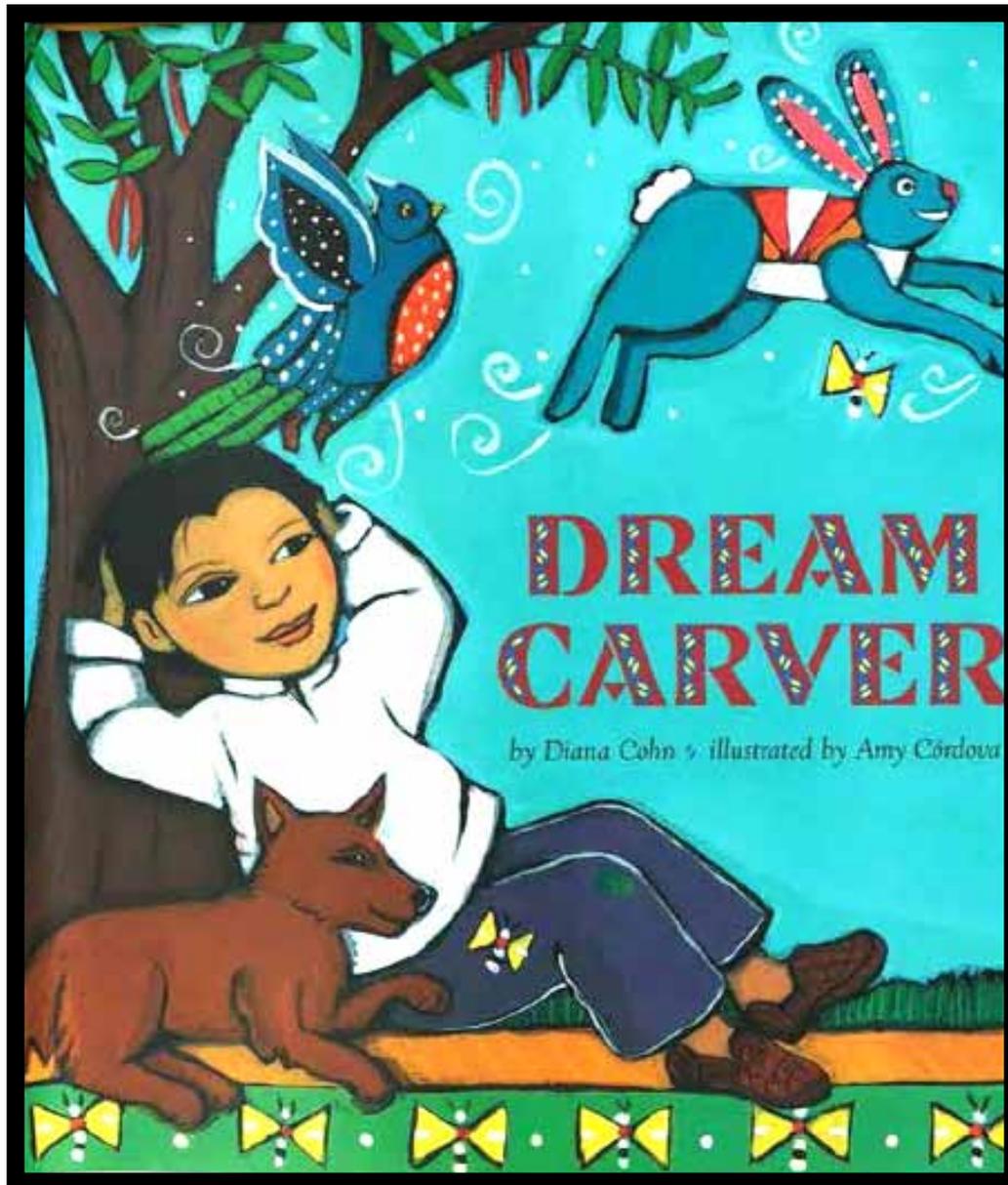


Lied Center for Performing Arts
Student Matinee Program
Swazzle's Dream Carver
2013-2014
Performance Guide for Teachers



Areas of Interest: Puppetry, Music, Bilingual Education, Character Development, History/Social Science, World Language, Culture, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Language Arts

Background

Special performances of world-class artists bring young people and educators (Pre-K-12th grades) together from across Nebraska to share an unforgettable experience. Presenting all genres of performing arts – theater, music and dance – the Lied’s student matinee performances enhance classroom learning, expand cultural awareness and inspire young people and their teachers through exposure to the arts.

