

STUDY GUIDE
for
JABBERWOCKY
A Tales & Scales Musictale performance

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National Standards Met in Viewing the Performance and Classroom Discussion

Music Content Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

Achievement Standard: Students demonstrate perceptual skills by moving, by answering questions about, and by describing aural examples of music of various styles representing diverse cultures.

Achievement Standard: Students identify the sounds of a variety of instruments, including many orchestra and band instruments, and instruments from various cultures, as well as children's voices and male and female adult voices.

Music Content Standard 8: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.

Achievement Standard: Students identify ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with those of music.

Theatre Content Standard 6: Comparing and connecting art forms by describing theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms.

Achievement Standard: Students describe visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts.

Achievement Standard: Students compare how ideas and emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts.

Theatre Content Standard 7: Analyzing and explaining personal preferences and constructing meanings from classroom dramatizations and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions.

Achievement Standard: Students articulate emotional responses to and explain personal preferences about the whole as well as the parts of dramatic performances.

National Standards Met in Classroom Activities

1. TRANSFORMATIONS

Language Arts K – 12.12

Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Theatre Content Standard 2: Acting by playing roles, developing basic acting skills, communicating characters in improvisations.

Achievement Standard 2C: Students assume roles that exhibit concentration and contribute to the action of classroom dramatizations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history.

2. JABBERWOCKY Mad-Lib, 3. JABBERgrammer & 4. The Portmanteau Poetry Game

Language Arts K – 12.3

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.

Language Arts K – 12.6

Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

Language Arts K – 12.12

Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

INTRODUCTION:

The information and activities in this study guide are intended to enhance your enjoyment and extend the educational value of Tales & Scales' performance of JABBERWOCKY. ***It is not necessary to prepare students in any way*** for the production. The performance stands on its own as a satisfying and stimulating entertainment.

However, we, like other performing artists, have discovered that some young audiences have little or no experience attending live theater. It is helpful to introduce the following ideas to your students before the performance:

- Your participation as an audience is very important to the success of the performance;
- Unlike television programs and movies, the performers on the stage can hear and see you. What you do and say affects what they do on the stage;
- The audience members who get the most from live performances keep their eyes, their ears and their minds open. You will probably miss something exciting if you don't!

Thank you, and enjoy JABBERWOCKY!

ABOUT TALES & SCALES:

TALES & SCALES is in its 20th year of touring the United States with unique productions called MUSICTALES. Each Musictale is written and composed especially for the troupe to perform. The four members of the troupe are classically trained musicians who have many other talents and skills. (Biographies of the performing and collaborating artists are in the last section of this Study Guide) They play their instruments, act, and dance to perform the Musictales. So each Tale is told in music, words, and movement.

This unique way of performing requires an exceptional imagination. There are almost no costumes, props or scenery used, and often each performer is required to play several different roles. The musical instruments used in the performance become many different things. These "transformations" are an important part of the Musictale experience, and are intended to spark audience's imagination as well.

Each performance of a Musictale is followed by an opportunity to meet the performers and ask questions about the production. We hope you and your students will take advantage of this unique opportunity. The next generation of Musictellers may be sitting next to you!

ABOUT OUR INSTRUMENTS:

Flute (Woodwind family) In its primitive beginnings, the flute was made of materials such as clay, bamboo or bone. Today, the modern flute is made of silver and sometimes gold. It is the only woodwind instrument that doesn't use a reed. Orchestral flutes have been in existence since the 12th century. The piccolo is smaller and higher in pitch than the regular flute and usually made of wood and silver.

Oboe (Woodwind family) The modern oboe was developed from a 12th century instrument called the shawm. The shawm was the first woodwind instrument to use a double reed, made from two thin pieces of bamboo tied together, to create its sound. While the shawm had simple finger holes like a recorder, oboes now have a complex system of keys to create different pitches.

Saxophone (Woodwind family) The saxophone is a woodwind instrument that is classified with clarinets as members of the single-reed family, but is actually a hybrid of the clarinet and the oboe. Like the clarinet, the saxophone has a single reed attached to a beaked mouthpiece, but its conical tube and flared bell are more typical of the oboe family. The saxophone was invented about 1840 by Adolphe Sax, a Belgian instrument-maker working in Paris.

