

WHO WE ARE

Portland Ovarations is a nonprofit cultural organization based in Southern Maine dedicated to gathering communities to share in the power of live performance. Ovarations connects artists and audiences both onstage and off — making the arts an integral part of community life.

Our unique array of live performances for the public and school audiences are curated to delight, inspire and educate. Venues used throughout greater Portland include historic and modern theaters, clubs, galleries, and classrooms — chosen carefully to ensure the best possible experience for both audiences and artists.

Our Vision

To inspire a curious and imaginative community where the experience of the performing arts is a vital part of every day life.

Our Mission

Portland Ovarations propels the artistic, social, educational and economic wellbeing of communities through the power of the performing arts.

RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT

At Ovarations, we recognize that promoting racial equity and anti-racism in the arts and culture sector is essential to showcasing the brilliance and artistry of diverse and multicultural communities from around the globe. Our commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and access extends to all aspects of our operations, including governance, programming and community engagement. We aim to include all voices, stories and perspectives in our programs and inspire similar efforts in the Portland, Maine area, resulting in a more just and equitable society where everyone's contributions are valued.

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.

Created and written by Dr. Liz Schildkret
Designed by Katie Day
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PLAN YOUR NEXT VISIT

Full Calendar of Portland Ovarations Events
portlandovations.org/calendar/

Plan your visit to Merrill Auditorium
porttix.com/plan-your-visit/merrill-auditorium/

Learn more about accessibility at Portland Ovarations
portlandovations.org/about/accessibility/



Audience Guide

A Year with Frog and Toad

Welcome to Portland Ovarations! I'm so excited to welcome you to Merrill Auditorium for *A Year with Frog and Toad* presented by Wishing Star Productions. This beautiful performance brings to life two beloved characters with such care and joy. I can't wait to experience it with you!

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 *A Year with Frog and Toad* highly encourage clapping along at parts of the performance 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. I can't wait to hear from you.

Enjoy the show!

Liz



Liz Schildkret
Director, School and Family Programs



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

A Year with Frog and Toad follows two fantastic friends—cheerful, popular Frog and serious, slightly grumpy Toad—through four seasons. Waking from hibernation in the spring, Frog and Toad plant gardens, swim, rake leaves, go sledding, and learn life lessons along the way. The two best friends celebrate their differences that make them unique and special.

A joyful musical, *A Year with Frog and Toad* is based on four books by well-loved author and illustrator, Arnold Lobel. Each of the songs and scenes in the play corresponds to a story from Lobel's books. Below are the Frog and Toad stories you'll see and hear in the musical.

Frog and Toad are Friends

- Spring
- A Swim
- The Letter

Frog and Toad Together

- The Garden
- Cookies

Frog and Toad All Year

- Down the Hill
- The Surprise
- Christmas Eve

Days with Frog and Toad

- The Kite
- Shivers**
- Alone

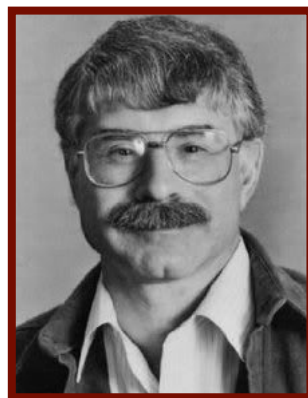
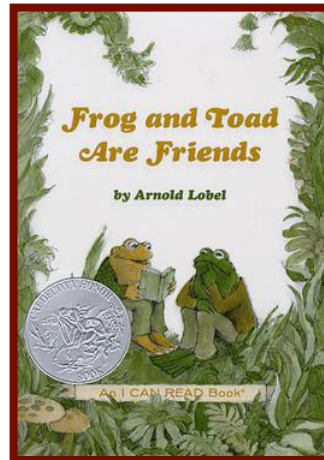
**Shivers features a character called Large and Terrible Frog, who is mean and awful. In the original version of the story this song is based on, the character is called the Old Dark Frog. This original name perpetuates a harmful stereotype where “dark” is used to mean “bad” or “scary.” The play uses different language to avoid continuing this stereotype.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ARNOLD LOBEL

Arnold Lobel (1933–1987) declared he “was born a children’s book illustrator and writer.” He illustrated nearly 100 children’s books, many—like his Frog and Toad series—celebrating love, friendship, and individuality. Lobel was a young boy when he decided he wanted to be a writer and an illustrator. Born in Los Angeles, California, and raised in Schenectady, New York, Lobel began writing and illustrating children’s books in 1962. *Frog and Toad are Friends* was published in 1970 and many others followed.

The Frog and Toad series includes four books: *Frog and Toad are Friends*, *Frog and Toad Together*, *Frog and Toad All Year*, and *Days with Frog and Toad*. Lobel wrote the books based on stories he told his children, Adrienne and Adam. Each book contains five stories highlighting the friendship between Frog and Toad, their experiences caring for and sharing with one another while living close to nature’s wonders and challenges. Every story is simple, often humorous, yet poignantly explores a deeper lesson. Lobel used simple text, stripped of adjectives and adverbs, to reveal the personalities and quirks of the amphibian friends. Although Arnold Lobel never publicly made the connection himself, Adrienne Lobel has said that the friendship between Frog and Toad was a part of Lobel’s own coming out to his family.

Arnold Lobel is one of few children’s book authors to receive both the Caldecott (*Fables*, *Frog and Toad are Friends*, and *Hildilid’s Night*) and the Newbery Honor Award (*Frog and Toad Together*). In addition to his own impressive body of work as both author and illustrator, Lobel provided illustrations for books penned by numerous other children’s book authors, including Jack Prelutsky.



BOOK LIST

CURATED BY OURSHELVES



If you love the Frog and Toad stories, check out these books that embrace diversity and follow the themes explored in the original stories, compiled by our partners, OurShelves. LGBTQ+ parent-founded and Maine-based, OurShelves is a diverse children’s book box service offering expert-curated, diverse kids’ books to families, schools, and others working to ensure that their book collections cultivate and affirm their values of equity, inclusion, social justice, joy, and fun! Be sure to check out OurShelves’ display in the lobby—try your hand at a craft and browse their incredible selection of books for purchase.

Scan the QR code below to see the booklist and learn more about OurShelves!



ACTIVITIES

BRING A BOOK TO LIFE WITH NARRATIVE PANTOMIME

In Narrative Pantomime, participants imagine and silently act out, or pantomime, a character’s physical and emotional journey. It’s a fun way to bring a book to life. To try it yourself, choose one of the books on the OurShelves booklist or a favorite book you have at home. Ask a friend or family member to read the story aloud while you act out what you hear silently, as if it is happening to you. Try using all your senses to create your actions.

MAKE A HAPPINESS COLLAGE

In *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Frog takes some time to be alone and think of all the things that make him happy. What are some things that make you happy? They could be activities you love to do, places you love to visit, or people you love to spend time with. Using materials like magazines and newspapers, find pictures that represent things that make you happy. If you can’t find the perfect image, try drawing it yourself! Once you’ve collected your pictures, arrange them on a sturdy sheet of paper and glue them down to create your happiness collage. Don’t forget to share your collage with us on social media @portlandovations or by email at offstage@portlandovations.org. We love seeing your artwork!

QUESTIONS FOR THE JOURNEY HOME

After you watch the performance, consider these questions.

- What parts of the play are sticking with you? What did you find surprising about the play?
- How did Frog and Toad spend their year together? What are some activities you remember from each of the four seasons?
- What were some emotions Frog and Toad experienced during the play? How did they handle their emotions? do you do when you feel that way?
- Frog and Toad are best friends. What qualities do you think make a good friend?