About Dream Carver

Dream Carver is a 45-minute bilingual, musical puppet show based on the children’s book of the same name written by Diana Cohn and illustrated by Amy Cordova. *Dream Carver* tells the story of Mateo, a boy growing up in Oaxaca, Mexico whose father has taught him to carve small wooden toys in the traditional way. One day, as Mateo is sitting under a large tree, he dreams of fantastic, brightly colored animals that dance and sing. When he wakes up, he is impelled to bring them to life. Feeling that his father doesn’t support him in his creative endeavor, Mateo secretly sets out to create the animals he saw in his dream. Through the experiences of the story’s hero, *Dream Carver* encourages young audiences to think creatively, try new things, and follow their dreams.

The puppet performance of *Dream Carver*, brought to the Lied Center’s main stage by Swazzle, features a variety of colorful, handcrafted puppets, including large-scale, full-body hand puppets, rod puppets, and black-light puppets.

About Swazzle

In the art of puppetry, a “swazzle” is a metal instrument held in the puppeteer’s mouth for a Punch and Judy show that produces shrill sounds and voices. But for *Dream Carver*, Swazzle is the company that brings this story to life on the stage. Swazzle is a Southern California-based company specializing in puppetry for film, television and stage. Gearing their shows to younger audiences, Swazzle brings lighthearted entertainment that provides uplifting messages for children with puppets they make in-house. They have performed hundreds of shows in venues across the country and worked on productions of every size, including the Emmy-winning music-education video series Juno Jr. and The Pee-wee Herman Show on Broadway. Those who have experienced puppet shows by Swazzle rave about their professionalism



and entertainment. Ginger Safstrom from Temecula Libray said, “Your originality, artistic creativity and dynamic performance skills make you a formidable team!”

The performance of *Dream Carver* features a cast of Broadway-trained puppeteers whose credits include *Avenue Q*, *The Pee-wee Herman Show* and *The Muppets*. The message of the show is delivered in five original songs that encourage young audiences to think creatively, try new things, and follow their dreams.

About Diana Cohn



Dream Carver came from the creative mind of educator and social justice advocate Diana Cohn. Cohn earned her master’s degree in education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and *Dream Carver* was her first published book. After her experience as a classroom teacher, Cohn began to work for a national foundation that is dedicated to supporting communities that work for economic and environmental justice. Living in California, Cohn is currently the Executive Director of the Panta Rhea Foundation, overseeing the grant making for the Social Imagination, Arts and Education Program and the Pollination Ecology Program. Cohn is a member of the National Writers Union. When Cohn is not writing books or fighting social injustices, she finds solace in her hobby of beekeeping, learning more about pollination ecology. From this interest, she and Steve Buchman created The Bee Works, which is an organization that provides public education about pollination ecology.

About Amy Cordova

Mateo’s dreams of brightly colored wood carvings would never have come to life for children without the artistic illustrations of Amy Cordova filling each page of the book. These illustrations inspired the Swazzle puppet creators, who modeled each puppet after the characters and animals/carvings Cordova drew. Winner of a Wisconsin Library Association Illustrators Award, an America’s Award, and two American Library Association Pura Belpre Honors Awards, Cordova has illustrated more than 17 books and has written and illustrated two of her own children’s books. Cordova has traveled across the country offering art residencies and lectures to children and adults using her strong background as an arts educator with a culturally specific curriculum related to the pedagogy of place. Her vibrant use of color adds to her art that she hopes will speak to the connection to the spirit and give a sense of place within a cultural context.

About the Art of Puppetry

The art of puppetry has charmed audiences for centuries. Even from the beginning of time, people have been using puppets to represent what they are discussing. Primitive people would use rocks or twigs to represent the animals they were about to hunt. This continued through the years to finally create the art of puppetry for performance. Since then, a variety of puppetry styles have come to be.



