

Sunday in the Park with George

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by James Lapine



SHAW
FESTIVAL
THEATRE
OF SEASON

CONNECTIONS Shaw Festival Study Guide

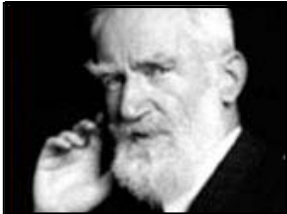
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WHAT MAKES SHAW SPECIAL



Festival Theatre



Court House Theatre



Royal George Theatre

THE SHAW STORY

MANDATE

The Shaw Festival is the only theatre in the world which exclusively focuses on plays by Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries, including plays written during or about the period of Shaw’s lifetime (1856 – 1950).

The Shaw Festival’s mandate also includes:

- Uncovered Gems – digging up undiscovered theatrical treasures, or plays which were considered major works when they were written but which have since been unjustly neglected
- American Classics – we continue to celebrate the best of American theatre
- Musicals – musical treats from the period of our mandate are rediscovered and returned to the stage
- Canadian Work – to allow us to hear and promote our own stories, our own points of view about the mandate period.

MEET THE COMPANY – OUR ENSEMBLE

- *Our Actors:* All Shaw performers contribute to the sense of ensemble, much like the players in an orchestra. Often, smaller parts are played by actors who are leading performers in their own right, but in our “orchestra,” they support the central action helping to create a density of experiences that are both subtle and informative.
- *Our Designers:* Every production that graces the Shaw Festival stages is built “from scratch,” from an original design. Professional designers lead teams who collaborate with each production’s director to create set, costumes, and lighting designs that complement the play’s text.
- *Our Music:* Music played an important role in Bernard Shaw’s life – in fact, he wrote music criticism for several years under the pseudonym Corno di Bassetto. Just as the reach of musical theatre is vast and manifold, so is The Shaw’s approach - presenting Brecht and Weill, Rodgers and Hart, and everything in between.
- *Our Play Development:* The Shaw’s play development programme goals include: 1) to develop new adaptations and translations that will tell classic stories in a contemporary way; 2) to produce new plays alongside those of Shaw, Chekhov, and Coward.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

As Artistic Director Jackie Maxwell says, “We all know the man can talk, but Bernard Shaw is also one of the most prescient, provocative, sparkingly articulate writers in the English language. His words and ideas, expressed in plays that are well-known, such as this season’s *The Devil’s Disciple*, or in plays that are not so familiar but no less interesting, have extraordinary relevance today. It is a joy to draw attention to those ideas and bring them to life on our stages.”

OUR THEATRES

The Shaw Festival presents plays in three distinctive theatres. The Festival Theatre with 869 seats is The Shaw’s flagship theatre; the historic Court House where The Shaw first began performing seats 327; and the Royal George Theatre, modeled after an Edwardian opera house, holds 328.

THE SHAW’S COAT OF ARMS

In 1987, on the occasion of our 25th Anniversary, the Shaw Festival became only the second theatre company in the world to be granted a Coat of Arms by the College of Heralds. A large painted sculpture of our Coat of Arms adorns the lobby of the Festival Theatre.



CONNECTIONS Study Guide

A practical, hands-on resource for the classroom which contains background information for the play, suggested themes for discussion, and Ontario curriculum-based activities. Designed by educators and theatre professionals, the activities and themes for discussion are organized in modules that can be used independently or interdependently according to the class level and time availability.

Sunday in the Park with George is recommended for students in grade 7 and higher.

This guide was written and compiled by Suzanne Merriam, Sarah Sheridan and Amanda Tripp. Additional materials were provided by: Joanna Falck, Peter Vietgen, Paul Sportelli, Judith Bowden, and Alisa Palmer

Cover: Blair Williams and Nicola Correia-Damude
Photo by Shin Sugino

Previews April 1
Opens May 22

THE PLAYERS

George/George
Dot/Marie
Old Lady/Blair Daniels
Nurse/Harriet Pawling
Jules/Bob Greenberg
Yvonne/Naomi Eisen
Boatman/Billy Webster
Celeste #1/Elaine
Celeste #2/Waitress
Bather/Louise

Franz/Dennis
Frieda/Betty
Bather/Soldier/Alex
Mr/Charles Redmond
Mrs
Louis/Lee Randolph
Bather/Woman/Photographer
Bather/Man/Museum Asst
Horn player

STEVEN SUTCLIFFE
JULIE MARTELL
SHARRY FLETT
GABRIELLE JONES
JAY TURVEY
PATTY JAMIESON
MARK UHRE
ROBIN EVAN WILLIS
SACCHA DENNIS
CELESTE BRILLON
ALIX BOYD
KYLE BLAIR
MELANIE PHILLIPSON
KAWA ADA
NEIL BARCLAY
MELANIE JANZEN
ANTHONY MALARKY
JACQUELINE THAIR
KELLY WONG
CHRISTINE PASSMORE

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Director ALISA PALMER
Musical Director PAUL SPORTELLI
Choreographer BILL COLEMAN
Designer JUDITH BOWDEN
Lighting Designer ALAN BRODIE

THE STORY

A compelling story about inspiration - in art and in life. Spend Sundays in the park with the French impressionist painter Georges Seurat as he creates his masterpiece, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte". A hundred years later, his great-grandson, another artist, learns from the ghosts of the past.

“Art
isn't
easy”

George - *Sunday in
the Park with
George*

The Story

Sunday in the Park with George

More than a hundred years ago, artist Georges Seurat challenged his audience to experience the art of painting from a new perspective. When the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine opened in 1984, it too presented a challenging concept for theatre audiences.

Sunday in the Park with George is a musical, entirely fictitious, using Seurat's life as its inspiration. The show examines the creation of a single painting, “A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte”. The first act begins with a blank canvas, in an island park on the Seine in 1884. We follow the troubled relationship between George and his mistress Dot, watching it unravel as George explores a new art form, pointillism. The crowd of bourgeois 19th century Parisians in the park become the subjects for Seurat's painting. At the end of the act we see the finished painting.

Act II is an exploration of how Seurat's painting has impacted future generations and how art, like love, can reverberate through time. Set in 1984, New York, Seurat's great-grandson is a modern day conceptual artist, facing creative bankruptcy. Although he is a consummate salesman of his own work, the process of making art has lost its meaning for him.



*Seurat's great-grandson, George,
attempting to finance his art, while losing himself
as an artist.*

His faltering artistic vision and confidence are restored after a visit to La Grande Jatte where the impressionistic setting that inspired his great-grandfather's work has been replaced by cubist architecture. George, the contemporary artist, is encouraged by the spirit of his great-grandmother Dot to stop worrying about what others think and “just keep moving on.” By connecting with his past, he is able to find a direction for his future.

Throughout the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* the characters struggle with the nature of the creative process, the limitations placed on interpersonal relationships by artistic commitments, and the danger of artists responding to a fad rather than respecting their own impulses.

Description from The MTI Study Guide for *Sunday in the Park with George*.

