

# MUMMENSCHANZ

**"YOU & ME"**



S STATE THEATRE  
NEW JERSEY

KEYNOTES

# WELCOME!

State Theatre New Jersey welcomes you to our school-day performance of Mummenschanz. For over four decades Mummenschanz has inspired audiences around the world with their wordless, playful, and poetic art. Their new show, "You & Me," celebrates the loving, joyful connection between audiences and performers.

These Keynotes provide information, discussion topics, activities, and resources to use both before and after the performance. The materials are designed to help you integrate the show with learning objectives in many areas of the curriculum.

We look forward to seeing you and your students at the State Theatre!

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*State Theatre New Jersey—creating extraordinary experiences through the power of live performance.*

# MUMMENSCHANZ

## YOU & ME



# ABOUT THE SHOW

In "You & Me," you'll meet a series of weird and wonderful characters. On a bare black stage with no words or music, they tell universal stories of romance and rejection, frustration and triumph, using masks, abstract shapes, body movement, light, shadow, and creative manipulation of simple props. The characters come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. Many of them are put together using recognizable objects in unusual ways: toilet paper, clay, a violin, and more. They create a visually stunning spectacle that transcends cultural barriers and sparks the imagination.



## MUMMENSCHANZ

For over 45 years, Swiss-based theater troupe Mummenschanz Mask Theater has been dazzling audiences around the world with their pioneering form of visual theater. The company was founded in 1972 by two Swiss performers—Bernie Schürch and Andres Bossard—and Floriana Frassetto, an Italian American. The following year, the company toured the USA, Canada, and South America. Their first Broadway show opened in 1977 and ran for three years, with 1,326 performances. They returned to the New York stage in 1986, with *The New Show*.

**'Mummenschanz'** is a German word meaning 'masquerade,' or a type of pantomime theater.

Quickly becoming a popular culture phenomenon, Mummenschanz was spoofed on *Late Night with David Letterman* and appeared as special guest stars during the first season of *The Muppet Show*. Other television appearances include *Sesame Street*, *3-2-1 Contact*, the *Tonight Show*, and *Northern Exposure*.



Of all their television appearances, the group's co-founder Floriana Frassetto says *The Muppet Show* was the most memorable. "We were on [the show] in 1976, and we will never forget Jim Henson. He was an extraordinary person and inspiration," she says.

# DO & DISCUSS

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What did you see at the show?
- What are some of the shapes you saw in the show? Colors?
- What types of things did the performers use to create the characters?
- How did the characters move? Did they make any sounds?
- What was your favorite part of the show?
- Pick your favorite creature from the show. What kind of sounds do you imagine that creature would make? Can you make the sounds?



## IMPROV IN A BOX

Assemble an assortment of ordinary objects (ideas: hairbrush, scarf, plastic cup, cardboard tube from a roll of paper towel, pencil, old compact discs). Place the items in a large box.

Have a student come up in front of the class and take an object from the box, without looking. Then have them show in mime (without using words or sounds) three different things the object could be—*other than what it really is*. (Example: a hairbrush could be a microphone, hand mirror, tennis racquet, or toothbrush.) As the student improvises, with their object, have the rest of the class try to guess what it is. Let each student come up to take a turn at pulling an object from the box and improvising in front of the class.



## OBJECTS COME TO LIFE

Give two paper plates to each student. Ask them to pick up a plate and **OBSERVE** it for themselves:

- What is it made of?
- What is its texture? Shape? Color?
- What can it do that materials like wood or metal can't?

Encourage students to **EXPLORE** and **DISCOVER** that it can bend, fold, and tear. Have students try each action and observe the changes.

- What are some ways the plate can move? Like a fan? A bird?

Now invite the students to use their imaginations and **WONDER** about their objects:

- If this plate was your pet, what would it like to eat?
- What would it do when you came home from school?
- What would make it happy? Sad?

Ask students to show, with their plate, their answers to your **WONDER** questions.

Hand out crayons or markers. Ask each student to pick up their unused plate and draw a circle just inside the textured outer circle. Then have each student fold their plate in half, with the circle on the inside.

### **OBSERVE** and **DESCRIBE**:

- How does this change your plate?
- What can it do now that it couldn't do before?

### **IMAGINE**: Play with plates on the desks.

- How does the plate breathe? Look around at the world? Move through the world?

Now play with the plates on your face, as mouths, eyes, etc.

- How can you show happiness with the plate on your face? Sadness? Other emotions?
- What does your plate sound like?
- How does your plate move when it asks a question? Give an answer? Make an exclamation?

You can have two students create a dialogue with their plates while the rest of the class watches.

# WHAT DO I DO AT THE SHOW?

Going to see a play at a theater is not the same as watching TV. When you are sitting in audience at the State Theatre, the actors will be able to hear and see everything that goes on in the audience. Use the key to find out what your job is at the performance.



**PERFORMANCE**



**AUDIENCE**



**WATCH**



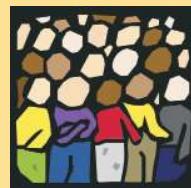
**LISTEN**



**CLAP**

**When I go to a  , I am part of the  . I have a**

**very important job. I have to  and  carefully.**

**If I talk or move around, the performers and the  will have a hard time paying attention to the  .**

**When the  is over, it's okay for me to  .**

# RESOURCES

## BOOKS

*Mummenschanz*, by Michael Buhrer. Panorama Verlag, 1984. More than 150 pictures of the troupe.

*Harvey the Child Mime*, written and illustrated by Loryn Brantz. Hometown 520 Press, 2011. Harvey's amazing mime skills lead him on an unexpected adventure. Grades Pre-K-5.

*Bip in a Book*, by Marcel Marceau and Bruce Goldstone. Harry N. Abrams, 2001. This book captures the genius of legendary mime Marcel Marceau in a series of photographs featuring his most beloved routines. All grades.

## VIDEO

*Mummenschanz, Musicians of Silence*

<https://vimeo.com/12398667>

*Mummenschanz: You & Me* (highlights)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfZUFswYGCI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfZUFswYGCI)

Kermit interviews Mummenschanz on the *Muppet Show*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=bD\\_JMiFms-A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bD_JMiFms-A)

## WEBSITES

Mummenschanz

[www.mummenschanz.com](http://www.mummenschanz.com)



## EDUCATION & OUTREACH SUPPORTERS

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