Trombone (Brass family) The trombone's origin dates back to 750 BC when man first blew into animal horns to create sound. The trombone was the first brass instrument able to play all the notes of any scale and found its first use in the church to help reinforce vocal choirs. Like a choir, the trombone family consists of a bass, tenor, soprano and alto. In the Tales & Scales performance, you will be hearing and seeing a *bass* trombone.

Euphonium (Brass family) Often referred to as a small, or tenor tuba, the euphonium is also a member of the brass family. It is played by operating valves with fingers, unlike the trombone, which is played by moving a 'slide' from note to note.

Percussion instruments are those that sound by shaking or striking one object with another. There are two kinds: those that are pitched (like the vibraphone and glockenspiel/bells) and those that are not pitched (like tam-tams, shakers and some drums). Percussion instruments can be made out of almost anything and Tales & Scales not only uses a variety of pitched and non-pitched instruments, but also uses 'found sounds' such as trash, rocks, water, leaves, or pot lids.

ABOUT JABBERWOCKY:

Lewis Carroll wrote THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS, AND WHAT ALICE FOUND THERE in 1871. In the story, the young Alice has a fantastic journey that begins when she steps through the mirror hanging above the mantel in her living room. In the "looking glass" world Alice meets many unusual characters and discovers that the rules of living are often the reverse of what she expects. She discovers a book in which the letters and words are all reversed - a mirror image of a normal page. (Hold the poem printed below up to a mirror and you will see what Alice saw *without* a mirror). In the book there is a poem called JABBERWOCKY. Here are the words to that poem:

Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought--
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and
through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

POETRY, PERFORMANCE, and POINTS OF VIEW:

The words in the poem JABBERWOCKY are the only words used in this Music-tale. Some of the words are familiar, and tell the story of the beamish boy's encounter with the dragon-like Jabberwock. Some are nonsense words made up by Lewis Carroll. In the Musictale, you will hear some of these words repeated.

In the Musictale version of the poem, the story is told three times, each time from a different point of view. You will see the story "rewind" and start again. In each version the words have a different meaning.

- First, the person who wants to rid the world of the Jabberwock (the percussionist) tells her version of the story;
- The next is a version of the story told by the boy who kills the Jabberwock; and
- The last, is told from the perspective of the Jabberwock, itself!

Abstractions

Lewis Carroll's works, ALICE IN WONDERLAND and THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS create fantasy worlds for Alice to explore. In a way, the worlds are distortions or abstractions of the real world. It could be said that Carroll, like many artists, set his stories in an abstract world, so that we might see the real world in a new light. This concept can be difficult to communicate, but is an important part of understanding all artworks that use abstraction.

If you already have experience using abstract poetry in the classroom, these paragraphs will be easy reading. If not, here are some suggestions.

The concept of *abstraction* is sometimes easier to introduce visually. (Students of Art History, please forgive the generalities!) The abstract paintings of Picasso are a good place to start. In many of his works, young students can clearly see familiar objects that have been changed in some way – abstracted. Many graphic novel (comic- book) artists use visual abstractions in the way they draw. With these two examples in hand (there are many others) a discussion can begin about the examples:

- What do you recognize in the artwork? - objects, animals, people?
- What has the artist done to abstract them?
 - unusual coloring
 - changing the size or dimension
 - altering the shape in some way
 - putting familiar objects in unusual settings
 - other things?
- Does the way in which the artist has abstracted the scene or objects make you feel a certain way about the scene?
 - does it make you laugh?
 - are you uncomfortable?
 - are you frightened? sad?

With older students, it may be possible to use even more abstract art works, that use only shapes and colors to communicate. Many of the discussion questions listed above still apply.

Verbal abstractions are found in many forms in poetry. In JABBERWOCKY, Carroll makes up words that can have many meanings. In the works of other poets, (e e cummings, Gertrude Stein, and T. S Elliot, to name a few) whole phrases and sentences are abstracted to create an impression beyond the meaning of the words themselves. Sometimes it is the sound of word that provides the most powerful meaning. Often, the intent is the same as visual abstraction – to show us (or tell us) the world from a different angle in order to reveal some truth.

