

The Snow Show: East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon

adapted by Amiel Gladstone from the Norwegian folktale
a **National Arts Centre English Theatre** production,
in association with **Caravan Farm Theatre** (Armstrong, BC)
and the **National Capital Commission's Winterlude**



Study Guide

**THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ENGLISH THEATRE
PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENT AUDIENCES
2006-2007 SEASON**

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**NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
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This Study Guide was written and researched by **Bonnie Tully-Adams** for the National Arts Centre, English Theatre, January 2007. It may be used solely for educational purposes.

The National Arts Centre English Theatre values the feedback of teachers on the content and format of its Study Guides. We would appreciate **your** comments on past Study Guides, on this current one, or suggestions on ways to improve future Study Guides. Comments may be directed to **Martina Kuska** either by email at mkuska@nac-cna.ca or by fax to Martina Kuska at the NAC, (613) 943-1401.

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CURRICULUM: NOTE TO TEACHERS

The Snow Show offers an opportunity for students to experience children's theatre in an exciting outdoor environment. Taking your students to the theatre and using information and activities from this Study Guide will help you fulfill some of the guidelines in the Ontario Curriculum for The Arts. Use or adapt any page to suit your classroom level.

Activities are offered at the end of this Guide with primary/junior, intermediate and senior versions. There are also suggestions for English specialists.

Some Ontario Curriculum Expectations:

Grade 1 expectation:

Communicate their response to a variety of stimuli (e.g. nursery rhymes, poetry, stories, picture books) by using elements of drama and dance.

Grade 3 expectation:

Interpret and communicate the meaning of stories, poems, plays, and other materials drawn from a range of sources and cultures, using basic drama and dance technique.

Grade 4 expectation:

Enact or create, rehearse, and present drama and dance works based on novels, stories, poems, and plays.

Grade 6 expectations:

Interpret and communicate the meaning of novels, scripts, legends, fables, and other materials drawn from a range of sources and cultures, using a variety of drama and dance techniques (e.g. reader's theatre), and evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques.

Grade 11 expectations:

Identify community/audience interests and needs, using a variety of methods (e.g. researching, interviewing, surveying), and present dramatic productions that are suitable for specific audiences.

Identify different performance spaces in both schools and the community, and compare them with regard to effectiveness.

For material appropriate for grades 1 to 3 go to: www.welcometonorway.co.uk/culture2.shtml

WHO HELPED PUT THE PRODUCTION TOGETHER?

The Creative Team

Playwright	Amiel Gladstone
Director	Jennifer Brewin
Set Designer	Estelle Shook
Costume Designer	Marina Szijarto
Lighting Designer	Martin Conboy
Musical Director/arrangements	Karin Randoja
Stilt Walking Coach.....	Laura Astwood
Stage Manager	Jennifer Swan
Apprentice Stage Manager	Samira Rose

Principal Cast Members (in alphabetical order)

Bear, North Wind	Laura Astwood
Sister, Lifeguard, South Wind, Troll Mother	Kelly McIntosh
East Wind, Bird Lady, Troll Daughter.....	Ben Meuser
Papa, Cowpoke, East Wind, Fisherman	Paul Rainville
Hanna	Manon Saint-Jules
Prince, Bear, West Wind.....	Christie Watson

Additional Cast Members (in alphabetical order) portraying the South, East, West, and North Winds:

Marie Claude Dicaire
Jean-François Dubé
Bryony Etherington
Lauren Hart
Alexandra Lent
Kaitlin St-Jacques

THE STORY



Peter Asbjørnsen (1812-1885)



Jørgen Moe (1813-1882)

The story of *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon* is traced back to Norwegian writers Peter Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe.

In 1837, Asbjørnsen and Moe's first collection of Norwegian Folklore appeared, entitled *Nor*. In 1841 *Norske Folkeeventyr* was published and was widely translated in Europe (the English translation appeared in 1859).

Like the Brothers Grimm, they became very successful because of their use of simple language; thus they could meet the challenges offered by Norway's many dialects, without losing the richness of oral tradition.