Who's Who Sunday in the Park with George

Old Lady,
George's mother

Nurse,
cares for the old lady

Franz,
servant to Jules & Yvonne, and is interested in Nurse

Frieda,
cook for Jules & Yvonne, wife to Franz & has an affair with Jules

A Soldier & his companion

Yvonne,
Jules's wife

Louis, a baker

Mr & Mrs, an American couple

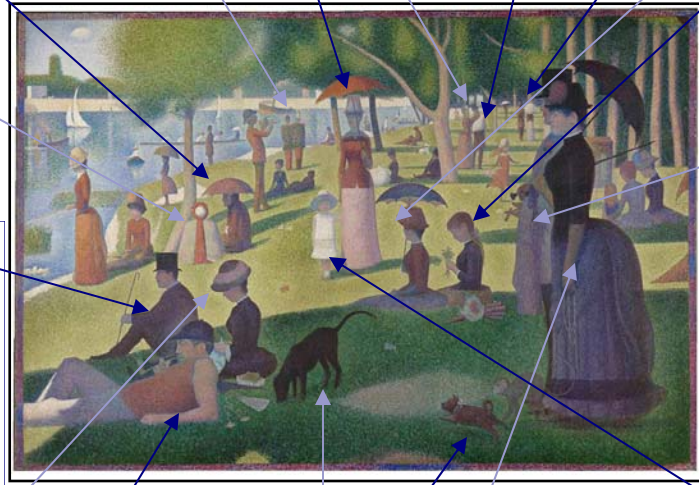
Celeste #1,
a shop girl

Marie, Dot & George's baby

Celeste #2,
another shop girl

Jules, a fellow artist, married to Yvonne

Louise,
young daughter of Jules & Yvonne



Boatman,
Spot's owner

Spot,
a dog

Fifi, a pug

Dot, George's mistress & eventual mother of his child

Who is missing from the painting?

George Seurat, the artist.

"Look, I made a hat...Where there never was a hat..."



ACT 1

ACT 2



Marie, George's grandmother (also George Seurat & Dot's daughter)

Dennis,
George's technician



Bob Greenberg,
museum director



Waitress



Blair Daniels
art critic



Harriet Pawling
patron of the arts



Alex, artist



Billy Webster,
Harriet's friend



Betty
an artist



Elaine,
George's former wife



Lee Randolph,
museum's publicist



Charles Redmond,
visiting curator



George, an artist, the great-grandson of George Seurat

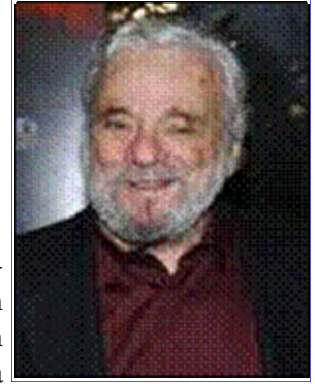


Stephen Sondheim - Composer and Lyricist

Stephen Joshua Sondheim - born 1930

"I care a lot about art and the artist ... The major thing I wanted to do in the show was to enable anyone who is not an artist to understand what hard work art is."

-Stephen Sondheim



The name of composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim has become synonymous with experimentation and excellence in the field of musical theatre. Born in New York City, he moved to rural Pennsylvania with his mother when his parents separated, where their neighbours included the famous lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II. Sondheim began piano lessons at age seven, wrote original musicals in high school and college, and after graduation wrote several episodes of the television series *Topper*.

After a couple of attempts at Broadway musicals, Sondheim learned, through a casual conversation, that a budding musical called *East Side Story* needed a lyricist. He soon found himself working with two of the most talented artists in music theatre, director-choreographer, Jerome Robbins, and one of the world's most important musician/composers, Leonard Bernstein.

That 1957 show was ultimately called *West Side Story* but before Sondheim could capitalize on it and pursue his composing ambitions, Hammerstein urged him to write for a star. The show was *Gypsy*, the star was Ethel Merman.

When given the chance to write his own music and lyrics in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, he found that although the show was a hit,



Sondheim & James Lapine

his songs were not. *Forum* won a Tony Award, but the score wasn't even nominated.

Another eight years would pass before, at the age of forty, he'd be given any recognition as a composer for *Company*. Even then, he was advised to concentrate on writing lyrics because people couldn't "hum his tunes."

In the years that followed, Stephen Sondheim established himself as Broadway's most ambitious and principled practitioner. Every one of his shows was of serious artistic intent and uncompromising integrity. Each was unique, attempting the dangerous or, in his words, the "unexpected". From childhood into his seventies, he has brought the musical stage to its most mature development, without ever losing his young sense of its exhilaration.

James Lapine - Book



James Lapine - Born 1949

This Ohio native is known for both his successes as a writer and as a director. He began his career as a photographer and graphic designer and taught graphic design at the Yale School of Drama. While there, he adapted and staged Gertrude Stein's play *Photograph*, performed Off-Broadway in 1977.

He began working with Stephen Sondheim in 1983 with their first collaboration on *Sunday in the Park with George*. The duo turned then from inspiration in art to inspiration in fairy tales to write *Into the Woods* (1987), which was directed by Lapine. This production earned Lapine and Sondheim the Best Book and Best Score Tony Awards.

He collaborated with William Finn and directed *Falsettos*, which won the Tony Award for Best Book in 1992. The second part of *Falsettos*, *Falsettoland* won the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical.



Stephen Sondheim & James Lapine

What Kind of Book?!

Some Important Definitions of Musical Theatre Terminology:

Book: The book refers to the dialogue (the unsung part) of the musical.

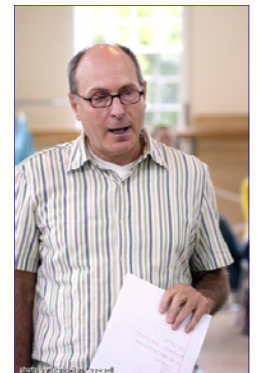
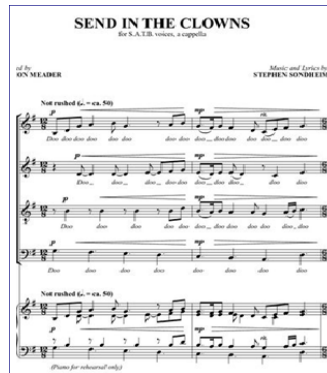
Composer: The person who writes the music is called the composer.

Libretto: The combination of dialogue & lyrics together, such as in opera.

Lyrics: A set of words that accompany a piece of music.

Lyricist: A person who writes the lyrics for songs.

Score: The written form of a musical composition, including music for all of the instruments and lyrics for the singers.



Knowing ourselves is perhaps the hardest work of art.

Alisa Palmer - Director

Director's Notes

Alisa Palmer - Director for *Sunday in the Park with George*

Sunday in the Park with George tells the story of two Georges, two artists, one hundred years apart. One George is based on the famous 19th-century impressionist painter Georges Seurat. The other George is a completely fictional character, the great-grandson of Seurat, a 20th-century installation artist and inventor. It's about the amazing things that can happen when we pause in our work - take a breath, a sideways glance - and life suddenly appears as a blank canvas, teeming with possibilities. It's also about the hard emotional work that goes into making ourselves available to these moments.