The words in JABBERWOCKY are abstract, but they may seem to have a meaning when you say them out loud. Try it with your students. Ask them to use the words in their own sentences and see what happens. Perhaps they will be able to construct entire abstract sentences. The last step – can they communicate something with the abstraction. You may be surprised by their success.

The Open-ended Story

The *open-ended story* – a story with no conclusive ending – has become more and more popular in our culture. Films and television scripts often tempt us to interpret an ending. The Musictale, JABBERWOCKY does just that. By presenting the story from multiple points of view audience members might select their favorite version. But a discussion of all the perspectives might reveal a variety of ideas. These questions might spark the discussion:

- What differences in the versions of the battle did you notice?
- Did one version seem more real or true than the others?
- Who won the battle? What did they win?
- Was there a bad guy and a good guy?
- What did you see in the ending of the performance?

If this seems too abstract for your students, try this exercise:

Divide the class in half. Everyone is at a baseball game. One half are fans of the green team, the other are fans of the red team. Imagine it is the last out of the last inning of the game. The red team is up at bat and is one run behind. There is a base hit and the batter runs, slides and is tagged at first. The umpire decides the man is out and the game is over. The red fans say that the ump was wrong, even the ones who saw the play. The green fans say it was the right call. Both saw the same thing, but interpreted it differently.

Before the conversation turns into a brawl, ask the questions:

- What did you feel when the call was made? (There will be two different sets of emotional reactions)
- What did you talk about on the way home from the game? What kind of words did you use to describe the last moments of it?
- How will you tell someone who was NOT at the game what you saw happen?
- Did the game have a TRUE ending? A RIGHT ending?
- Have you ever had a life experience (not necessarily a sporting event) that was similar to this? What happened?

CLASS ROOM ACTIVITIES:

The activities described below can be presented before and/or after the performance. They are designed to engage students in the Tales & Scales process, and engage them more deeply in the poem, JABBERWOCKY.

1. Transformations

Tales & Scales artists transform their instruments and bodies into props and characters throughout their Musictales: a cymbal becomes a shield, a drumstick becomes a sword, or a flute becomes a computer.

To play Transformations:

- a. Gather ordinary objects or hand-held instruments and display in front of the class. (i.e. eraser, pen, kitchen utensil, triangle, etc.)
- b. Select an object and demonstrate how it can be transformed. You could use a wooden spoon and act out the following activities:
 - Swing the spoon as if it is a golf club;
 - Mime combing your hair with the spoon;
 - Cast the spoon forward and hold it as if it is a fishing rod.
- c. Have student volunteers choose an object and perform a transformation in front of the class. Ask the class to guess the transformed object.

Additional suggestions: Encourage students to use both their bodies and voices to add detail to their transformations. After students identify a transformation, ask them what the performer did to make the transformation clear. Remember that the object of the game is for the transformation to be guessed quickly, and therefore it must be executed clearly.

2. JABBERWOCKY Mad-lib

JABBERWOCKY is full of nonsense words invented by Lewis Carroll. Try this exercise for creative fun.

- a. Read the poem with the class
- b. Identify the nonsense words with students
- c. Ask students to replace the nonsense words with real words, or their own nonsense words.
- d. Read the new versions out loud.

EXAMPLE:

Original -

'Twas *brillig*, and the *slithy toves*
Did *gyre* and *gimble* in the *wabe*;

New-

T'was *raining* and the *running boy*
did *slip* and *stumble* in the *street*;

3. JABBERgrammar

With older students studying grammar, try this variation on the above Mad-lib:

- Write out the poem;
- Label the parts of speech for the nonsense words;
- Insert appropriate real words, or original nonsense words for the parts of speech.

EXAMPLE:

'Twas (*adjective*), **and the** (*adjective*) (*plural noun*)
Did (*verb*) **and** (*verb*) **in the** (*noun: place*);
All (*adjective*) **were the** (*plural noun*),
And the (*adjective*) (*plural noun*) (*verb*).