Separately, Asbjørnsen published Norwegian fairy tales and folk legends between 1845-1848. Moe became one of the finest Norwegian romantic poets with his *Digte* (a compilation of poems published in 1850) and the following year he published a Norwegian Children's classic: *I Broden og i Tjaernet* (*In the Well and the Pond*).

Their best-known stories are *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon* and *The Three Billy-Goats Gruff*.

To read a translation of the story *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon*, go to: www.pitt.edu/~dash/norway034.html

Source: www.ricochet-juenes.org/eng/biblio/author/moe.html



THE CHARACTERS

The 16 roles will be performed by six actors: Laura Astwood, Kelly McIntosh, Ben Meuser, Paul Rainville, Manon Saint-Jules, and Christie Watson.

Papa is an artist who creates fantastic works but whose family is starving and is faced with difficult decisions for the good of everyone.

Hanna is a young woman who must journey far to find herself and true love.

The Bear/Prince is a prince transformed into a bear. He must break the spell and avoid taking a troll princess as his bride.

The West Wind, East Wind, South Wind, North Wind are sibling elements who try to help people.

Hanna's Older Sister is the one who convinces Hanna to question a seemingly good thing.

Old Ladies one, two and three are three eccentric women who offer wisdom, riddles, and tools to help Hanna along her way.

The Troll Daughter is the intended bride of the Prince.

The Troll Queen is the ruler to the land East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon.

The Fisherman is the man who makes a deal with Hanna to escape his troll masters.

THE PLAY

The play is written by Amiel Gladstone. The Wind characters also act as narrators.

Scene 1: A poor artist is heard talking to the winds. He is worrying about his future and that of his three daughters.

A big white bear offers the artist wealth in exchange for his youngest daughter, Hanna. Hanna has always dreamt of living in a far away castle so agrees to go with the Bear to his home east of the woods and north of the lake.

Scene 2: The Bear's home is magical and Hanna is very content. She spends her days with the Bear, but each night he goes into the woods and a silent visitor comes to sleep in Hanna's bed. After several weeks Hanna's family, which is now living in a nicer home, pays her a visit. When Hanna tells her father and sisters about her living arrangements, she is counseled to light a candle so as to get a look at her nightly visitor. Her family is worried that her visitor may be a troll.

Scene 3: Hanna returns to the castle and when the visitor arrives in the dark she lights a candle. She sees a young, handsome man and kisses him. She accidentally spills wax on him and he awakens. He explains that he is a prince under a spell which transforms him into a white bear by day. The Prince tells her that now the spell is broken he must marry a troll princess who lives in a castle east of the sun and west of the moon. The Prince declares his love for Hanna, after which he disappears. Hanna decides that she must find the Prince and turns to an old woman for aid. The Old Lady gives her a team of horses and sends her off to visit a neighbour of hers who may be able to help.

Scene 4: When Hanna sees the Second Old Lady, she is given a stinky fish and sent to yet another elderly woman.

Scene 5: The Third Old Lady gives Hanna a rotten egg and tells her that the horses will lead her to the East Wind.

Scene 6: The East Wind tries to help, but is not powerful enough. He then enlists the help of his brothers, and all the Winds combine to create a gigantic storm, with the North Wind delivering Hanna to the castle east of the sun and west of the moon.

Scene 7: To save the Prince, Hanna must outwit the Troll Queen and her daughter. With the aid of the stinky fish and the rotten egg, she breaks the curse and the Prince is set free.

TROLLS AND TALES FROM NORWAY (page 1 of 2)



Troll pondering its age (Theodor Kittelsen, 1911).

A troll is a fearsome member of a mythical anthropomorph race from Scandinavia. Their form ranges from fiendish giants to a devious, more human-like folk of the wilderness, living underground in hills, caves or mounds.

While the everyday folklore consisted mostly of short anecdotes describing things that had (supposedly) happened to local people, fairytales are narratives that rarely claim to be true in the same way. Many of the fairytales featuring trolls were written in the late 19th to early 20th century, reflecting the Romanticism of the time, and published in fairytale collections like *Tomtar och Troll*. These tales, and illustrations by artists like John Bauer and Theodor Kittelsen, would come to form the ideas most people have of trolls today.