Sunday in The Park with George is a study in contrasts. Like the colours in Seurat's painting, the juxtapositions of different elements, characters and worlds creates a fuller and more vibrant picture of the whole. For this production, designer Judith Bowden and I were inspired by Seurat's working method - he was thorough and meticulous, experimenting with form and composition in black and white before creating his magnificent colour paintings. In the contemporary second act we looked to the pioneering work of Bill Viola, a prolific video artist whose exquisite explorations of light and shadow, stillness and movement have often been imitated by less soulful artists. Both artists in Sondheim's musical work incredibly hard - one at creating his work, the other at creating the conditions for his work. And both are missing something. Here the musical moves beyond being a specific story of artists to a more universal story; what does it mean to live well? How can we live and love fully? Both Georges work extremely hard and for both, work is a refuge; from loneliness, from the sense that something is missing. They use work to fill up the empty spaces and replace intimacy with intensity.

This musical was inspired by a painting that is a reverie of a day off. The people on La Grande Jatte are not working, and are vividly alive in their stillness. Perhaps Seurat longed for this ordered calm. Perhaps he intuited that life can be richer when we dare to pause. When George in the second act comes to the La Grande Jatte - to this park on a Sunday one hundred years later - he is at the peak of his professional career but at the nadir of his existence. He's looking for people and comfort but is met with emptiness. It is in these moments of despair that we crack open and become available to the extraordinary. George experiences the impossible: he is visited by ghosts of the past, spirits of creative impulse, by his ancestors and by timeless muses.

When we stop working, when we lay down our familiar tools of survival the impossible can happen. In this moment of creative inspiration we can meet our greatest source of power: ourselves. Knowing ourselves is perhaps the hardest work of art.

I am not hiding behind my canvas. I am living in it.

George-*Sunday in the Park with George*

Designer's Notes



Judith Bowden - Set Designer *Sunday in the Park with George*

In the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* the terms Design, Composition, Tension, Balance, Light, and Harmony are repeated throughout the production. Judith Bowden describes what these terms mean to her as a set and costume designer.

DESIGN – As a set and costume designer this term is really self-explanatory. In designing a set I try to create a visual world that supports, enhances, and reinforces the story or journey of the play or musical. I believe the set and costumes are an extension of the heart of the performance. In the set and costume designs for *Sunday in the Park with George*, I have tried to understand, to use, and to support all the elements that were important to Seurat, including design.

COMPOSITION – I am constantly aware of creating stage pictures that are always in motion – not a static picture. When I design, the composition is important. Being able to guide the focus – for example, where is the strongest position to put a door, a window, and how does that affect how a scene will be played out? How close or far apart will the actors be based on the placement of furniture? Costumes also are an important aspect of composition, with their ability to focus the attention of the audience.

TENSION – Within a design composition tension relates to focus. In *Sunday in the Park with George* the idea of tension, or excitement, comes through Seurat's interest in opposite colours. It is the huge opposing differences that create tension, or friction, resulting in great liveliness. Tension also comes into play with costume design as wardrobe can reflect the inner tensions of characters who feel one way inwardly yet display contrasting outward appearances.

BALANCE – Everyone has an eye for balance when it's wrong. We won't necessarily know exactly *what* is wrong, but it has to do with balance. We relate everything in the world in terms of our own human proportions, so balance comes through perspective. When designing a set I make choices as to whether the balance will be symmetrical or asymmetrical, or whether elements repeat, in order to achieve some sort of balance that will provide harmony to the overall picture.

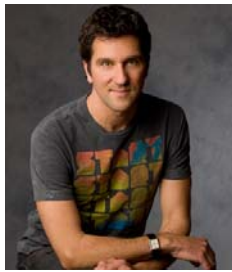
LIGHT – In his painting, Seurat played with light and colour. His theory - that we cannot see an object without light, led him to experiment how colour was determined by the way light hit it. In the theatre, when I design a set, I place things in positions knowing that light will hit them in different ways, affecting the mood, the balance, the tension. I also choose certain materials for the set and for costumes, as well as paint, because of the way light will hit, or reflect, or shine through the various materials.

HARMONY – My goal is to create a set design that is part of the whole production, so that the set and costumes are not a separate entity but contribute to a harmonious whole. I believe when harmony is working in theatre it is very expansive, the combining of all the events lifts the audience to another level, experiencing a largesse outside of the norm. In this musical it is interesting that musically, harmonies come in when Seurat finishes his painting, when colour is introduced.

“This is
my
favourite
musical.”

Paul Sportelli -
Music Director

Music Director's Notes



Paul Sportelli - Music Director *Sunday in the Park with George*

In the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* the terms Design, Composition, Tension, Balance, Light, and Harmony are repeated throughout the production. Paul Sportelli, Shaw's Music Director describes what these terms mean to him as a composer and as a music director.

DESIGN – Design first speaks to me as a composer. If the piece of music you are composing is structured or designed properly, you will be able to convey the emotion of the piece. The design is the architecture of the piece. As a Music Director, I must discern what Sondheim's design is and bring his work to life based on his design.

COMPOSITION – We all think of composition as a song or a symphony. But composition is about what something is composed of – the elements that make up the whole. So, what you choose to use in your composition is as important as the composition. The way you compose your elements results in your composition being denser or sparser, wider or not, dissonant or consonant. As a Musical Director, my job is to again discern the elements of the composition in a very practical way so I can break it down for the actors so they can understand what they are hearing. In effect, they become part of the composition.

TENSION – This is a great one! Without tension, relaxation or release would not be as meaningful. It is the interplay between tension and release that keeps us interested in music. All composers are playing with tension and release. The job of the Music Director is to determine when tensions and releases occur and how that informs the actors, how the awareness of that helps them do their job.

BALANCE – This is tricky to describe because it is ephemeral. Balance has to do with how all the parts relate to the whole and the relationship to the whole that creates either balance or a sense of imbalance. A composer is always playing with wanting the audience to know where they are, versus not knowing – where the listener moves from a feeling of being lost to a feeling of coming home and the movement back and forth between the two poles depends on the individual parts and how they relate to the whole.

LIGHT – Smart composers can write music that sounds luminescent and Sondheim does that in spades in this piece – Sondheim found a way to capture Seurat's concerns with colour and light and to suggest it in a musical equivalent to pointillism. The fun part of my role as a Musical Director, is the art of interpretation – to figure out what the composer is trying to do, what the composer is trying to say, to find the meaning. With this show, all the elements, tension, light, harmony inform us what the characters are going through psychologically at any moment.

HARMONY – It is notable that this term is last in the list because really it is the ultimate goal. In order to achieve harmony, you need two or more things relating to each other. However, all these qualities, design, light, tension, act in relation to each other to lead to the creation of harmony. The goal is for the audience to experience a form of transcendental release. *Sunday in the Park with George* is my favourite musical because I feel it is important to be transformed by an arts experience, and, in this show all the elements come together to a final chord of coming home of harmony.

Sunday in the Park with George

began its life during workshop productions in 1983. The show opened on May 2, 1984 at the Booth Theatre in New York, starring Mandy Patinkin and Bernadette Peters. It was directed by James Lapine and ran for 604 performances. The show went on to win the 1985 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and two 1984 Tony Awards: Tony Straiges for Best Scenic Design and Richard Nelson for Best Lighting Design.



Bernadette Peters in the original Broadway production in 1984

The original cast gave a tenth anniversary concert performance (one night only) at the St James Theatre on May 15, 1994.



