

ACTIVE AUDIENCE

SEPT | OCT 2019

guide

BLACK

BEAUTY

By JAMES STILL Directed by COURTNEY SALE Based on the book by ANNA SEWELL

AN INTERVIEW WITH
PLAYWRIGHT
JAMES STILL

PROFILE OF
AUTHOR
ANNA SEWELL



SEATTLE
CHILDREN'S
THEATRE

SYNOPSIS | THEATRE ETIQUETTE | VOCABULARY LIST | SUGGESTED READING



WORLD PREMIERE | SCT COMMISSION

BLACK

By **JAMES STILL**
Directed by **COURTNEY SALE**
Based on the book by **ANNA SEWELL**

BEAUTY

SEPT 26–OCT 27 | RECOMMENDED FOR
PATRONS 6 YEARS & OLDER

HEARTWARMING HERO

Innovative large-scale puppetry, live music, and a multi-generational cast gather on stage to share the story of a beautiful horse. Experience his journey from being a carefree colt to a workhorse in the busy streets of London, before his graceful retirement in a country pasture. Brimming with compassion, this SCT commission and World Premiere invites us to seek kindness in the face of adversity. *Black Beauty* is an equestrian adventure for the whole family that will gallop straight to your heart.

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synopsis

BE WARNED: THIS SYNOPSIS HAS SPOILERS

In a pasture, a young colt makes a wish. Night becomes day as more colts trot through the field. They frolic in the grass; playing games and enjoying one another's youthful energy. Black Beauty experiences difficulty standing up. His long legs become tangled. He falls and attempts to get back up.

At night in a stable, a smaller horse, Merrylegs, scolds Beauty for waking him up. Beauty wonders if Merrylegs and another horse, Ginger, remember their mothers. Beauty conjures details about his own mother; the sound of her voice and the smell of her breath. Ginger and Merrylegs explain they have been with too many masters to recall the days of being with their families.

Months later a man called Master Gordon drives a carriage pulled by Beauty and Ginger. Beauty misses the sense of freedom the pasture provided. He wonders if Ginger longs for liberty. Beauty feels uncomfortable with the reigns and the blinkers. Beauty fears he may forget what he wants in his own life because he is trying to please Master Gordon. Back at home, Merrylegs is taunted by a group of children. In a fit of rage, Merrylegs bucks one of the children, Little Joe, off his back. Beauty is shocked. Master Gordon leads Little Joe into the stable and instructs him to make an apology. Little Joe shyly apologizes. Then Master Gordon teaches Little Joe how to care for the horses.

Time passes and the three horses observe Little Joe grow. He is now ready to ride Beauty. He gallantly gallops through the field atop the horse. At night in the stable, Merrylegs remembers eating delicious red apples. In a rare act of kindness, Merrylegs shares a personal story with Beauty. In the stable, a fire breaks out. Smoke and coughing fill the air. Horses are escorted out of the barn. Sadly, Little Joe and Master Gordon discover Merrylegs did not make it out of the barn, Merrylegs perishes in the fire.

In another barn some time later, Beauty tells Charles the Dog the story of leaving Little Joe. Beauty is now in a new home called Earls Hall. A menacing Mistress runs the home. She inspects the new horses alongside one of her stablemen, York. She is displeased that Ginger and Beauty do not match in color. She places the horses in check reign which requires them to unnaturally hold their heads back. Beauty feels the pain of wearing such an apparatus.

The horses learn this cruelty was enacted primarily for fashion purposes. Beauty and Ginger continue the challenging work at Earls Hall. York sees the horses are mightily suffering. The Mistress doubles down on the check reigns. Another stableman Reuben Smith strikes Ginger.

A while later a new horse, Max, is introduced into the stable. Max matches Beauty in spirit which delights the Mistress. Max shares stories with Beauty and Ginger of his tiring work as a cab horse. Ginger's faith in humans is shaken. Later Reuben Smith, after drinking heavily, comes into the barn and steals Beauty for a ride. A massive storm descends. Smith tries to take Beauty over a bridge where the river water is rising. Beauty, scared for his life, throws Reuben to the ground. Beauty feels more alone than ever. Ginger, York, and Charles the Dog come to his aid. York admonishes Smith for his foolish behavior.