Four major types of puppets emerged and are used in performances. *Dream Carver* uses a combination of all of these types of puppetry. Marionettes, the first style of puppets, are wooden figures that are moved with strings and gravity. They can be used in a number of settings from large theaters to children's stories. The second type of puppets is hand puppets, which cover the hand and forearm and are made of simple items. Hand puppets are the most common because they are so versatile and simple to make. Rod puppets are the third type of puppets to be used in performances. They are usually bigger and have more lifelike movements because they are controlled by rods, which allow them to make bigger gestures. Finally, there are shadow puppets. These usually come from the East and create silhouettes.

About Oaxacan Folk Art

Mateo and his family carve their fantastic wooden figures in Oaxaca, Mexico, which is unique because of its abundance of indigenous cultures that are still alive today. Located in the southwest region of Mexico, Oaxaca is a rugged land that houses at least sixteen indigenous cultures. Because of the rugged land, these people have been able to remain isolated and keep true to their cultures. About a third of the indigenous peoples speak their native language. Along with these native peoples' traditions comes their unique artwork, which students will see through *Dream Carver*. This artwork includes the juguetes, or traditional wood carvings, that Mateo creates as well as pottery and textiles.

Juguetes (Traditional Wood Carvings)

Just as Mateo dreams of brightly colored animals when he sees simple tree limbs, the artists who create these carvings see animals hiding in the branches of the Copal trees of Mexico. Using this wood because it is gnarled and pliable, the carvers use a wet or damp piece to begin their masterpieces, which can be seen in *Dream Carver*, and can sand the finished piece to give it a porcelain shine. Sometimes carvers will create their figures from a single piece of copal wood or use a number of pieces, using knives as large as machetes and as small as kitchen knives to do their carving. After carving their pieces, they sand it to add life and personality to the figure. As can be seen in *Dream Carver*, some of the most prized figures are those that are small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. Manuel Jimenez is said to be the reason these unique carvings became more popular. Jimenez was the first to extend the art beyond the small figurines and create an international market for the Oaxacan wood carvings.

Pottery/Ceramics

Along with making the wood carvings featured in *Dream Carver*, the indigenous peoples of Oaxaca also create ceramics and pottery. Their ceramics and pottery talents lie in a variety of different forms, ranging from terracotta figures to green pottery to black pottery to "chia" pottery. The green and black pottery created by these people is unique to this area of Mexico. The green pottery gets its color from the glaze artists use to coat their pieces before it is fired. The Spanish brought this glaze to Oaxaca in the 1500s, and the artists have been using it since to make ceramic pieces that are often used for cooking or serving food. The black pottery gets its color from the clay that artists use. This already dark clay becomes darker during the firing process because the artists use a method that encourages an oxidative reaction. Then the artists use a method of polishing developed by Dona Rosa Real de Nieto, which uses polishing rocks to give a





distinct sheen the these dark pieces of pottery.

Textiles

The native Oaxacans also produce a number of textiles that add to their array of folk art. Many of these textiles, which include traditional clothing, blankets, and rugs, originally used a backstrap loom to weave their cotton or ixtle, which is a fiber from a maguey plant. To dye these materials, native Oaxacans originally used natural resources, such as making bright red dye from cochineal beetle larvae. Even though natural dyes began to be replaced with aniline dyes, artists are moving back to these natural dyes because they believe the natural resources create more superior dyes and they hope to keep the traditional weaving practices alive. When the Spanish arrived in the 1500s, however, some artists began using an upright loom and incorporating Catholic imagery into their pieces of work. Embroidery has also become an indication of Oaxacan textiles.



Whatever you can do, or
dream you can, begin it.

Boldness has **genious**, **power**
and **magic** in it.

Begin it now.