Jenna Russell & Daniel Evans

The show has also seen time in London, with a 1990 UK premiere production at London's National Theatre, directed by Stephen Pimlott. A more recent production began at the Menier Chocolate Factory from November 2005 to February 2006 then transferred to Wyndham's Theatre. Directed by Sam Buntrock, the production used 21st century technology to create the world and work of Georges Seurat. At the 2007 Laurence Olivier Awards in London, the production won five awards for Outstanding Musical Production, Best Lighting Design, Best Set Design, Best Actress in a Musical for Jenna Russell and Best Actor in a Musical for Daniel Evans.

New York's Roundabout Theatre Company presented the Menier Chocolate Factory production at Studio 54 in 2008.



Broadway Production in 2008 at Studio 54

This is the Shaw Festival's first production of *Sunday in the Park*, but Sondheim is no stranger to the Festival. The first Sondheim here was *Merrily We Roll Along* in 2002, directed by Jackie Maxwell, and the 2008 programme included both *A Little Night Music* (directed by Morris Panych) and *Follies: In Concert* (directed by Valerie Moore). *Gypsy* was produced by the Festival in 2005 and was directed by Jackie Maxwell.

Georges Pierre Seurat - French, 1859 - 1891



Georges Seurat

- began painting as a teenager in his middle-class Parisian home
- in 1880 he was attracted to the impressionists' technique and began his study of colour theory and the science of optics
- was the founder of neo-impressionism, which applied strokes of pure colour to the canvas along more scientific principles
- the technique became known as pointillism or divisionism in which tiny dots of pure colour are applied to the canvas according to the theories of optical colour mixing. When viewed from a distance, the dots blend into various hues and tones while retaining the luminosity of pure pigment
- Seurat's paintings are also characterized by his use of simplified forms, and the overall balance and sense of control in his compositions.



The Bathing Place

His first major painting “The Bathing Place”, 1883, depicted an impressionistic subject, a group of people relaxing during an afternoon excursion on the banks of the Seine. The painting has a shimmering quality and a suggestion of cut-out flatness and frozen static poses. From then on, Seurat concentrated on creating very large paintings capturing the bourgeois lifestyle in Paris.

When his painting “On a Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte” was shown at an Impressionist Exhibition, fellow artists Monet, Renoir, and Sisley withdrew their submissions. The painting was placed in a small room, too dark for it to be seen. While the painting was initially ridiculed, the technique of pointillism was adopted by the neo-impressionists, and eventually used widely in early 20th century art.

Seurat refined the technique and in his later work he used less naturalistic shapes and colours and introduced a theory of aesthetic harmony based on line as well as colour. He created six more major paintings before his death, but never sold a painting in his lifetime.

Seurat spent two years on this painting, “La Grande Jatte,” visiting the park on weekdays, when it was empty, and making sketch after sketch - getting the grass right, the trees right, the river right. Seurat's friends, who were slightly in awe of him, were distressed to see a Frenchman working through the lunchtime break, and even (*quelle horreur!*) sustaining himself with a chocolate bar. The painting gives the impression of silence, of control, of nothing disordered - it is this that makes “La Grande Jatte” so moving. Seurat was 25 when he painted “La Grande Jatte”. He died 7 years later.



Child in White (study for La Grande Jatte)

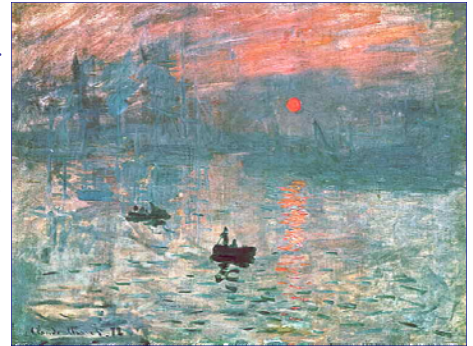
Impressionism

developed primarily in France during the last part of the 1800's. The major characteristic of impressionism is the focus on the importance of colour, light, and movement when painting outdoor subjects.

Impressionism is also used to describe a painting that involves an interest in subjects who were informal and pleasant.

The name "Impressionism" came from the title of a painting by Claude Monet, called *Impression: Sunrise*. Monet named the painting this because an impression of the subject was conveyed in the painting without specific details.

The key figures of the Impressionist movement were Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissaro, Alfred Sisley, Edgar Degas, Berthe Morisot & Edouard Manet.



Claude Monet's *Impression: Sunrise*



Pointillism...

is the technique used by Georges Seurat to portray the play of light using tiny brushstrokes of pure colour side by side. This new style developed by Seurat was based on scientific findings on colour. Close up, these tiny brushstrokes of colour are obvious. However, at a distance the eye fuses the colours together to create a wide range of secondary and intermediate colours. By not mixing the colours together on the palette, the colours appear brighter and lighter on the canvas.

"So, your eye is perceiving both red and blue and violet. Only eleven colours, no black - divided, not mixed on the palette, mixed by the eye. Can't you see the shimmering?"

Above: Detail of Georges Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*



Right: Georges Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*

Dramatic Devices

Dramatic Devices

Metaphor is a figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two seemingly unrelated objects without using "like" or "as."

Example: Life is a yo-yo. It's a series of ups and downs.

Here, "life" is the subject. "Yo-yo" is the symbol that represents the subject.

In *Sunday in the Park with George*, many of the characters are one-dimensional, some even being cut-outs of human beings. This metaphor explains that to George, (who has trouble connecting with people) some of the characters in his paintings are only one-dimensional.

Personification is giving human qualities to animals or objects.

Examples: a smiling moon, a jovial sun

The dogs Spot and Fifi are given voices and desires in *Sunday in the Park with George*, thus giving them human qualities. The painting coming to life is also an excellent example of personification, as an inanimate object such as a painting is given human thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Cross-Casting: Sometimes in order to create a connection between scenes, acts, or characters, playwrights and directors will cross-cast the same actors to play different, but sometimes connecting roles. There are examples of this in *Sunday in the Park with George*. Here, the cross-casting is used to connect Act 1 & 2, as well as connect the characters who are 100 years apart. Keep in mind Marie's song "Mama" where she is singing about her mother, Dot, who is played by the same actor.

Dramatic Irony is when the audience knows more about a situation than the character knows. Think about those times when you want to yell at the stage or screen to tell the character to do, or not to do something! We know as an audience that George is inventing a new style of art, while his contemporaries are criticizing his work. We also know that by ignoring Dot, George is losing the love of his life.



COULD YOU DO THIS?

As part of an effort to promote a new event along the riverfront in Beloit, Washington, Jeff Adams came up with the idea to duplicate Seurat's painting with a modern twist! Take a look and see what similarities and differences you can find between the photograph and the original painting. Which do you like better? Why? Could you do your own modern version with Seurat's painting, or with another favourite piece of art?

“... I do not paint for your approval.”

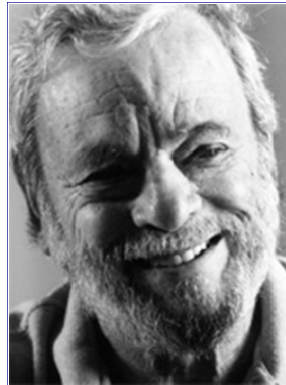
George -
Sunday in the Park with George

Artists are so ...