Now in another stable Beauty meets Captain, a horse who served in the army. We learn York bought Ginger and retired her working days. Beauty informs Captain that he has a new name, "Jack", and now drives a cab in London. The streets of London are bustling and vibrant. Beauty quickly learns how to navigate the traffic and people. Jerry Barker, Beauty's new owner, drives him with precision and care. When Jerry Barker returns home, his wife Mary, takes delight in hearing Beauty drove well. Their children, Henry and Dolly, love "Jack".

Everyone rests on Sunday. Beauty relishes the opportunity to restore at the end of a long week. Dolly shares a secret with Henry that when she grows up she wants to be a horse doctor. Months pass and the winter sets in; bringing snow to London. Beauty feels the fatigue and cold working in the harsh climate. Dolly sees another cab driver whipping their cab horse. With great courage, she stands up to the driver. Jerry takes pride in his daughter's sense of justice and her ability to defend the horses.

On Christmas night, Jerry Barker waits outside a fancy home with Beauty for his patrons. Both creatures are cold in the chilly weather. Jerry Barker becomes very ill. After much rest and a visit from the doctor, Jerry is on the path to recovery. He tells Henry and Dolly he may no longer drive a cab and they will need to get rid of the horses.

Beauty ends up in an auction yard. He shares his story with an elderly horse named Justice. A wicked man, Nicholas Skinner, purchases Beauty. Skinner works Beauty harder than anyone ever has in his life. He overloads the weight Beauty must bear. One day while carrying an oversized cab, Beauty passes out in the street. A crowd gathers certain the horse will not make it. Beauty awakens in another horse sale, grateful to be alive. A man comes into the sale and Beauty realizes it is Little Joe. Weeks later Beauty watches as three colts play in a pasture. He runs a race with the young horses. He gallops away full of love and life. ■

STATE LEARNING standards

Black Beauty touches on many themes and ideas. Here are a few we believe would make good **Discussion Topics**: Kindness, Empathy, and Compassion.

We believe that seeing the show and using our Active Audience Guide can help you address these **21st-Century Skills**:

- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Perseverance
- Growth Mindset

We also believe that seeing the show and using the AAG can help educators meet many of the **Washington State Learning Standards**. Below are some that might fit in well with certain articles or activities. Where more than one standard within a specific area applies, we selected a few examples. Multiple standards could apply to most of these articles and activities.

Standards are grouped by the AAG articles and activities they connect to. Descriptive text of chosen standards is on the following page.

ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE OF *BLACK BEAUTY*

ARTS

Theatre Arts | Anchor Standards 7–11

PROFILE OF AUTHOR ANNA SEWELL

From author Anna Sewell's birth in 1820 to *Black Beauty*'s performance at SCT today, this article examines the history and impact of *Black Beauty*'s story.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading Standards for Informational Text | RI.1, RI.2, RI.7

SOCIAL STUDIES

History | 4.1, 4.2

A WORD FROM OUR DESIGNERS;

INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT JAMES STILL

These articles explore the perspectives of theatre artists involved in the creation of *Black Beauty*.

ARTS

Theatre Arts | Anchor Standards 7, 8, 11

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading Standards for Informational Text | RI.1, RI.2, RI.7

DRAMA IN ACTION

ARTS

Theatre Arts | Anchor Standards 1–6

VOCABULARY LIST

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Language Standards | L.4

Reading Standards for Informational Text | RI.7

Reading Standards: Foundational Skills | RF.3

JUMP START

ARTS

Theatre Arts | Anchor Standards 1–6

Visual Arts | Anchor Standards 1–2

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Language Standards | L.1

Speaking and Listening Standards | SL.1, SL.2, SL.3, SL.5, SL.6

Writing Standards | W.1, W.2, W.3, W.8

ACTIVITY PAGES

ARTS

Visual Arts | Anchor Standards 1, 2

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing Standards | W.2, W.3

WASHINGTON STATE K-12 LEARNING STANDARDS

ARTS

THEATRE ARTS

Anchor Standard 1 | Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2 | Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 3 | Refine and complete artistic work.

Anchor Standard 4 | Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Anchor Standard 5 | Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Anchor Standard 6 | Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Anchor Standard 7 | Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8 | Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 9 | Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Anchor Standard 10 | Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standard 11 | Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

VISUAL ARTS

Anchor Standard 1 | Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2 | Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 7 | Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8 | Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

SOCIAL STUDIES

HISTORY

4.1 | Understands historical chronology.

4.2 | Understands and analyzes the causal factors that have shaped major events in history.

COMMON CORE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

LANGUAGE STANDARDS

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L.1 | Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.4 | Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on age appropriate level reading and content.

