

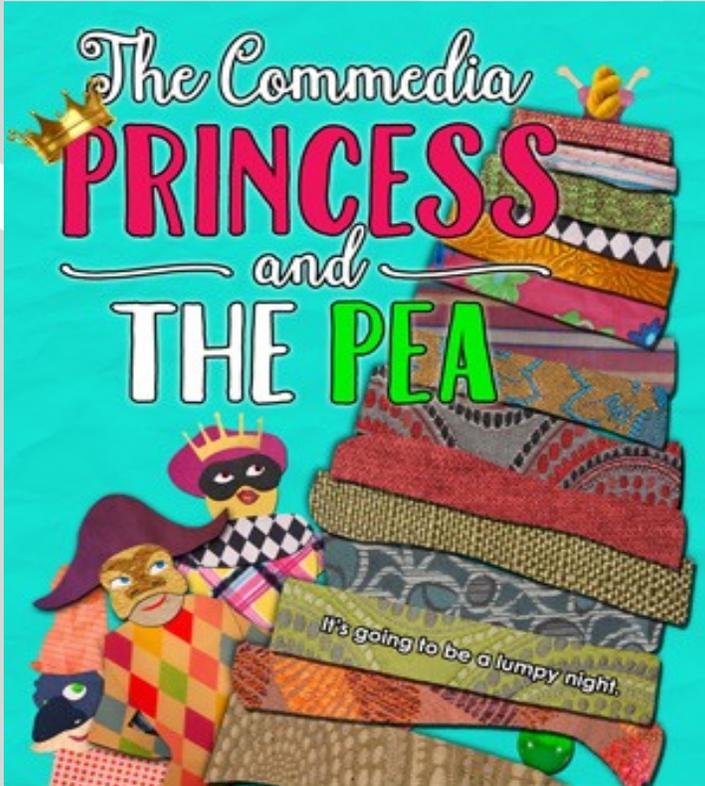


Teacher Resource Guide and Lesson Plan Activities

Featuring general information about our production along with some creative activities which will help you make connections to your classroom curriculum, before and after the show.



The production and accompanying activities address **North Carolina Essential Standards in Theatre Arts, Goal A.1: Analyze literary texts and performances.** Look for this symbol throughout the resource guide for other curriculum connections.



By Lane Riosley and Rebecca L. Byars
Based on *The Princess and the Pea*
by Hans Christian Andersen
Directed by Carlos Cruz

About Children's Theatre of Charlotte

Founded in 1948, Children's Theatre of Charlotte has been opening young minds to the wonders of live theatre for over half a century. Today it continues to be one of the most technically imaginative and resourceful theatres in the country. Annually it reaches nearly 300,000 young people and their families with multiple program areas: Mainstage productions, a Professional Touring Company and a full scope of Education classes for both schools and the community. Children's Theatre of Charlotte is housed in **ImaginOn: The Joe & Joan Martin Center**. The facility is shared with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library: www.cmlibrary.org.

About the Play

A tiny pea under twenty mattresses is the Queen's final test to see if her beloved son's chosen bride is worthy of his hand. Hans Christian Andersen's classic fairy tale meets the comic storytelling of Italian *Commedia dell'arte*.

About the Author

Hans Christian Andersen was born in 1805 in the town of Odense in Denmark. His parents were very poor and his family lived in a one-room house by the Odense River. When Hans was a little boy he spent days with his grandmother, who worked in a home for elderly people. The old women who lived there would fill his ears with the fairy tales and legends of the Danish countryside. At 14, he left Odense for Copenhagen hoping to become an actor. Scholars suggest that Andersen was dyslexic and preferred telling stories to writing them down. Despite this, writing became his passion. In 1834, he published his first book of fairy tales. Over time he wrote numerous works, most famously **The Little Mermaid, The Emperor's New Clothes, The Snow Queen** and **The Ugly Duckling**. Andersen's stories have been translated into over 150 languages.



About the Playwright

Lane Riosley is the recipient of the Roger L. Stevens Award in Playwriting from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Fund for New American Plays. Lane has 15 plays in publication. Her plays have been produced by The Actor's Company of Burbank, The West Coast Ensemble, The Little Top Theatre Company, The Texas Renaissance Festival, Early Stages of Houston, The Merry Go Round Theatre, Asolo Theatre and, of course, Children's Theatre of Charlotte!



“Only a real princess could be as sensitive as that.”

A troupe of four travelling actors put a comic twist on the tale by Hans Christian Andersen about a girl who proves herself a princess by feeling a pea through twenty mattresses. Instruments, acrobatics, masks and slapstick humor come together to retell this fairy tale in the unique style of Italian Commedia dell’arte.