Creating New Conventions

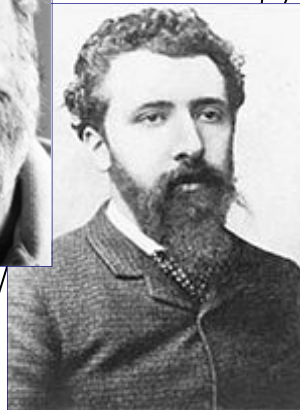
It is a courageous artist who is willing to take current conventions and trends beyond their comfort zone to create something entirely new. As George comments to fellow artist, Jules, in Sunday, “... I do not paint for your approval.”

“No-one before Seurat had thought of combining countless tiny dots of colour into one ordered image. By allowing the colours to mix in the eye of the beholder rather than on the palette of the painter, he brought a new dimension to art. Sondheim and his librettist James Lapine work a similar revolution in terms of theatre. The lives frozen into the idyllic tableau by one medium are freed and explored by another.”(Review by Jack Tinker, *Daily Mail* 16/03/90)



Stephen Sondheim
(above)

Georges Seurat
(below)



“Rebel Advancing a Cause”

Sondheim became concerned with the direction that musical theatre was going in, early in his career. “You have two kinds of shows on Broadway - revivals and the same kind of musicals over and over again, all spectacles,” says Sondheim.

Perhaps this is why this artistic risk-taker began writing music that he liked, more interested in harmony than melody, and bringing his intellectuality to the unconventional subjects that he writes about.

Defying Convention

Seurat defied conventional perspective and conventional space. Impressionism valued the idea of spontaneity in art, while the geometric order of Seurat’s work went directly against the conventional style of the impressionists.

Resistance to Change

At first there was public resistance to Seurat’s new style of painting. The change in technique was simply too immense for most of the public and fellow artists to be able to understand.

However, soon neo-impressionism followers were adopting the technique and it became more widely used and appreciated in the 20th century.

More Art Risk Takers

1504 - Michelangelo’s DAVID is greeted with a hail of stones at his unveiling. On many occasions in history, he has offended with his nudity and been ordered to cover up.

1564+ - The works of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE have been expurgated more than any other playwright. Queen Elizabeth I cut the passage in *Richard II* in which the king is deposed.

1853 - The VENUS DE MILO is tried and convicted for nudity in Mannheim, Germany.

1905 - One of the most famously banned plays in theatrical history, the New York city premiere of *Mrs Warren’s Profession* by Bernard Shaw is one of the most controversial events of its time.

1966 - JOHN LENNON enrages Americans with his remark that the Beatles are more popular than Jesus.

1965+ - Some of the most frequently censored books in the U.S. since 1965 are: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Diary of a Young Girl* (Anne Frank), *Black Like Me*, *Brave New World*, *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Glossary of select terms from *Sunday in the Park with George*

Many of these words are terms associated with visual art.

Order: A condition of logical or coherent arrangement among the separate elements of a group. The opposite of chaos.

Design: The composition of a work. An effective design is one where the elements of art & principles of design have been combined to achieve a sense of unity.

Composition: The arrangement of lines, colours and form.

Light: Either the sensation of light, a source of light, its illumination, the representation of it in a work of art, or an awareness as if there were light on a subject.

Harmony: Harmony refers to a way of combining elements of art to accent their similarities and bind the picture parts into a whole.

Tension: Balance between opposing elements often causing anxiety or excitement.

Tone: A quality of a colour arising from its saturation, intensity, luminosity and temperature; or to create such a quality in a colour.

Form: The total structure of a work.

Symmetry: When one side of something balances out on the other side.

Balance: A principle of design referring to the way that the elements of a work of art are arranged to create a feeling of stability in the work.

Gavotte: A French peasant dance of Baroque origin, in moderately quick meter.

Jungen! Nicht so laut! Ruhe, bitte!: Boys! Not so loud! Quiet, please!

Follies: An elaborate theatrical revue consisting of music, dance and skits.

Promenading: To take a leisurely walk for pleasure or display.

Seine: A French river that flows through the heart of Paris.

Schwitzes: Sweating.

Chromolume: Term describing Seurat's technique of breaking colour into its basic element.

Ascension Day: Marks the day when Jesus Christ ascended up into Heaven.

Neo-Expressionism: A term to describe artwork depicting intense emotions and symbolism, sometimes using unconventional media and intense colours with turbulent compositions and subject matter.

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Sunday in the Park with George Pre- and Post- Show Activities

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Sunday in the Park with George - Pre-Show

Visual Arts – The Artist in Society

Grades 7- 12

Pedagogical Intent

Through the art form of collage, students explore the principle of foreground, middle ground, and background.

Grade: Grades 7 - 12

Subjects: Visual Arts, History, English

Objectives and Competencies: In these activities, students will:

- explain how the concepts and principles of design reflected in a specific work of art support the concepts and ideas expressed through that work
- apply the elements and principles of design to express a particular concept or idea
- use various strategies in creating images
- demonstrate the ability to solve artistic problems and make creative choices when completing art works that reflect their concerns
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of symbols in creative expression

Materials: Old magazines, scissors, glue, paper for collages

Pre-Activity Discussion

Discuss: *Sunday in the Park with George* explores both the role of the artist and the role of art in society.

Ask: In your opinion, what is the role of art in our society?

Discuss: What can a work of art tell us about a society that a film or videotape cannot?

Ask: Is being an artist as important and respected a job as being a lawyer or physician? Should it be?

Discuss: Seurat chronicled the life of middle-class people in his work. In the days before photography, how else could a visual sense of a way of life be recorded?

Ask: Seurat was criticized for painting the common people by his fellow artists. Why do you think this was the case?

Main Activity

Discuss: As a class, discuss various leisure activities that take place outside in today's world.

Instruct: Create a list of some possible locations such as parks, school playgrounds, zoos, or water parks.

Sunday in the Park with George - Pre-Show

Visual Arts – The Artist in Society

Grades 7- 12

Main Activity - cont'd.

Instruct: Using cut-out pictures from magazines, students will create a collage of a group of people enjoying their leisure time . Place some of the figures and groups close to the viewer (foreground), some back a bit in the composition (middle ground) and others in the distance (background).

Instruct: Add interesting items into the picture which will serve as props. Students may use both two-dimensional images from magazines and three-dimensional objects. These props will help identify the setting and add interest to the characters (eg. animals, musical instruments, objects along a street, clothing accessories, etc.).

Note: Three-dimensional objects would be good for objects in the foreground. Students will find that a greater sense of depth can be achieved as these items will appear to come right off the page and into the viewer's space. Caution students to be careful when using three-dimensional objects in the middle ground or background. They can create confusion in the overall sense of depth in the composition.

Variation: Students may want to explore a large-scale collage where every student contributes to a large piece of art. Using large mural paper, this group collage may depict a leisure activity in which a large group of people can participate. Ideas for this collage might include; a music festival, concert, or a sports event. In each of these collage projects, pay close attention to the distinction of the foreground, middle ground and background.

Class Discussion

Ask: What does the term "perspective" mean?
As the artist, how have you created a sense of perspective in your picture?
How many different ways can an artist create perspective in a composition/picture?