READING STANDARDS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Phonics and Word Recognition

RF.3 | Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

READING STANDARDS FOR INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Key Ideas and Details

RI.1 | With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RI.2 | With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.7 | With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARDS

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.1 | Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about age appropriate topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.2 | Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

SL.3 | Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.



Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.5 | Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.

SL.6 | Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

WRITING STANDARDS

Text Types and Purposes

W.1 | Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell the reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., My favorite book is...).

W.2 | Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

W.3 | Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W.8 | With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

guide

Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allows the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. *We invite you to laugh when it is funny, cry when it is sad, gasp when it is shocking, but refrain from talking during the show, as it disturbs audience members and performers alike. We invite teachers and chaperones to distribute themselves among students to monitor behavior.*

**HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL GUIDELINES
ON HOW TO ENJOY THE PERFORMANCE:**

Leave cell phones, tablets, hand held games, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home or turn them completely off.

Do not text during the performance. The light and the motion is very distracting to those around you, on stage, and the tech crew behind you.

Gum and food must stay in the lobby. Drinks are only allowed if they have a lid.

The lights dimming and going out signal the audience to quiet down and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

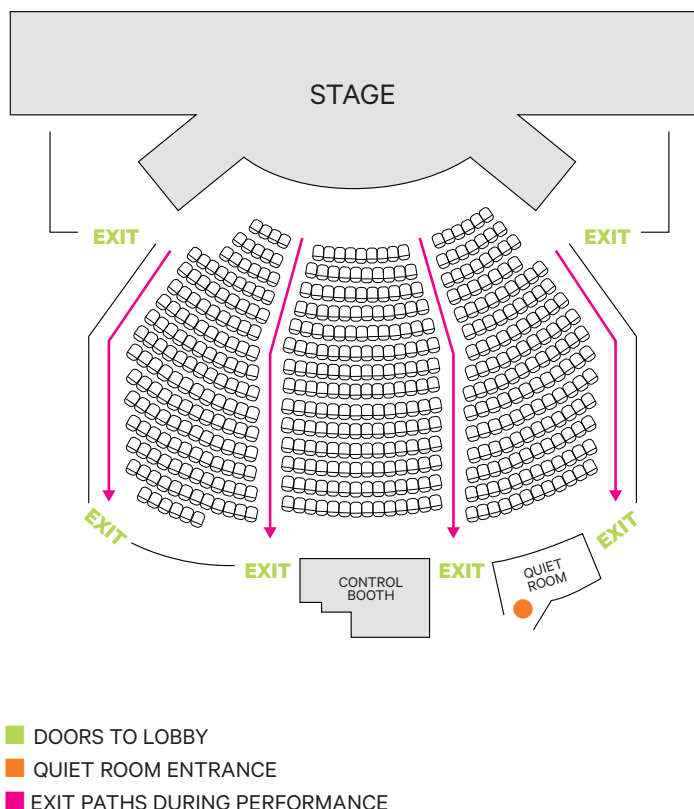
Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp — whatever the performance draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain in your seat during the play. Please use the restroom before or after the show, as well as during intermission.

During the curtain call remain in your seat and applaud because this is part of the performance too. The actors will come out on stage one more time to say thank you for your participation as an audience member.



THE CHARLOTTE MARTIN THEATRE



Thank you being part of the SCT family. If you have any questions please visit our FAQ page at WWW.SCT.ORG/FAQ or contact us at info@sct.org.



ANNA SEWELL
English Novelist

Born:
March 30, 1820
Great Yarmouth,
Norfolk, England

Died:
April 25, 1878
Old Catton,
Norfolk, England

Mother:
Mary Wright Sewell

Father:
Phillip Sewell

PROFILE OF AUTHOR

anna sewell

**NOW I SAY THAT WITH CRUELTY AND
OPPRESSION IT IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS
TO INTERFERE WHEN THEY SEE IT.**

— Anna Sewell

Anna Sewell's beloved novel *Black Beauty* has been enjoyed by generations of children and adults. This timeless classic utilized a horse named "Beauty" as the book's narrator. A first of its kind —an animal as the autobiographer — the writing offered perspective, thoughts, and feelings many had not considered. Through this lens, Sewell illuminated new ideas about empathy, compassion, and kindness toward animals. The horse's point of view revealed observations about animal suffering and human nature never before seen in literature.

