

BLACK BEAUTY FAMILY GUIDE

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The performance takes place in the Charlotte Martin Theatre. Seating is stadium style, similar to a movie theater. There are four aisles and a quiet room on the back right.
- An onstage pianist plays music throughout.
- The show is approximately 1 hour and 41 minutes in duration and has two acts. The first act is 54 minutes in duration and the second act is 32 minutes. There is a 15 minute intermission.

SHOW CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Parents may want to prepare their children who are familiar with the book, *Black Beauty*, that the show is similar in some ways to the book (characters with the same names, similar themes, some lines from the book recited in the show, general storyline followed), but that the show may differ in many ways from the book.
- Parents may want to prepare their children for the use of puppeteers and puppets throughout the show. All of the horses are animated by actors whose costumes are also puppets. At times the character of Black Beauty and other horses are represented by smaller puppets which are manipulated by other puppeteers, but voiced by the same actors.

SCENE	SENSORY CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Opening	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pianist plays onstage piano [continues throughout show]• A voiceover is heard
	VISUAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stage darkens• Shadow puppets appear
At night in the stable	VISUAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horse puppets/actors appear
	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voiceover between Black Beauty and his mother
“Stop, stop, stop” and “the Master is fine”	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horse noises
Bird puppet appears in a flashback	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Throughout the play, whenever the bird puppet appears a piccolo recording plays
	SUSPENSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The piano music becomes more lively
	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The children behave roughly with Merrylegs in a flashback
At night in the stable	VISUAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horse puppets/actors appear
	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voiceover between Black Beauty and his mother
Little Joe steps towards Merrylegs to apologize	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horse neighs
Scene concludes with, “Every day...Every day...Every day.” The next scene begins with nightfall.	VISUAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A bright image of the moon is projected

SCENE	SENSORY CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Merrylegs says, "I remember! Good night." The scene shifts	SOUND VISUAL EMOTIONAL INTENSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds of thunder and crackling fire • The horses speak in distressed voices • Bright red lights flicker • Lightning flashes • A fire starts in the stable • Actors run across the stage frantically shouting
"We barely get out when a wall of the burning stable falls to the ground with a shudder."	SOUND VISUAL EMOTIONAL INTENSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is the sound of a building collapsing • Lights flash • Little Joe frantically cries that he needs to save Merrylegs, and then sobs when he realizes he couldn't save him
"Why couldn't I save Merrylegs?"	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Joe and the horses mourn the loss of Merrylegs
"That's quite a story. Do you have any more stories?"	VISUAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dog puppet named Charles joins
"Wearing the check-rein. Head held back."	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Beauty and Ginger discuss wearing the check-rein, Ginger is visibly uncomfortable • The horses try not to protest, however Ginger becomes more and more distressed • The mistress insists the check-rein be tightened, a ratcheting noise is heard
"Day by day, notch by notch"	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York tightens the check-rein [with a ratcheting sound] at the mistress's insistence • The Mistress orders Reuben to tighten the check-rein • Black Beauty makes a sound as if in pain and begins neighing • Ginger bites Reuben and begins yelling as Black Beauty neighs loudly
"Humans are my enemies. They don't like me so I don't trust them."	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY VISUAL SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reuben orders Black Beauty to take him into town • Reuben strikes Black Beauty multiple times with an instrument that makes a cracking noise • Black Beauty neighs and throws the puppet Reuben to the ground • Black Beauty and Reuben are now represented as a miniature puppet, the actors who portray them are also onstage voicing them • Thunder and rain are heard with lightning effects • Bird's song is heard again
INTERMISSION		
London	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accordion is heard
"It's not easy driving fast in this city..."	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onstage instrumentalist plays a wood block

SCENE	SENSORY CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Dolly is crossing the street	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A man is beating an unseen horse, he whips at the horse with the cracking instrument A horse neighs, frightened Dolly yells at the man
Wintertime	VISUAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage snow falls to the ground
Jerry approaches the door	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A doorbell sound is heard
“Why don’t they say something?”	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Jerry has caught pneumonia, the horses can tell there is tension in the air The children express concern that their father might die
“I’ll take him. The black one.”	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Skinner who was beating his horse earlier in London comes and says he’ll buy Black Beauty Black Beauty is nervous Black Beauty describes cruel treatment The man draws his cracking instrument and hits Black Beauty making a loud noise
“My new master’s name is Nicholas Skinner.”	EMOTIONAL INTENSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Beauty describes cruel treatment at the hands of Mr. Skinner A family expresses concern at Black Beauty working in the heat Black Beauty collapses from the heat, the actor playing Black Beauty lays alone, onstage, without the horse costume
Finale	SOUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audience applause