Ask: What different types of materials can an artist use when creating a collage?
Why would an artist use these different materials?
When would you use one material instead of another? Give examples.

Ask: How can texture, an element of design, play a large role when making a collage?
Does the role of social recorder and commentator remain a valid role of an artist?
Is playing such a role an artist's responsibility, or should art be merely decorative?

Extension

Try using materials with a variety of textures to express different ideas. Explain why you chose to include each material in your composition/picture.

Sunday in the Park with George - Post-Show

Visual Arts – The Artist in Society

Grades 7- 12

Pedagogical Intent

Students will explore masterworks from famous artists and re-create the artwork incorporating different figures and characters in order to change the story of the art piece.

Grade: Grades 7- 12

Subjects: Visual Arts, History and Language Arts

Objectives and Competencies: In these activities, students will:

- analyze the formal composition of an example of artwork from historical works
- explain how the style, history, and artist-related information associated with specific works of art inform their own artwork
- explain how representational elements and the formal organization of visual content are used in both the creation and evaluation of art works
- demonstrate an understanding of several different interpersonal speaking strategies and adapt them to suit the purpose, situation, and audience
- identify the important ideas and supporting details in both simple and complex texts

Materials: Access to computers, OR copies of the following works of art:

1. *Las Meninas*, 1656 by Diego Velazquez
2. *Nighthawks*, 1942 by Edward Hopper
3. *Tar Beach*, 1988 by Faith Ringgold

Pre-Activity Discussion

Discuss: Composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim has said, "I care a lot about art and the artist. The major thing I wanted to do in the show was to enable anyone who is not an artist to understand what hard work art is."

Ask: Do you think the creators of *Sunday in the Park with George* accomplished this goal?

Discuss: At the beginning and ending of the musical, George is embracing not a person, but an empty white canvas that he loves for its many possibilities.

Ask: In your opinion, have both George characters sacrificed personal relationships for their art?

Ask: Do you think giving personal relationships as much time and attention as art is a problem with most artists?

Ask: What is the meaning of the fact that Seurat appears almost oblivious of the two people closest to him, his mother and Dot?

Ask: What does George mean in Act I when he says "I am not hiding behind my canvas. I am living in it"?

Sunday in the Park with George - Post-Show

Visual Arts – The Artist in Society

Grades 7- 12

Main Activity

In the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* the audience gets a glimpse into the imagined stories of the characters from the famous painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grand Jatte" – (by Georges Seurat, 1884-86).

Split the class into three groups. Assign one of the following masterworks for each group:

1. *Las Meninas*, 1656 by Diego Velazquez
2. *Nighthawks*, 1942 by Edward Hopper
3. *Tar Beach*, 1988 by Faith Ringgold

Instruct: Each group research information pertaining to both the artwork and the artist.

Instruct: Discuss and answer the following questions:

- How has the artist featured people in their artwork?
- How might the characters in the artwork be feeling?
- What is the mood depicted in the artwork?
- What elements has the artist used to create mood?
- What might have happened right before these characters were captured in this painting?
- What might happen after?
- Discuss possible storylines for each character included in the artwork.

Instruct: Have each group create a small reproduction of the masterwork and add in new characters that could possibly bring in a different perspective to the story. These characters can be real, make believe, or the students themselves.

Allow time for students to share and discuss their created artworks.

Class Discussion

Discuss: Some characters in the musical are rather one-dimensional and in some cases are portrayed by cut-outs made of cardboard.

Ask: Are we meant to care about these characters? Why or why not?

Discuss: The boatman believes George portrays his characters both in terms of what is true and what suits the artist.

Ask: How have the authors of the musical used the characters in the painting to both reveal what is true, and what suits their needs?

Ask: Is it possible that the characters in the musical, like the characters in the painting, were seen by their creators as little more than forms to be manipulated?

Sunday in the Park with George - Pre-Show

Music – Exploring The Musical

Grades 7- 12

Pedagogical Intent

Since the advent of musicals such as *Show Boat* and *Oklahoma!* many Broadway shows have touched upon relevant social and historical issues. In these lessons, students will investigate how Broadway musicals can reflect the times in which they were created, as well as how musicals bring historical figures, periods, and events to the stage.

Grade: Grades 7–12

Subjects: Music, History, and Language Arts

Objectives and Competencies:

- describe how some Broadway musicals reflect the times in which they were created
- describe how some Broadway musicals use historical figures, events, and time periods as their source material
- compare and contrast American history to the Broadway musicals and songs based on that history
- create lyrics for a new song based on a contemporary issue, figure or event
- present and/or perform their original songs to the rest of the class

Materials: access to computers for students to conduct research

Pre-Activity Discussion

Instruct: Brainstorm with class about the concept of the musical and ask them to verbally "shout out" everything they know about musicals. Write the students' comments on a blackboard or whiteboard so that everyone can see them. To encourage student thinking, prompt them by asking the following questions:

- What do you think of when someone says the word "musical"?
- What kinds of musicals are there?
- Is there any acting in musicals, or just singing?
- Name some musicals.
- Name some musical composers.

Circle the most relevant terms on the board.

Main Activity

Discuss: Many theatre musicals contain powerful messages that comment on social issues or current political climate.

Ask: Can you think of an example of a musical that focuses on a controversial theme? Create a list.

Sunday in the Park with George - Pre-Show

Music – Exploring The Musical

Grades 7- 12

Main Activity - cont'd.

Instruct: Divide students into pairs. Drawing from the list created by the class assign to each pair one of the musicals. (More suggestions for musicals and corresponding composers/lyricists are listed below).

Instruct: With their partners, students will research the assigned musical with the goal of sharing the information with the class. (students may also choose to present a song from the musical).

Musicals	Composers/Lyricist(s)
Porgy and Bess	George and Ira Gershwin, Heyward,
The King and I	Rodgers and Hammerstein
Of Thee I Sing	George and Ira Gershwin
Showboat	Jerome Kern
Assassins	Stephen Sondheim
Evita	Tim Rice
Fiddler on the Roof	Jerry Brock
The Sound of Music	Rodgers & Hammerstein
Rent	Jonathon Larson
Chicago	John Kander
Hairspray	Marc Shairman
Wicked	Stephen Scharzt
West Side Story	Leonard Bernstein
Les Miserables	Michael Ball
Miss Saigon	Claude Michel Schonberg
Oliver	Lionel Bart
Cabaret	Kander and Ebb

Instruct: Allow time for students to share what they have learned about their assigned musical.

Class Discussion

Discuss: Act I of *Sunday in the Park with George* is based on the imagined life of French painter Georges Seurat as he creates a new style of painting exhibited in his work "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte".

Ask: What elements of craft does a visual artist have in common with a musician or dramatist?

Ask: In what ways is a painting different from a play or musical composition?

Ask: In what ways is a painting the same as a play or musical composition?

Sunday in the Park with George - Post-Show

Music – Creating Lyrics

Grades 7- 12

Pedagogical Intent

Teachers will lead students in a discussion to respond to the theatre performance in a meaningful manner and discuss opinions. Through the activities, students will understand the use of personification and metaphor in song in order to create a meaningful story which then become the basis for creating lyrics.