Anna Sewell was born into a Quaker family in 1820. Her mother was a successful author of children's books and instilled a love of reading in her daughter. At the age of fourteen, Anna had a terrible fall, which affected her ability to walk the rest of her life. For greater mobility, the family often used horse drawn carriages. It was on these rides; Anna grew a fondness for horses. Her experience of the world was greatly shaped by these animals.



Anna Sewell's home in Old Catton, Norfolk, England where she wrote *Black Beauty*.

First published in 1877, *Black Beauty* sold at the time an unprecedented 1 million copies in two years. The book was responsible for the end of a practice called the "bearing reign." This manipulation was placed on horses merely for appearances. The reign's restriction would cause the horse to unnaturally stand with its neck upright. The long-term effects of the "bearing reign" on a horse could hinder breathing and respiration. In its release in 1877, the book was enthusiastically adopted by animal welfare organizations.

Horses were necessary for farm work as well as delivery of goods and people in cities. The story illuminated humans and horses working in kind partnership was better for all living things involved. The American Humane Society's founder George Anwell was known to distribute free copies to cab drivers.

Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Jane Smiley speaks of *Black Beauty* this way, "The book helped people see animals in new ways. As soon as you say an animal has a point of view, then it is very difficult to go and just be cruel to an animal. It showed the readers that animals should not be treated as objects." Sewell's story has been adapted for movies, television, and theatre. Her love of these animals and fight for their fair treatment lives on today. ■

AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT *james still*

WHAT INITIALLY DREW YOU TO *BLACK BEAUTY*?

Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* was a book I first read when I was 10 or 11 years old. The book belonged to one of my grandmothers and it had a beautiful shiny cover that featured a drawing of a black horse. I grew up around horses so I was probably first drawn to the cover art — and also my grandpa had a black horse named Beauty, so maybe I thought the book was about his horse! That's the thing about being a curious reader as a kid — maybe I thought all books were about ME in some way, or maybe I was always searching for the personal, how stories connected to my own young life as well as how books and stories might transport me OUT of my own young life. Even though the novel is set in 19th Century London (a place I didn't know and could barely imagine) somehow the story of *Black Beauty* was accessible for me — somehow it reached this kid who lived in a tiny town in Kansas. When I think back on that now, it must have been because the story is told from Black Beauty's point of view and that I recognized his vulnerability and playfulness and curiosity as well as his desire for fairness and justice, the ways he came to value friendship and kindness.

DID OR DO YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP TO HORSES IN YOUR LIFE?

I don't remember ever NOT being around horses. My parents had both grown up on farms in rural areas of Kansas and horses were part of that life. And even though we lived in a small town, my dad bought our first horse when I was in the 2nd Grade. We kept him in our backyard! Eventually we moved to a house (still in town) with about 10 acres — and from that point on we always had two,

three, or four horses. My dad still has two horses (Domino and Lady Three). I grew up not only aware of but paying attention to horses. We rode our horses in Fourth of July parades, in the County Fair parades. In the summer on weekends sometimes we'd ride the horses in nearby pastures where we could trot or gallop a little bit. Those were longer, quiet rides.

But I also want to talk a little bit about connecting horses as fellow creatures. Have you ever looked into a horse's eyes? Really, really looked? There is something very present about the gaze of a horse. Also the way horses move — when they gallop, they are almost running and walking at the same time,

I WOULD ALSO BE REMISS IF I DID NOT MENTION DIRECTOR COURTNEY SALE AS SHE IS ONE OF MY PRIMARY COLLABORATORS. WE HAVE DREAMED ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION FOR MANY YEARS NOW AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE I WOULD WANT TO SHARE THIS MOMENT WITH.

there's something about the way they seem suspended in mid-air. It's mysterious. And let's face it — the old expression “to kick up your heels”? When a horse lets loose and playfully moves around an open space, they literally kick up their heels. I want to know how to do that more.

I also am intrigued by the effect horses seem to have on humans. I've seen people transformed around horses — they are suddenly quiet, more gentle, even calmer around horses. It's been a long time since I've ridden a horse. But that long absence hasn't changed my connection to them, my respect and awe.