Character List

In the tradition of Commedia dell’arte, actors play a variety of characters. Masks are used to show different characters.

Columbine is a common girl, good at dance. She plays the role of the Princess.

Arlequin is the mischief-maker; clever and athletic. He plays the role of the Prince.

Punchin is bombastic and proud. He plays the role of the Butler.

Rosetta is a country girl. She plays the roles of the Queen and the Fairy Godmother.



The Art of Commedia dell’arte

Commedia dell’arte is a style of acting that flourished in Italy during the 16th and 17th centuries. The literal translation of Commedia dell’arte is **company of comedians**. However, the Commedia artists were not simply comedians. They were highly skilled artists, mimes, acrobats and musicians who used all of these skills in staging their plays.

Due to the restrictions of touring, the commedia artists became experts at creating full shows using relatively little scenery, props or costumes. Actors frequently wore masks and depended on their bodies and on their voices to help create their characters. The scenery they carried was simple, and they often carried a portable stage. Therefore they could perform almost anywhere. Often they acted out set pieces when the pieces weren’t available, becoming fountains, lamps or statues until their character was needed in the action again.

Commedia actors rarely memorized any dialogue. Instead they staged their shows by following a basic plot outline and improvising the dialogue. Players knew each plot outline so well that they only had to hang a brief outline of the scenes backstage to keep them on track.

Companies were often made up of members of the same family. An actor might become so famous for the character he played that people knew him by the character’s name rather than by his own name. Actors often played the same character for life and sometimes passed the traditions of their character on to their children.

Eventually the commedia troupes toured all over Europe. They were such good mimics that audiences could follow their story lines even if audience members didn’t speak Italian.



In the Commedia tradition, the actors perform a “Play within a Play”.

LARGER than LIFE!

Applying the concepts of Commedia dell'arte to Descriptive Writing

As evidenced in the production of **The Commedia Princess and the Pea**, the theatrical style of Commedia dell'arte is larger than life. The characters are exaggerated through the use of ornate facial masks and extreme physical actions. Examples of this expressive style can also be applied to storytelling, art and creative writing in the classroom.



Group Walk: Instruct students to walk around the room silently using plain, neutral steps. After a few seconds of neutral walking, call out instructions to change the way the group walks. Walk quickly. Walk s-l-o-w-l-y. Walk sadly. Walk cheerfully. Walk like there's bubble gum on the ground. Walk like you're stuck in mud. Walk like you're stepping on red hot lava. Walk like a small child. Walk like an old person. Walk like a secret agent. Walk like a king or queen. Remind students that this is a silent activity and that the focus is on the action.

Character Walk: Ask for a volunteer to stand in front of the room. On the board, write a simple sentence such as "The boy jumped" and encourage the volunteer to act it out. Next, ask the volunteer (or a new volunteer) to add an action or character trait to the action. For example, The boy jumped off a chair. The boy jumped over a puddle. The goofy boy jumped like a frog. The happy boy jumped rope. Discuss how the actions of the character make the sentence more interesting.

Build a Super Size Sentence: Think about the actions in the group walk and the character walk and use those ideas to create interesting sentences. Use a simple sentence as a starting point. Add detail or description to the sentence, using adjectives, action words and senses. A chart similar to the one below could be a helpful sentence-building tool.

A	<i>(adjectives—describing words)</i>	child <i>(who? what?)</i>	played <i>(verbs, action words)</i>	<i>(where? how?)</i>
Some		fish	swam	
The		wizard		in the castle.

Masked Emotions: Create paper masks in class. Direct students to choose an emotion and decorate their mask as that emotion. A happy mask might have colorful feathers; a sad mask might have darker, bluer tones; a surprised mask might have wide stripes around the eyes. Introduce a simple statement, such as "The girl walked down the street." Encourage students to "put on" their emotional mask and retell the sentence using that emotion.

Vocabulary Enrichment

absurd (*adj*) – silly, ridiculous
allege (*v*) – to state as a fact without proof
applicant (*n*) – someone who wants a job or position
crafty (*adj*) – sneaky, sly, tricky
delicate (*adj*) – easily hurt; fragile
devious (*adj*) – sly, crafty, wily, sneaky
dolt (*n*) – a person who is not very smart
flaw (*n*) – fault, defect, mistake
mere (*adj*) – simple, plain

particular (*n*) – hard to please
postpone (*v*) – to put off for later
prospects (*n*) – things to come
qualified (*adj*) – able; fit to do a job
scheme (*n*) – plan, plot
temperamental (*adj*) – gets excited easily; moody
withdraw (*v*) – remove oneself from the contest

Which of the vocabulary words listed here was repeated over and over in the play?



Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: L2: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases. W5: Add details to strengthen writing.

Compare and Contrast

Children's Theatre of Charlotte's production of **The Commedia Princess and the Pea** is an adaptation of the story originally written by Hans Christian Andersen. To compare and contrast the original story with the play version, below is the translated text of Andersen's original work.

ONCE upon a time there was a prince who wanted to marry a princess; but she would have to be a real princess. He travelled all over the world to find one, but nowhere could he get what he wanted. There were princesses enough, but it was difficult to find out whether they were real ones. There was always something about them that was not as it should be. So he came home again and was sad, for he would have liked very much to have a real princess.

One evening a terrible storm came on; there was thunder and lightning, and the rain poured down in torrents. Suddenly a knocking was heard at the city gate, and the old king went to open it.

It was a princess standing out there in front of the gate. But, good gracious! what a sight the rain and the wind had made her look. The water ran down from her hair and clothes; it ran down into the toes of her shoes and out again at the heels. And yet she said that she was a real princess.

"Well, we'll soon find that out," thought the old queen. But she said nothing, went into the bed-room, took all the bedding off the bedstead, and laid a pea on the bottom; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on the pea, and then twenty eider-down beds on top of the mattresses.

On this the princess had to lie all night. In the morning she was asked how she had slept. "Oh, very badly!" said she. "I have scarcely closed my eyes all night. Heaven only knows what was in the bed, but I was lying on something hard, so that I am black and blue all over my body. It's horrible!"

Now they knew that she was a real princess because she had felt the pea right through the twenty mattresses and the twenty eider-down beds. Nobody but a real princess could be as sensitive as that.

So the prince took her for his wife, for now he knew that he had a real princess; and the pea was put in the museum, where it may still be seen, if no one has stolen it.

There, that is a true story.

Draw a Venn Diagram on the board. Using the list below, determine if each plot point was **only** in the original version of the story, **only** in the Commedia play version of the story or in **both** the original and play versions.

- The Prince was sad at the beginning of the story.
- The Prince made announcements to hang up in ten kingdoms.
- The Prince travelled all over the world looking for a Princess.
- The Queen had a Butler.
- The King opened the door to the castle.
- A Fairy Godmother came to visit the Prince.
- A terrible thunderstorm occurred and the Princess arrived at the castle soaking wet.
- The Queen gave the Princess a test to see if she was a real princess.
- The Princess couldn't sleep because she felt the pea through the mattresses.
- The Prince and the Princess got married.
- The pea was put in a museum.



Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: RL7: Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text. RL2.9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story.

Questions for Discussion

1. In keeping with the Commedia tradition, a troupe of actors play a variety of characters in **The Princess and the Pea**. What elements are used to tell the different characters apart? How do the masks enhance the story?
2. At the beginning of the play, why is the Prince sad? What happens to help him understand his sadness and what does he decide to do about it?
3. Who seems to make all the decisions the family? Do you think the Prince is old enough to make his own decisions about who he should marry?
4. Is there a Fairy Godmother in the original story of **The Princess and the Pea**? Why does Rosetta change the play and put a fairy godmother in the Commedia version?
5. Why do you think the Queen was so against the idea of the prince getting married? Wouldn't she want her son to be happy?
6. Describe the Princess. In addition to being very sensitive and able to feel a pea through twenty mattresses, what were some other qualities about her? What do you think it means to be a "real" princess?
7. Think about another familiar fairy tale that you know; maybe Cinderella, Jack & the Beanstalk, or perhaps a story that you're reading in class. If the actors from the show were to present a version of that story, what might it look like? Who would play which character?

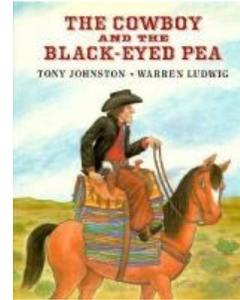
Mapping Skills

The acting style of Commedia dell'arte originated in Italy. Italy is a long peninsula shaped like a boot. It is slightly larger than the state of Arizona. Locate Italy on a classroom map. Identify the bodies of water and landforms that are connected to Italy.



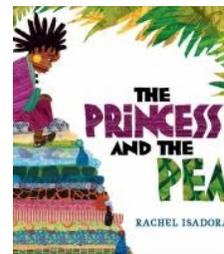
Other Variations of The Princess & the Pea

The Cowboy and the Black-Eyed Pea by Tony Johnson



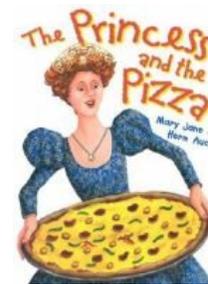
In this adaptation, the daughter of a wealthy Texas rancher devises a plan to find a real cowboy among her many suitors.