-Goethe

Curriculum Connections

Possible Follow-Up Lessons

To ensure that students receive a truly arts integrated learning experience, it may help to continue using the arts or provide a number of follow up activities after attending *Swazzle's Dream Carver*. The Kennedy Center for Performing Arts offers a number of interdisciplinary lessons that may be helpful following the performance. Within these lessons, many opportunities exist to promote literacy with your students. Below are a few examples of such lessons:

A Listening Doll

Create traditional Native American storyteller dolls

Dream Carver is about celebrating imagination and cultural traditions, and this lesson from the Kennedy Center allows students to do the same with the Pueblo Indian culture. Much like the Oaxacan wood carvings, the Pueblo people create small figures of animals or people, but they do so out of clay. Along with their love of sculpting, they also love the art of storytelling. Combining these two passions, the Pueblo people created the tradition of the "storyteller dolls." This lesson invites students to learn the storytelling process by listening to a variety of stories and finishes by having the students create their own storyteller doll that would imitate those of the Native American storyteller dolls. To extend this lesson, teachers can also have students write their own stories to go with the doll. This encourages students to become more literate as they must access their prior knowledge of what makes a story and create one worth telling. Students will develop a greater literacy in visual arts, theater, social studies, and language arts. To view this entire lesson, visit http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/Listening_Doll.aspx

Adjective Monster

Use language arts and literary arts to creatively tell stories and express emotions

This lesson from the Kennedy Center also utilizes a children's story to learn core and arts content material by combining the language arts and the visual arts. It begins by having students read *Go Away Big Green Monster* by Ed Emberley, which acts a way to introduce adjectives. The students will study adjectives as descriptive words. They will choose an adjective or a few adjectives and create their own "monster" that would fit those adjectives. To tie it back to *Dream Carver*, it may be also good to reference Mateo's carvings and have the students brainstorm a list of adjectives that would fit his pieces of art before creating their own paper sculpture of a monster. Because this lesson is geared toward a younger grade level, it may be helpful to have them practice reading portions of the book aloud to ensure they become more literate in both reading and science concepts. One way to promote this reading aloud would be to have students partner up, sharing a copy of the book between them, and then whenever you stop, they must all read the following word aloud as a class. By pausing on the words that enhance your lesson's objectives, you will be reinforcing the content as well as promoting more literacy as students must follow along with the reading. For example, you could pause on the adjectives in the story and have the students read those aloud. To view this entire lesson, visit http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-k-2/Adjective_Monster.aspx.

Visual Arts Careers

Do you have what it takes to be a Fashion Designer, Architect, or Graphic Designer?

In *Dream Carver*, Mateo and his family sell their juguetes at fiestas, but many people are also able to make careers out of the visual arts. This lesson from the Kennedy Center explores the different kinds of careers that can emerge from a love for art. Students will circulate between three different art stations that allow them to use the various media required for a career as a fashion designer, architect, and graphic designer. They will create different materials and see what the life of these professionals would entail. This lesson

aims to help students see the impact visual artists have in the daily life of a community as well as allows them to begin their thinking about the future. The lesson ends with the students creating their own “career book” that describes the professions and gives a work example from each of the three careers. This lesson ties the visual arts to the language arts. To view this entire lesson, visit http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/Arts_Careers.aspx.

In further attempts to promote literacy, incorporating further writing activities will help students improve their writing and communication skills. For such young writers that will attend *Swazzle's Dream Carver*, this introduction to writing can help them develop great literacy, and potentially critical literacy, as they continue within their educational careers. Having students write simple answers to what they enjoyed most about the performance, what they learned from the performance, etc. will help the students begin to articulate what they remember and understand from the performance, a skill that will transfer well to their more advanced classwork.



The National Arts Standards and Nebraska's Content Standards

The majority of standards listed below must be adapted to appropriate grade levels. This is not a complete list of applicable standards, but instead provides a set, or examples, of relevant standards for teachers to develop lessons in line with Nebraska's educational standards and requirements.

Core Subject Standards

The Nebraska Standards can be found on the Nebraska Department of Education website - <http://www.education.ne.gov/>.