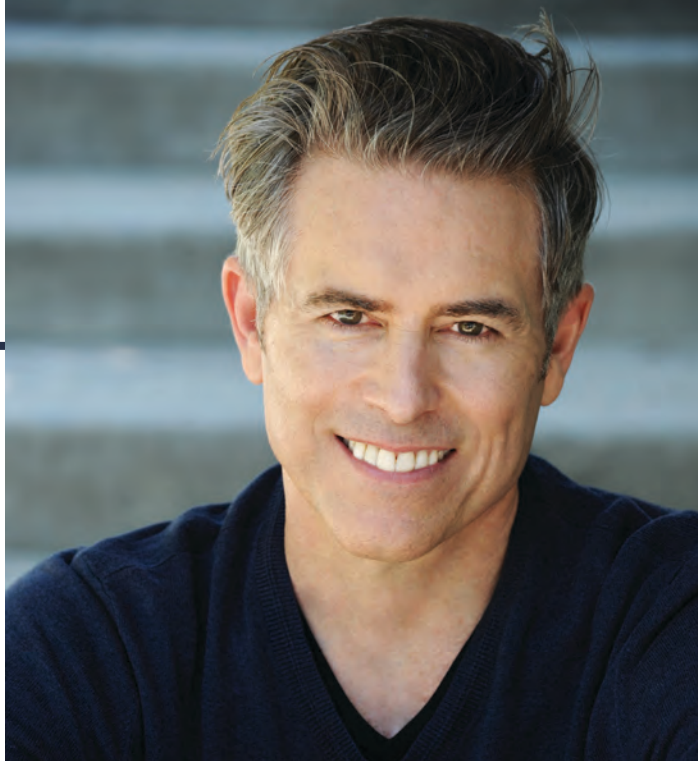
HOW ARE YOU COLLABORATING TO MAKE *THE PLAY*?

Collaboration is all about the people you make work with — and the people I've spent time with around my new imagining of *Black Beauty* have been smart and committed and imaginative and fun. Initially my primary collaborators were director Courtney Sale and Puppet Designer Annett Mateo because from the beginning Courtney and I imagined this premiere production as bold and theatrical. After years of suspicion, I had come to love and respect the work of great puppet artists because of some wonderful television shows I'd worked on as a writer and producer. I came to see puppetry as an art; and with the right story — puppets are

is doing their best work, asking big/deep questions about the play and its world and story — that's when I feel most confident as a writer, most excited, most humbled, and most alive. I would also be remiss if I did not mention director Courtney Sale as she is one of my primary collaborators. We have dreamed about this production for many years now and there is no one else I would want to share this moment with. As a writer, I need to know the director “gets it” — as their engagement with the play rings a loud beautiful bell for everyone involved. Courtney will bring her own vision and artistry to this production — and that will inspire me too. My collaboration with SCT will continue through rehearsals, tech, previews, and opening night. And like any good collaboration, it will leave many fingerprints on my play and help make me a better writer.

WHEN YOU SIT DOWN TO WRITE A PLAY DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE CAPABLE OF?

I don't think I've ever been asked this question in exactly this very interesting way. Hmm. I don't want to be glib here — talking about writing this way is deeply personal because it's a process that is unique to every writer. For me as a writer, there's real tension between ego and humility. I have to have ego to believe I can write something, and I have to have humility as a way of acknowledging the mysterious and mostly unknowable parts of writing. In that way, I know what I'm capable of — but I rarely know the STORY is capable of... how is it going to unfold during the writing process? And how will it CHANGE me? I am a different person because of every play I've ever written — some of the plays have had a profound effect on me as an artist or citizen.



DID YOU WRITE AS A CHILD?

I did write as a child. But even before I was writing, I was THINKING in stories. And I certainly “wrote verbally” — that is, I made up stories. Even after I was old enough to write and was writing the stories down on paper, I was still TALKING stories. I remember when I used to mow lawns as a part-time job when I was in middle school, I’d make up a long involved story while mowing the lawn. The mower was so loud no one could hear me, and it made the work go much faster.

When I was in the 7th Grade I entered a state-wide (Kansas) writing contest and a story of mine got 2nd Place. It was called *The Lady in Red* and was about the first woman President of the United States. Sadly, all these years later and my prescient story remains fiction. Then in the 8th Grade I entered the same contest and this time a story I wrote won and a poem I wrote received honorable mention. I think there was prize money, maybe \$25, and a certificate. But most importantly it lit up a corner of the world I didn’t know existed. I didn’t know that writing could be someone’s job. It started me thinking about writing in a different way. For one thing, I got interested in the writers themselves. I wasn’t just reading books anymore, I was reading books written by writers who had big life stories.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE AUDIENCES WILL BRING TO THE PLAY?