Legends from the Middle Ages and earlier also feature a kind of troll of more horrifying dimensions. This might reflect a past view of trolls as distinctly bad creatures that would soften in later folklore, or just be another example of fantastic tales demanding fantastic dimensions.

In fairytales, folktales and legends trolls are not people you would find living next door, but rather frightening creatures “out there somewhere”. Particularly in these tales they come in any size and can be as huge as giants or as small as dwarves. They are often regarded as having poor intellect, especially the males, whereas the females, *trollkonor*, may be quite cunning. They may have great strength, big noses, long arms, and may be very hairy and not very beautiful. Once again, females often constitute the exception, with female trolls frequently being quite comely.

Asbjørnsen and Moe's collection features a number of traditional fairy tales where trolls hold princesses captive, such as *The Three Princesses of Whiteland*, *Soria Moria Castle*, and *Dapplegrim*, and two where trolls invade homes on Christmas Eve to make merry, *Tatterhood* and *The Cat on the Dovrefell*.

TROLLS AND TALES FROM NORWAY (page 2 of 2)

Female trolls may conspire to force a prince to marry their daughter, as in *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon*, or practice witchcraft, as in *The Witch in the Stone Boat*, where a troll usurps a queen's place, or *The Twelve Wild Ducks*, where she turns 12 princes into wild ducks. In other tales, the hero matches wits with the troll as in *Boots and the Troll*, and *Boots Who Ate a Match with the Troll*.

There is a word in Norwegian: "trolsk". It's an adjective which comes from the word "troll". "Trolsk", or "Troll-ish" as that would be in English, is used to describe spooky, supernatural atmospheres in nature, such as a forest at dawn, with thick fog around the mossy trees.

Trolls have inspired many artists and composers. The previously mentioned Theodor Kittelsen is only one of them. Edvard Grieg, for instance, composed a piece of music which symbolized Trolls out marching just before dawn, and when the sun rises, the Trolls explode, something which is marked with a gigantic BAM! in the music. Trolls also play a part in Henrik Ibsen's play *Peer Gynt*, and therefore also in the music to the play, the music which Grieg wrote. "*Dovregubbenshal*" ("*In the hall of the mountain king*"), where Peer Gynt meets the trolls, is probably the most famous piece of music derived from Ibsen's play.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolls>

THE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE

Arboretum (from the Latin; place where an extensive variety of woody plants are cultivated for scientific, educational and ornamental purposes)

This outdoor performance takes place at the Central Experimental Farm Arboretum. The audience will ride horse drawn sleighs or wagons to locations throughout the Arboretum where scenes will be acted out with nature as their backdrop. Winter is celebrated in Ottawa during Winterlude and *The Snow Show* brings a little Norwegian magic to the celebration.

Director's Note

"Creating theatre outside in the snow with horses and actors and stilt walkers is as ridiculous as it is sublime. The effect is nostalgic without being sentimental, magical without the use of sorcery, and familial despite the fact that one is sitting on a sleigh with strangers. Creating theatre in the snow reminds me of the indomitable and whimsical nature of the Canadian spirit. Its artistry is in its audacity."

Jennifer Brewin (director)



photo by Richard Hinchcliff

Caravan Farm Theatre

This play is a National Arts Centre production in association with Caravan Farm Theatre (Armstrong, BC) and the National Capital Commission's Winterlude.

Caravan has been staging outdoor productions in British Columbia since 1978 both on its farm property and as the touring company Caravan Stage Company. In 1989 the company began staging a winter sleigh ride show.