Social Studies

Human Systems

Standard 8.3.4

Students will analyze and interpret patterns of culture around the world

SS 8.3.4.a: Compare and contrast characteristics of groups of people/settlements (e.g., population density, distribution and growth, migration patterns, diffusion of people, places, and ideas, westward expansion of immigrants, Homestead Act)

Geography

Standard SS 3.3.5 – Human/Environment Interaction

Students will identify the relationship between humans and the physical environment

SS 3.3.5.a: Explain how physical environments influence human activities (e.g., availability of water, climate, and fertility of soil)

SS 3.3.5.c: Explain the importance of Earth's natural resources (e.g. minerals, air, water, land)

Standard SS 8.3.5

Students will analyze how humans have adapted to different physical environments

SS 8.3.5.b: Identify and evaluation how humans utilize the physical environment

Application of Geography to Issues and Events

Standard SS 4.3.6

Students will use geographic skills to make connections to issues and events

SS 4.3.6.b: Identify questions that help explain the interrelationships of human or physical geographic characteristics of places

Historical Comprehension

Standard SS 8.4.2. (WLD)

Students will analyze the impact of people, event, ideas, and symbols upon world history using multiple types of sources

SS 8.4.2.1.a (WLD): Analyze the impact of people, events, ideas, and symbols, including various cultures and ethnic groups, on history throughout the world by era

Language Arts

LA Grade.1 Reading

Students will learn and apply reading skills and strategies to comprehend text

Standard Grade.1.5 Vocabulary

Students will build literary, general academic, and content specific grade level vocabulary

Grade.1.5.b Relate new grade level vocabulary to prior knowledge and use in new situations

LA Grade.2 Writing

Students will learn and apply writing skills and strategies to communicate

Standard Grade.2.2 Writing Genres

Students will write for a variety of purposes and audiences in multiple genres

Grade.2.2.a Write for a specific purpose

LA Grade.3 Speaking and Listening

Students will learn and apply speaking and listening skills and strategies to communicate

Standard Grade.3.1 Speaking Skills

Students will develop and demonstrate speaking skills to communicate key ideas in a variety of situations

Grade.3.1.a Communicate ideas orally in daily classroom activities and routines

Standard Grade.3.2 Listening Skills

Students will develop and demonstrate active listening skills across a variety of situations

Grade.3.2.a Demonstrate listening skills needed for multiple situations and modalities

Grade.3.2.c Listen and retell main ideas or information

National Arts Standards

The National Arts Standards can be found on the <http://www.artsedge.org> website.

Visual Arts

Content Standard 4

Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Grades K-4: Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places

Grades 5-8: Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, idea, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art

Grades 9-12: Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places

Content Standard 5

Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Grades K-4: Students describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks and understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art

Grades 5-8: Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry

Grades 9-12: Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works

Theater

Content Standard 6

Comparing and connecting art forms by describing theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms

Grades K-4: Students compare how ideas and emotions are expressed in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts

Grades 5-8: Students describe characteristics and compare the presentation of characters, environments, and actions in theatre, musical theatre, dramatic media, dance, and visual arts

Grades 9-12: Students determine how the nondramatic art forms are modified to enhance the expression of ideas and emotions in theatre

Content Standard 7

Analyzing and explaining personal preferences and constructing meaning from classroom dramatizations and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Grades K-4: Students explain how the wants and needs of characters are similar to and different from their own

Grades 5-8: Students articulate and support the meanings constructed from their and others' dramatic performances

Grades 9-12: Students construct social meanings from informal and formal production and from dramatic performance from a variety of cultures and historical periods, and relate these to current personal, national, and international issues

Content Standard 8

Understanding context by recognizing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in daily life

Grades K-4: Students identify and compare similar characters and situations in stories and dramas from and about various cultures, illustrate with classroom dramatizations, and discuss how theatre reflects life

Grades 5-8: Students describe and compare universal characters and situations in dramas from and about various cultures and historical periods, illustrate in improvised and scripted scenes, and discuss how theatre reflects a culture

Grades 9-12: Students analyze the relationships among cultural values, freedom of artistic expression, ethics, and artistic choices in various cultures and historical periods

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The Lied Center for Performing Arts, a state-of-the-art performing arts facility, is Nebraska's "Home for the Arts." The facility offers major regional, national and international programs designed to attract, entertain and inspire a statewide audience. The Lied Center and its programs received generous support in 2013/2014 from Christina Hixson and the Lied Foundation Trust, Friends of Lied, Ameritas and Union Bank. For more information visit www.liedcenter.org.

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