Well, an open heart, of course. A yearning for time spent with characters and their stories. I want audiences to bring curiosity, playfulness, empathy for others, and generosity for the actors and staff of the production. Mostly I want them to bring a desire to be with the play on that day, at that performance. I think it’s human nature for us to want to feel seen and heard. I think that’s true for stories too. I want an audience to bring a sense of being present so that *Black Beauty* can be seen and heard.

WHAT’S YOUR BIGGEST DREAM FOR THE PLAY?

Is there any such thing as a “small” dream. All dreams are big. I want my play to deeply engage with my collaborators. I want the director and designers to want to do amazing work. And I want the actors to love sharing the play with audiences, every single time. I want people to think about justice and kindness in 2019 in new, urgent ways. I want *Black Beauty*’s story to matter. ■

SUGGESTED *reading*

THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN
by Katherine Applegate

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY
by Betty G. Birney

THE HORSE AND HIS BOY
by C.S. Lewis

THE BLACK STALLION
by Walter Farley

MISTY OF CHINCOTEAGUE
by Marguerite Henry

DRAWING FROM MEMORY
by Allen Say

Find these and other great animal stories
at your local public library.



The Seattle Public Library

A WORD FROM OUR *designers*



Act 1 set rendering featuring the barn side of rotating set including life-size horse puppets and cast members in SCT's 2019 production of "Black Beauty." © Carey Wong



Act 2 set rendering featuring the London "tiny town" side of rotating set including cast members in SCT's 2019 production of "Black Beauty." © Carey Wong

Black Beauty's story takes us from a succession of country stables — those of Farmer Gray, Master Gordon, and the Mistress of Earl's Hall — to the bustling city of London where the horse encounters a series of owners — the kind Jerry Barker, the wicked Nicholas Skinner, and Joe from an earlier time in its life. The play's action moves fluidly and without interruption from location to location. Because the settings move from country to town and ultimately back to the country, I felt it was important to create two very distinct looks for these two very different environments — a more open, natural and inviting one for the country, and a more enclosed, grim one for the city. Both of these locations have been fabricated on a turntable so that a simple rotation of the turntable transforms the setting from the country to London.

An key dramatic and visual element of this play are Annett Mateo's puppets for the horses and other animals and non-human characters in the piece. Annett and I worked closely together to make certain that the scenic environment could accommodate the size and movement of her puppets so they could be an important and dynamic primary feature of this presentation.

CAREY WONG, scenic designer

The actors in the play work together as an ensemble to tell our story. All of the actors are in a uniform of sorts that act as a base layer on to which they add different costume pieces that help them become a range of characters. The goal of the look is to still see the base layer underneath, and recognize that the costume piece is a means to push the story along. Similar to the magic children can create with a single length of yarn, a cup and spoon.

Since *Black Beauty* is our reliable narrator most of the fabrics are botanical, and relate to something he would see at eye level as a horse, and things that may catch the eye of his and his fellow fauna companions.

TREVOR BOWEN, costume designer

For *Black Beauty*, I am using the dichotomy of town vs country, nature vs manufactured, and freedom vs confinement to help guide my lighting design choices. As the story progresses from the more pastoral beginnings to the noisy chaotic streets of London, I am interested in exploring how the lighting can contribute to creating the environments that are both affecting and reflecting *Black Beauty's* emotional and physical states. It has been helpful to go back to the source material of the original novel by Anna Sewell to fill in some details and remind myself of the wonder and joy in reading the book as a young girl. But I am also following the lead of the playwright, James Still, in interpreting the piece with a greater sense of poetry and fluidity which almost at times elicits a dreamlike state.

CONNIE YUN, lighting designer

CAREY WONG, scenic designer
TREVOR BOWEN, costume designer
CONNIE YUN, lighting designer
ROB WITMER, composer
CHRIS WALKER, sound designer
ANNETT MATEO, master puppet artisan

The music in the show serves to underscore the emotional landscape of *Black Beauty's* story, but also frame his thoughts and awareness of his own autobiography. In writing the score, I was inspired by traditional English folk music, as well as the contemporary piano scores of Michael Nyman and Fiona Joy Hawkins. Piano and accordion serve as the basis for the musical arrangements, with instruments such as the pennywhistle used to illustrate the nightingale and other farm animals.