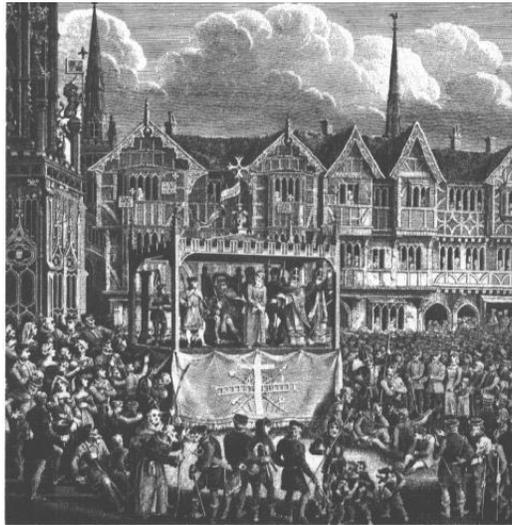
Jennifer Brewin (the director of *The Snow Show*) was co-artistic director of that company from 1998 to 2005 and is experienced with shows that use the natural landscape as a backdrop.

The company focuses on adapting classic texts into accessible and entertaining performances for a broad audience.

Estelle Shook, Artistic and Managing Director of Caravan, is designing the sets.

PLAYS AND WAGONS

English theatre history



In England, during medieval times, theatre resided with the Catholic Church. The plays were religious and they were performed in the church itself (or on the church steps) by priests. The language in church was Latin which was not spoken by many of the people.

By 1400, movable outdoor stages were used to present plays related to the celebration of Corpus Christi. Cycle plays grew from short pieces that had originally been performed by the clergy into long form plays performed in the language of the people.

Corpus Christi was a festival created by the Church to give special emphasis to the stories of the bible and their relevance to the people. It was held in May, lasted several days, and was performed by laymen (non-priests) to show their devotion.

Trade or craft guilds would produce one story of the bible and each guild was responsible for providing a pageant wagon, scenery, costumes and actors. Guilds would present plays that connected to their work; shipbuilders produced plays about Noah's Ark and bakers produced plays about the Last Supper.

We are not sure how these performances were presented. One theory is that the wagons traveled from station to station like parade floats with performers gathering an audience to a performance location. The other widely accepted theory is that throughout the day a wagon would be moved several times and the whole performance repeated at each location. Whatever the case, these wagons moved through the city and were England's first stages. In 1576, the first permanent theatre was built, but the outdoor tradition continued for religious plays.

Wagons were also used by acting companies who were sponsored by wealthy patrons. After their season was completed in London, they would tour the countryside and mount versions of the secular plays.

DRAFT HORSES



A draft horse is a large work horse bred for pulling farm ploughs, wagons and brewery kegs. There are several large breeds, all are known for their strength and gentleness.

They are the gentle real “beasts” in this production. These horses will be used to pull the audience sleighs or wagons from one location to the next to follow the action of the play.

The ancestors of modern draft horse breeds were the Medieval Destriers or war horses, bred to carry a heavily armed and armoured knight into battle or individual combat such as jousting.

Clydesdale is a breed of draft horse derived from the very hard-working farm horses of Clydesdale (now Lanarkshire), Scotland and named for that region. Thought to be over 300 years old, the breed was extensively used for pulling heavy loads in rural, industrial and urban settings, their common use extending into the 1960s when they were still a familiar sight pulling the carts of milk and vegetable vendors.

Belgian horse, **Belgian Heavy Horse**, or **Brabant** is a horse breed that comes from the West-Brabantian region of Belgium. They are one of the strongest of the heavy breeds. The world's largest Belgian Horse was named Brooklyn Supreme, who weighed 3,200 pounds, and stood at 19.2 hands*. On average the Belgian will grow to be slightly over 1 ton or 2,000 pounds. They are considered a working horse, and wagon horse. They are able to pull tremendous amounts of weight - up to over 4,500 pounds per pair. They are still used as work horses and wagon horses, but have become increasingly popular as show horses, gaming horses, and trail riding horses. Although the overall percentage of drafts among American horses has declined, the number of Belgians has increased.

The world's tallest living horse is a Belgian Draft named Radar. Radar is a gelding, born in 1998 in Iowa. He stands at 19.35 hands*, which means he is approximately 6 foot 7 inches tall at the top of his shoulders (withers). He weighs over 2400 lbs.

*Hands are a unit of measurement used to state the height of horses. Four inches equal one hand.
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draft_horse

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Fairy Tales to Theatre

The adaptation of a classic children's tale into a theatrical performance provides the opportunity for students of all levels to enrich their learning. These activities are designed in general to act as a guideline and serve as a suggested focus for class study.

