique. What are some ways we are different that you heard in the show?
- What are some things that make you unique?
- How might you help make your community more welcoming for everyone?

# ACTIVITIES

## BLACK LIGHT THEATRE

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia performs in a style called Black Light Theater, or Black Light Puppetry. Originating from Asia, and popularized in the west by theaters in Prague. Black Light Theater uses glowing fabrics, props, and puppets manipulated by actors dressed in black against a black background so that they become nearly invisible.

## FUN WITH BLACK LIGHT

“Black light” is a bulb designed to emit ultra-violet light. It’s called a black light because if you look at it, it won’t seem very bright, and if you put it in a dark room (or a dark theater) it won’t seem to brighten the room very much. That’s because our eyes cannot detect ultra-violet light. The bulb does emit a lot of light, however, and we’re able to see that light in the way it interacts with other things. Some materials have the special property that they absorb ultra-violet light and then re-emit that light in colors that our eyes can see. This is called “fluorescence.” The puppets Mermaid Theatre uses in It’s Okay to Be Different are painted with special paints that fluoresce when ultra-violet light shines on them. That makes them appear to glow in the dark. Experiment with black light at home with these activities!

## CREATE A BLACK LIGHT

If you don’t have a black light bulb or flashlight at home, you can create your own with a smartphone and a few office supplies.

While this is a “mock” black light, not a proper UV light, it can achieve many of the same effects.

### Materials

- Smartphone with flashlight function
  - Tape
- Blue and purple sharpie
- White paper
- Highlighters

### How-to:

1. Color 2 pieces of tape large enough to cover the flashlight on your phone blue using the blue sharpie pen.
2. Color 2 pieces of tape purple using the purple sharpie pen.
3. Layer your tape alternating blue and purple and place it over the flashlight on your smart phone and turn on the flashlight. You’ve created a mock black light!
4. Test your black light by writing or drawing in highlighter on plain white paper. Yellow, orange, and pink highlighters tend to work best.
5. Go into a very dark room and shine your smartphone black light on the paper you’ve designed. They should glow brightly.
6. If you’re not satisfied with your black light after testing, try applying more layers of tape to create a more opaque lens covering and test again.

## BLACK LIGHT BUBBLES

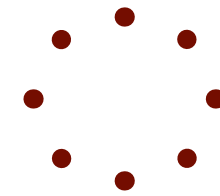
You may have made “indestructible” bubbles at home before. Adding washable glow paint produces glow in the dark bubbles. While these bubbles will glow in the dark on their own, shining your homemade black light on them will enhance the effect.

### Materials

- 3 cups water
- 1 cup liquid dishwashing detergent (Joy is the classic choice)
- ½ cup white corn syrup
- Up to 1 teaspoon washable glow paint
- Plastic container
- Bubble wand (or make your own with a wire coat hanger)
  - Black light

### How-to:

1. Mix water, detergent, and corn syrup in a wide plastic container
2. Add a few drops of glow paint (a small amount is all you need. Start with a few drops and add more as needed, up to about a teaspoon). Test your bubble solution under black light in a dark place to see how much glow it produces.
3. Wait until dark to begin blowing bubbles. As you make bubbles, shine the blacklight on them to make them really glow brightly.



## GLOW-IN-THE-DARK SLIME

Just like with bubbles, it just takes a little glow paint to transform normal slime into glow-in-the-dark slime.

### Materials

- 4-6oz bottle of white Elmer’s Glue
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 ½ tablespoon buffered or multipurpose contact lens solution
- Up to ½ teaspoon of washable glow paint
- 2 tbs- ½ cup warm water (optional)
  - Black light

### How-to:

1. Pour the glue into a bowl (the whole bottle). In a separate bowl or measuring cup, add the baking soda, contact lens solution, and a small amount of glow paint.
2. Pour the baking soda solution into the glue and mix with a spoon or your hands. The slime will be very sticky at first but will get less sticky as you mix.
3. Adjust the texture of your slime by adding a pinch of baking soda for firmer slime or a couple drops of water for oozier slime
4. Take your slime to a dark room and shine a black light on it. Watch it glow!

*Tip: Not sure what to do with the leftover glow paint? Use it to create a glowing Halloween display! Cover a carved pumpkin in paint to create a ghoulish jack-o-lantern, or paint it onto paper and cut out shapes to create glowing art that can be hung on walls and in windows. If you’re not decorating for Halloween, use glow paint and construction paper to create your own glow-in-the-dark constellations.*