Grade: Grades 7 - 12

Subjects: Music and English

Objectives and Competencies: In these activities, students will:

- create a simple composition using the elements of melody, rhythm, and form
- make artists decisions about aspects of performance
- make simple and creative choices in performance within musical parameters
- play or sing in various metres and accurately change metres as found in the exercises being performed
- play or sing rhythms as found in the exercises being performed

Materials: Blackboard or whiteboard, writing materials, copies of the book for *Sunday in the Park with George*

Pre-Activity Discussion

Instruct: Trace George and Dot's continuing love song throughout the show by finding fragments of it in the songs "Sunday in the Park With George", "Colour and Light", "We Do Not Belong Together", and finally in "Move On" at the end of Act II.

Ask: How are the themes of their relationship threaded through a series of scenes covering one hundred years?

Discuss: Seurat used 11 basic colours. Sondheim used repeated musical motifs and key words and phrases throughout the work to create an aural picture of Seurat's colour scheme and technique.

Instruct: Find examples of this in the musical. (For example, the words 'connection', 'move on', 'Sunday', 'tree', 'colour' and 'light' and the repeated musical phrases that travel with them).

Main Activity

Review: Distinctions between "metaphor" and "personification" (see p. 13).

Instruct: Complete the following exercise exploring personification and metaphor:

Instruct: Create two lists: List #1 - a list of nouns; List #2 - a list of verbs.

Choose a word from List #2 and write this word next to the word from List #1. Then create a sentence with the words you've selected. (The example on the next page provides guideline.)

Sunday in the Park with George - Post-Show

Music – Creating Lyrics

Grades 7- 12

Main Activity - cont'd.

List #1– Nouns	List #2 - Verbs
sun	listens
sea	remembers
stone	dances
dawn	dreams
morning	guides

Example: stone listens
The stone listens to the grass as it grows.

Instruct: Brainstorm with class words or descriptions associated with love, romance, or a romantic situation. Encourage students to think of words, phrases, and descriptions they know from popular romantic songs (Broadway or other kinds). Write their responses under List #1.

Instruct: Brainstorm verbs or symbols that might be used to personify these terms. Write their responses under List #2.

Instruct: Create a metaphor using words from both lists.

Explain: Recall a romantic experience or object associated with romance that they don't want to remember.

Instruct: Quickly write down these experiences or objects.

Instruct: Spend 10-15 minutes brainstorming and writing down everything they DO remember and answer the following question: "Why don't you want to remember _____?"

Explain: These activities will eventually provide the subject of a story the students will be writing. This exercise is meant to provide an opportunity to begin to understand the negative sides of romance and relationships, like hurt, disappointment, etc. If students have trouble thinking of something "real" to brainstorm or write about, give them the option of picking a fictional topic.

Instruct: Using the written information as material, write a story about the experience or object in question.

Instruct: Working in pairs or groups choose one story and find at least three terms or phrases that can be turned into metaphors or personification. Use this as the basis for lyrics for a song.

Explain: As a group, decide on the one thing you want your audience to remember. This should become the main line or statement of the chorus. Remind students to follow the "verse – chorus" format. Allow students to choose creating lyrics that are either in prose or rhyme.

Extension

Instruct: Students may either compose music to accompany their lyrics OR reference a song that already exists.

Sunday in the Park with George - Pre-Show Drama/Dance – Creating a Monologue Grades 7- 12

Pedagogical Intent

Students explore building a character using a painting as source material. They explore the characters using a variety of improvisational strategies and tableaux. Students then create monologues that express the emotions of the characters they create.

Grade: Grades 7 - 12

Subjects: Drama, Dance, Visual Arts, and English

Objectives and Competencies: In these activities, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of techniques used to re-create roles
- Demonstrate an understanding of how role is communicated through language, gesture, costume, props, and symbols
- Identify and use effective styles of collaboration in drama
- Create an original or adapted dramatic presentation
- Identify and evaluate their personal artistic strengths and weaknesses
- Interpret and present a dramatic text, using only voice or movement techniques

Materials: copies of art examples (see p. 22) including Harris Burdick drawing
http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/davidc/6c_files/documents/mysteries/Harris%20Burdick/placetime.htm
writing materials

Warm-Up Activity: First Line/Last Line

Instruct: Divide the class into small groups. Hand to each group one of the following lines from *Sunday in the Park with George*.

Instruct: Build an improvisation around the line. The line must be used by one group member as either an opening or closing line. Allow a short amount of time for students to quickly choose a setting and various roles and work on a rough draft of their improvisation.

"I should have been an artist. I was never intended for work."

"You were always in some other place – seeing something no one else could see."

"Art isn't easy."

"Stop worrying where you're going – move on."

"White. A blank page or canvas."

"It's hot up here."

"I want my glasses."

"These helmets weigh a lot on us."

"Well, there are worse things than sweating by a river on a Sunday."

"I have to finish the hat."

Instruct: Allow time for each group to perform their improvisation.

Sunday in the Park with George - Pre-Show Drama/Dance – Creating a Monologue Grades 7- 12

Main Activity

Instruct: Allow each group to choose one of the paintings from page 22 of Post-Show Visual Arts activities.

Instruct: Have students examine the paintings closely. As a group, brainstorm what they notice about the characters in the painting. Consider expression, location, age, etc. Provide the following questions as a guideline for their discussions about each figure in the painting:

- Who is this person?
- What is he/she doing?
- What is he/she thinking?
- How is he/she feeling?
- What is happening at this very moment?
- What is special about this person?

Instruct: Record ideas on, either on the back of the painting, or on a separate piece of paper.

Explain: Each student will take on a character from the painting and create an improvised scene based on their discussions as to what is occurring in the scene.

Instruct: Beginning with a tableaux recreation of the painting, students move and speak as the characters in the painting.

Instruct: Within their groups, students discuss what may have happened immediately before and immediately after the time shown in the painting.

Explain: Each student will take on the role of one of the characters in the painting and/or take on characters that are necessary to depict the before and after scenes. Allow time for students to practice improvising the three scenes.

Instruct: Share the created beginning, middle and end scenes with the whole class.

Writing-in-Role

Explain: Each student selects a character from a painting they are interested in exploring. It is not necessary for students to select characters of the same gender as themselves.

Instruct: Students decide on a name for their character.

Instruct: In a series of timed writing exercises, students write in-role as the character they have chosen. Each exercise will have a 2 minute writing time, in which students must write non-stop.

- a. Write about how you got a scar on your body.
- b. Write about a toy or a game from your childhood.
- c. Write about where you would go if you could go anywhere in the world.

Sunday in the Park with George - Pre-Show Drama/Dance – Creating a Monologue Grades 7- 12

Main Activity - cont'd.

Developing Characters through Hot Seating

Explain: In order to create a truly believable role, it is useful to give your chosen character a secret. It can be big or small. Students can choose to reveal the secret or not, but knowing it inside will help to deepening your role.

Instruct: In groups, one at a time, students will "Hot Seat" a character to be developed. Students in the group will ask questions of one student in the "Hot Seat", who will be in role as their character with a secret. This will allow students to brainstorm information about their character and deepen the role.