Primary/Junior

Tales differ from culture to culture but many of the elements of the stories are the same. Before attending the performance read a fairy tale which also has a female heroine and a prince transformed into a beast: *Beauty and the Beast*.

View the cartoon version.

Discuss the differences between the written version and the cartoon musical version.

Read through provided material and discuss expectations.

Ask students to draw:

1. A troll (male)
2. A troll (female)
3. One of the four winds
4. An actor wearing a costume of one of the Fours Winds

Play the music by Edvard Grieg for inspiration.

Junior/Intermediate

From Beowulf to Harry Potter, heroes of literature have fought trolls, endured hardship and faced personal demons. Beasts, in various forms and guises, are a part of good storytelling.

Read provided material with class.

Read *Beauty and the Beast*.

Identify and categorize key elements to story: female heroine traded for money, creature transformation, etc. Individual plot-point classification charts can be combined to a whole class storyboard that would work for either story.

As a class, create an outline for a modern version of the story.

E.g. a beast would be a _____

Intermediate/Senior

The origins of theatre are storytelling and dance. We see these basic elements exemplified best in Children's Theatre.

Read provided material.

Pitch a children's story. Each student must propose a work and state why he/she believes it will work.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Getting Theatrical

The Snow Show's staging acts as an example of theatre in an outdoor setting, of the possibilities within simple text, and the universal appeal of the characters and stories beyond their culture of origin.

Primary/Junior

Read *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon* and *The Three Billygoats Gruff*.

Compare the troll characters of the story.

Discuss *The Snow Show* interpretation of trolls.

Create your own theatrical experience.

Use Mother Goose and create your own cycle festival.

Group students into small groups of three to five.

Allow the groups to choose a favorite Mother Goose rhyme or story.

Assign each group a location in or outside the classroom.

Rehearse briefly with text in hand.

Narrate while the students perform.

Students take turns as performers and audience members as the action moves from location to location.

Junior/Intermediate

A story cannot be separated from the culture from which it originates. Explore other cultures' stories and find common ground.

Read the Nanabush stories from Aboriginal Canadian culture (see on-line resources herein)

Identify similarities to the Norwegian tale *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon* and discuss universal story characters and plot. E.g. humans transformed magically into animals; elements of nature as individual personalities.

Adapt the Nanabush stories into your classroom cycle festival.

Groups (guilds) of four to six are responsible for mounting a short play.

Allow time for rehearsal and supplies for basic costume pieces (masks, etc).

Create an outline of your modern fairytale (see Pre-show activities herein)

Divide the outline into scenes and group students into guilds to write and perform a short scene.

Present them in sequence to another class.

Intermediate/Senior

Create your own children's theatre: choose one story or create a cycle of several short stories connected by theme, character or setting. E.g. Nanabush stories or scenes from different plays.

Create a spring outdoor theatrical event: use nature to help tell your stories. E.g. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Write a play review focusing on effectiveness of the show's staging.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Stories

East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon

<http://www.surlunefairytales.com/authors/asbjornsenmoe/eastsunwestmoon.html>

The Three Billy Goats Gruff

<http://www.welcometonorway.co.uk/culture2.shtml>

The Real Mother Goose

<http://trmg.designwest.com>

The Beauty and the Beast

<http://user1291600.sites.myregisteredsite.com/library/id88.html>

Nanabush and the Wild Rose Bushes

<http://user1291600.sites.myregisteredsite.com/library/id9.html>

A Collection of Nanabush Stories

<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Gorge/1066/513ojibwa.htm?20062>

more info on ...

Caravan Farm Theatre

<http://www.caravanfarmtheatre.com>

The Arboretum

<http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca>

Pageant Wagon Routes

<http://jerz.setonhill.edu/resources/PSim/applet/index.html>

Norway

<http://www.emb-norway.ca>

<http://www.welcometonorway.co.uk>

Mother Goose Primary Activities

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~pfa/dreamhouse/nursery/rhymes.html>



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The National Youth and Education Trust

Investing in young Canadians through the performing arts:
as young audiences, through professional training
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