"Beware the (*noun "a"*), **my son!**
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the (*noun*), **and shun**
The (*adjective*) (*noun*)!"

He took his (*adjective "a"*) **sword in hand:**
Long time the (*adjective*) **foe he sought--**
So rested he by the (*noun*),
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in (*adverb*) **thought he stood,**
The (*noun "a" again*), **with eyes of flame,**
Came (*adverb*) **through the** (*adjective*) **wood,**
And (*verb, past-tense*) **as it came!**

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The (*adjective "a" again*) **blade went** (*loud sound*)!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went (*adverb*) **back.**

"And hast thou slain the (*noun "a" again*)?
Come to my arms, my (*adjective*) **boy!**
O (*adjective*) **day!** (*exclamation*)! (*different exclamation*)!"
He (*verb, past tense*) **in his joy.**

(repeat your first stanza here)

Additional Suggestion: When doing this exercise with older students, allow **them** to label the original nonsense words as parts of speech. Notice that there is some ambiguity (the "mome raths outgrabe," for example, could be labeled several different ways, and requires some creative and critical thinking.)

4. The Portmanteau Poetry Game

Your class may be ready to experiment with a word concept that Humpty –Dumpty introduces to Alice in THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS. He explains, "Well, *"slithy"* means 'lithe and slimy.'" You see it is like a portmanteau – there are two meanings packed up into one word." A portmanteau word is one that combines parts of two different words, like "brunch." Humpty gives a few more examples, but the fun begins when students try their own hand at this. Come up with your own combinations, or use these to get things started:

To play the Portmanteau Game:

- Read the poem "Jabberwocky" to the class.
- Create a list on the blackboard of the portmanteau words in the poem. Have the students express verbally or in a drawing how each word makes them feel.
- Give each student a series of words to combine into a portmanteau (i.e. "sweetly-anxious" could become "swanxious"). These may be new vocabulary words the class has learned. Other suggestions

Sad Underwear and Other Complications: More Poems For Children and Their Parents by Judith Viorst and Richard Hill; Simon and Schuster, 1995

The Baby Uggs are Hatching by Jack Prelutsky; Harper-Trophy, 1989

The Shel Silverstein Collection

Where the Sidewalk Ends: Poems and Drawings; Harper Collins, 1974

A Light in the Attic; Harper Collins, 1981

Falling Up; Harper Collins, 1996

Runny Babbit: A Billy Sook; Harper Collins, 2005

A Giraffe and a Half; Harper Collins, 1964

Books by Dr. Seuss

Fox in Socks; Random House, 1965

The Butter Battle Book; Random House, 1984

Tales Told from Different Perspectives:

The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales; by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith; Viking Juvenile, 1992

Babushka Baba Yaga; written and illustrated by Patricia Polacco; Putnam Juvenile, 1993

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs By A. Wolf as told to Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith; Puffin, 1996

ABOUT THE COLLABORATING ARTISTS:

Doug Lofstrom, composer

Composer and bassist **Doug Lofstrom** has been composer-in-residence for the Metropolis Symphony Orchestra and musical director of Chicago's Free Street Theater. His works have been performed by the St. Louis, Indianapolis and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras, and the Present Music and Revolution Ensemble chamber ensembles. His most recent endeavors include a ballet score for *The Mirror*, commissioned by the Midwest Ballet Theatre and a *Concertino for Oboe and Orchestra*, commissioned by the New Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2001, Lofstrom formed The New Quartet, a versatile chamber ensemble which performs his original music and arrangements of modern classics, jazz and world music. Mr. Lofstrom has composed three works for Tales & Scales, including *The Arabian Nights*, *Just Beyond the Junkyard* and *Jabberwocky*. He is currently on the music faculty of Columbia College in Chicago, IL.