The Princess and the Pea by Rachel Isadora



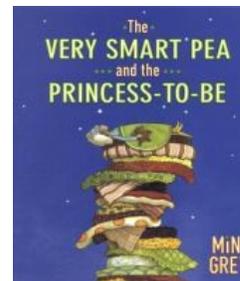
This retelling takes readers to an African setting, illustrated by Caldecott Honor winning artist Rachel Isadora.

The Princess and the Pizza by Mary Jane and Herm Auch



An out of work princess applies to become the bride of Prince Drupert, but first she must pass several tests including a cooking contest.

The Very Smart Pea and the Princess-to-Be by Mini Grey



This witty and clever adaptation retells the story from the point of view of the pea.



North Carolina Essential Standards, Social Studies 1.G.1.1: Use geographic tools to identify characteristics and various landforms and bodies of water. Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: SL2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. RL2.9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story.

Theatre Corner

Every play produced by Children's Theatre of Charlotte is created in the city of Charlotte by a talented team of designers, carpenters, stitchers, props masters and lighting technicians, not to mention the director and the actors. Because it is presented live, a play is very different from a television show or a movie. As a class, discuss what you experienced when you went to the theatre.

1. What was the first thing you noticed on the stage?
2. Name three things you noticed about the set. Did the set help tell the story? What sort of set would you have designed?
3. What did you like about the costumes? Did they fit the story? What sort of costumes would you have designed?
4. What role did lighting play in telling the story? How did the lights enhance what you were seeing?
5. Talk about the actors. Were there moments you were so caught up in the story that you forgot you were watching a play? Talk about those moments.
6. Is there a TV or movie version of the play you saw today? What makes a stage play unique?
7. Were there any actors who played more than one character? At what point in the play could you tell that it was the same person? What are some ways that you can be the same person but play different characters?



Write to us!

Letters to the actors can be addressed to:
Children's Theatre of Charlotte
300 E. 7th Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

Meet the Company



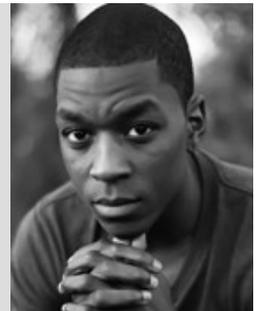
Leslie Ann Giles is in her 10th season touring with Children's Theatre of Charlotte! She is originally from Anderson, SC, and graduated from Winthrop University with a BA in Theatre Performance. She spent a year as an acting apprentice at Round House Theatre in MD before calling CTC her home. She won the 2011 MTA award for Outstanding Lead Actor (female) for her work with Stephen Seay Productions, and has been nominated several times for her roles with CTC. "Thank you to my ever supportive family, to Michael and Girlie for all their love, and to our wonderful audiences for making my dream a reality!" FOLLOW OUR ADVENTURES ON THE ROAD VIA TWITTER! @CTCTouring

Veda Covington is thrilled to be one of the newest members of the Resident Touring Company for the 2015-16 season. It has been a remarkable journey for her to make it to this level in her artistic career. Previous Children's Theatre of Charlotte credits include; *Balloonacy* & *Don't Tell Me I Can't Fly*. Veda truly has a passion for performing, and believes that this opportunity will continue to help polish those skills that define her craft. She would like to thank those that have taken part in this process thus far, and is looking forward to the lasting impressions our company will make on the lives of each of our audiences.



Scott A. Miller is in his 4th season with CTC. He has been featured in *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *Interrupting Vanessa*, *Mike Mulligan*, *Spelling 2-5-5*, *A Commedia Christmas Carol*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Too Many Frogs*, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, and *Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*, among others. Scott has also been on stage with many Charlotte theatre companies such as Actor's Theatre of Charlotte, CAST, Queen City Theatre Company, Three Bone Theatre, and the Charlotte Shakespeare Festival. Originally from Newport, NY, Scott couldn't be happier to call himself a transplant here and share his love of theatre with children and families of Charlotte and beyond!

Rahsheem Shabazz is best known for his role in the feature film *Blood Done Sign My Name* (Student #1) and the CBS television series *Under the Dome* (Jones). He has done numerous stage plays which include: *Othello* (Iago), *A Raisin' in the Sun* (Walter Lee), *Fame* (Goody), *A Soldiers Story* (Private Anthony Smalls) and *Stick Fly* (Kent Levay). Rahsheem has been performing since he was 3 years old in New York City where he was born and raised. He is extremely excited to be back on the stage and performing with the Resident Touring Company.



Children's Theatre of Charlotte is sincerely grateful to our generous sponsors and supporters:



www.ncarts.org

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