Introducing Monologues

Explain: Students will write short monologues for their characters. Review the following criteria for creating a monologue:

- a. The voice of the character only.
- b. Who is the character talking to? (him/herself, another person, the audience)
- c. When?
- d. Where?
- e. The character must have a reason for *needing* to tell something at this moment. Decide on whether character will or will not reveal their secret.

Instruct: Allow time for students to work on writing their monologues.

Instruct: With a partner students take turns reading aloud the monologue they have written. The students should provide feedback for one another, including suggestions for clarity. They should also give general impressions of the character the monologue brings to mind. Finally, they should brainstorm ways to revise the piece.

Instruct: Students may choose to either read their monologues out loud or perform their monologues. Encourage class to respond to monologues by 1) offering praise, 2) asking questions, and 3) making suggestions.

Reflection

Ask: What skills are you developing as you improvise in drama?

Ask: Do you agree with the statement: "Improvising is more about listening than speaking"?

Discuss: Which did you prefer, to tell a story through improvisation or monologue? Why?

Sunday in the Park with George - Pre-Show Drama/Dance – Choreographing Characters in a Painting Grades 7- 12

Pedagogical Intent

Following instructions provided by the teacher, students create a choreographed dance phrase involving a character from Georges Seurat's painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte". Students then choreograph original dances based on a character of their choosing.

Grade: Grades 7 - 12

Subjects: Music, Visual Arts, and Language Arts

Objectives and Competencies: In these activities, students will:

- choreograph a dance phrase using five steps from a compositional strategy
- demonstrate elements of dance (e.g. shape, time, energy, space) alone and in combination
- create dance sequences using explored elements
- demonstrate an understanding of how technique functions as a tool in developing artistic scope
- solve a variety of creative problems through movement
- create increasingly long and complex dance compositions, exploring themes, ideas and topics

Materials:

- Music selections, such as pieces by Claude Debussy ("La Mer" or "La Faune") or Maurice Ravel. (Both were composing around the time that Georges Seurat painted *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. Selections from the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* would also be suitable for the lesson).
- Prints of the painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte" by Seurat
- A large sheet listing the cast of characters for Act I of *Sunday in the Park with George*.
- A large poster listing the list five steps in the compositional strategy (see p. 32).

Warm-Up Activity - Abstract the Ordinary

Instruct: Students find a partner. (A and B)

Instruct: Partner A mimes an everyday action (e.g. listening to music, hammering a nail, tying a shoe lace, starting a lawn mower, etc.)

Instruct: Partner B repeats this action but in an exaggerated abstract manner.

Instruct: Partners will alternate roles after each action.

Extension: Add music to support exaggerated movements.

Sunday in the Park with George - Post - Show

Drama/Dance – Choreographing Characters in a Painting

Grades 7- 12

Main Activity - Choreographing Characters from a Painting

Ask: There is no dance in the musical *Sunday in the Park with George*. Why?

Ask: Do you agree with the author's choice?

Ask: Where would you have placed dance in this musical? Why?

Display a print of Georges Seurat's painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte".

Explain: This painting is the basis for the musical *Sunday in the Park with George*. Through creative movement, we will explore characters in this painting and create a short dance composition.

Explain: Assigning a gesture to a character that appears in Act I of *Sunday in the Park with George*, students will create a dance phrase. The strategies for composing a dance phrase are many and varied. The following strategy, comprised of five compositional steps, is just one method.

Five Compositional Steps

1. Choose a gesture.
2. Make the movement faster or slower than normal.
3. Perform the movement while traveling.
4. Change the level of the movement twice.
5. Create a short, patterned phrase of movement from these experiments.

Explain: To begin, all students will focus on the character of the nurse in order to learn the steps to create a dance phrase. As a group the teacher will guide the students through the following steps:

1. Choose a gesture

Instruct: Starting from a seated position, the arm starts in close to the body and then opens out as if to guide the steps of another person.

2. Make the movement faster or slower than normal

Instruct: The right arm starts in close to the body and very slowly begins to extend to the front of the body as the body leans forward. The arm continues to slowly circle out to the side as the upper body follows the movement of the arm to the side.

3. Perform the movement while traveling

Instruct: The movements of the arm and upper body are repeated from #2 as the feet take the body in the same direction, quickly traveling (walking or running) forward and then gradually curving out to the side.

4. Change the level of the movement twice

Instruct: Assume the beginning pose of the character in the painting. As the body rises and the hand is in, take small steps beginning out to the right side with the steps making a circular path (as in #3) to end up facing a different direction.

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Instruct: While standing, repeat the movement with the opposite arm (left) traveling to the left, but this time make a complete circle to end up facing the original direction. The body continues down on one knee (the right) while the arm continues the movement from being out to the side to behind the back and the upper body is bent over the knee.

5. Create a short, patterned phrase of movement from these experiments

Instruct: For the first 16 counts, perform the movements in step #4.

Instruct: For counts 17-20, execute the arm gesture to a faster tempo (right arm, left arm, right, and left) as the body rises to a standing level. The focus is looking up.

Instruct: For counts 21-24, lower the body slowly as the arms come down to touch the floor on either side. The head is down.

Instruct: During counts 25-28, the body travels diagonally to the right (walk: right, left, right) as the shoulder leads to guide the movement.

Instruct: In counts 29-32, repeat the same movement as in counts 25-28, but move diagonally to the left. On the final count, the left arm comes straight down to the side with a percussive movement.

Extension

Instruct: Students perform the movements to music.

Instruct: Half of the class should perform the dance phrase for the other half; then, each half should switch roles.

Extension

Explain: Using the same five-step compositional strategy, students will create a dance phrase representing one of the other characters in Georges Seurat's painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte".

Note: Display a poster of the five compositional steps.

Discuss: Review the characters in Act I of *Sunday in the Park with George* along with some possible gestures:

- George - extending arm out, pointing to "a perfect tree"
- Dot - turning her back toward others; hand up to the forehead as though it is very hot; having hand on the back of the neck again, as though it is very hot
- Boy - stretching and curving his arms out to the side as though mimicking someone who is large and fat
- Jules - extending the head and neck forward as though looking closer at the painting
- Soldier - extending arm out as though throwing away, to indicate "I am glad to be free of him."

Instruct: Review the following guidelines for the dance phrase:

- a. The beginning pose/stance must be the same as the selected character's position in the painting.
- b. The ending position is to be determined by the student.
- c. The phrase should last for approximately 32–64 counts.

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Main Activity - cont'd.

Instruct: Halfway through the class period, have students take their positions in relation to one another and perform as much of the dance phrase as they have completed up to that point. The students should practice with the music, and perform the sequence more than once as necessary.

Instruct: Allow time for students to revise, add, delete, rework, or change elements of the dance phrase at various points of the process.

Extension

Instruct: Once each student has performed his or her dance sequence, the class incorporates the individual pieces into a group presentation. All of the separate dance compositions are performed simultaneously.

Instruct: Students take their beginning poses as if they were in the painting. The dance is re-choreographed or restaged to accommodate all of the characters moving at the same time. It may be helpful to practice four to eight counts at a time and make revisions as necessary.

Note: If two or more students are portraying the same character, they could stand side-by-side, upstage and downstage, or in another place while still maintaining the balance in the work. It is not necessary for all of their parts or dance phrases to end simultaneously. If possible, perform the piece to music.