Gary Race, director

Before stage director and arts educator **Gary Race's** recent return to upstate New York, he served for three years as the Director of the Martha Ellen Tye Opera Theater at the University of Iowa. Before this appointment he served for seven years as Director of Opera for the Cleveland Institute of Music. For two seasons he was also Artistic Director of Lyric Opera Cleveland. His thirty-some years of experience have included directing over 100 productions for regional companies including Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Cincinnati Opera, Tri-Cities Opera, Whitewater Opera, The Kennedy Center in Washington DC, and Utah Opera among others. In 1994 he made his European debut directing *MADAMA BUTTERFLY* for the Stadttheater Lueneburg in Germany. As an educator he has presented workshops on performance techniques for opera singers in many colleges and universities including Carnegie-Mellon, Cornell, Duquesne, Syracuse, Miami University, Ithaca College, and the University of Maryland at College Park. He has created and directed arts education programs for many opera companies, for Gateway to the Performing Arts in Pittsburgh, and the National Symphony Orchestra, where he continues to serve as Education Consultant. His programs have won several awards including a national "A+" award from the National Education Association. He was the director of *ANGELS VOICES* at the Kennedy Center, a multi-cultural opera about coping with death. He researched and wrote the libretto for this work, which was commissioned by the Kennedy Center. *Jabberwocky* is his fifth Tales & Scales production.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

Zara Lawler, flute

I began playing the flute when I was in fifth grade—that was the year we started band at my school in Nyack, New York. I was the last kid in my class to be able to make a sound on my instrument! I remember that when I first got a sound on it, I was so excited I ran around the whole neighborhood yelling, “I got a sound on the flute! I got a sound on the flute!” And even though it was pretty much right then that I knew I wanted to be a flutist when I grew up, I also wanted to be lots of other things too: an archeologist, a firefighter, or a gymnast. Now that I am a flutist, one of my favorite things about being a professional musician is all the cool places that you get to visit. Before joining Tales & Scales, I spent three years living in Hong Kong, where I played in the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, and also got to spend summers at music festivals in Germany, Canada, and in Vermont and Massachusetts. I joined Tales & Scales in 2000, and get to travel all over the U.S. with the troupe. Other things that I love to do are Morris dancing (a kind of traditional English folk dance) and playing the banjo.

Meaghan Heinrich, oboe and tenor saxophone

When I was growing up in Huntington, West Virginia, there was always music in my house. My dad played the piano, and he started teaching me to play when I was three years old. In sixth grade, I started playing the saxophone in my band at school because I wanted to be like Lisa Simpson. One day, I went to a concert to hear the West Virginia Symphony, and when I heard the oboe, I decided I wanted to play that too. I hoped that some day I could be in an orchestra and a jazz band. When I joined Tales & Scales in 2004, I also joined the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra, so I get to play both my oboe and my saxophone and make a lot of different kinds of music. I still always have music in my house, and one of my favorite things to do is put on a great CD and dance around my living room. I also like to run, read books, and ride my bicycle.

Neil Parsons, bass trombone and euphonium

I grew up in an artistic family; both of my parents are actors, and I was in my first play when I was 3 years old. My family moved a lot when I was growing up, so I have lived in Kentucky, Ohio, Florida, Texas, Michigan, and now I live in Indiana. I was on many sports teams when I was younger (swimming, basketball, baseball, and football), but I especially liked taking art, music, theatre, and dance classes. I began playing trombone in my 6th-grade band class. I chose the trombone partly because my older brother already played the trumpet, and I wanted to play something different. I also think the trombone is a fun instrument to watch when someone is playing it. I went to a special arts high school called Interlochen Arts Academy and went to college (Oberlin Conservatory and Ohio University) for 6 years before joining Tales & Scales in 1999. When I am at home I like to watch movies, play mini golf, read good books, and play with my two cats.

Bonnie Whiting Smith, percussionist

My parents bought me my first set of drumsticks when I joined the sixth grade band in Ortonville, Michigan. However, I've always loved hitting things and making my own music. Pots, pans, pencils, garbage cans and kitchen utensils were my first musical instruments, and they are still some of my favorite ones. I also studied dance at a young age; tap dancing let me make percussive rhythm with my feet. My love of music has taken me to school in northern Michigan (Interlochen Arts Academy, just like Neil) and Ohio, on a tour of Europe, and to many theaters, schools, and concert halls in the US with Tales & Scales, which I joined in 2005. When I'm not playing percussion, you'll probably find me running or otherwise enjoying the great outdoors.