ROB WITMER, composer

Often when an audience experiences a play, the attention is entirely on the visual. For seeing folks scenery, costumes, and lights take a lot of our conscious attention.

As a sound designer, I love this! As the eyes feast on all of the new stimulation in a play, there is a back channel open straight to the subconscious, to sense memory — and that's sound.

I choose sounds to create environments, to trigger your subconscious, to transport your feelings. For *Black Beauty*, there is the stables (a fly buzzing, a bird outside), the paddock (gentle wind over the grass), the town (people walking, carriages, a distant ship horn), the bridge (river underneath, wood creaks), a barn fire – lots of other realities that I can pull sounds from to help subconsciously move the audience. If you feel it, you will believe in it.

CHRIS WALKER, sound designer

Horse puppets are pretty much my favorite and to build so many of them in so many different ways has been very exciting. We decided right from the start that we did not want to fall into Mr. Ed territory (look it up kids) and we did not want to make them too literal. This gave me a great deal of creative freedom to design the different styles of horses and using a variety of materials. It has been great fun working with dictionary and map pages for Captain, the natural fiber mat for Ginger, burlap for Justice and a new tree leather material for Max. For *Black Beauty* I went with a geometric pattern to highlight all the various paths his life takes. There are six different *Black Beauty* puppets in the show!

ANNETT MATEO, puppet designer

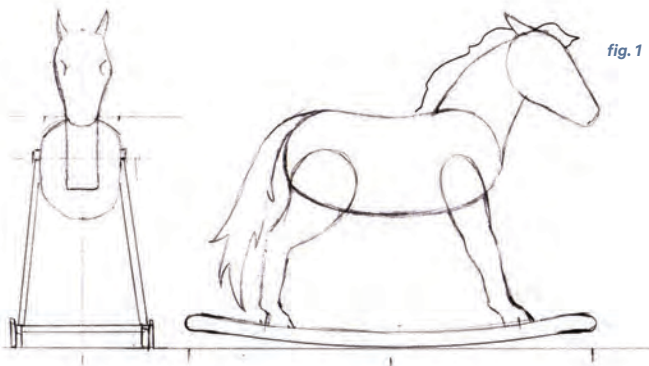


fig. 1



Black Beauty - SCT ©2019 Robertson Witmer

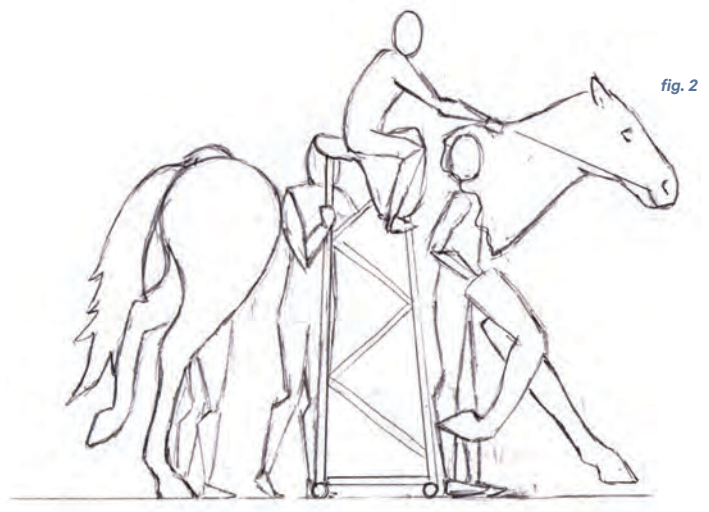


fig. 2



fig. 3

fig. 1 Merrylegs Rocker: Large size functional rocking horse, steel structure so actors can crawl all over it. © Annett Mateo

fig. 2 Joe Puppet: The actor holding/wearing the head will operate the front legs. The actor in the saddle controls the head with special reins which are stiff control rods. © Annett Mateo

fig. 3 Joe Puppet: One actor operates the back legs which are on a backpack-type rig. © Annett Mateo

DRAMA IN *action*



EXERCISE: A HORSE'S JOURNEY

GRADES: 1ST AND UP

TIME: 15 MINUTES

SET-UP: WORKS BEST IN AN OPEN SPACE

SUPPLIES: NONE

In *Black Beauty*, the audience follows how Black Beauty and his friends are affected by the treatment they receive from various masters. Some moments in his story are ones of kindness and love; others of adversity and resilience. In an exercise inspired by the stories of the horses in *Black Beauty*, students will explore how our emotions, actions, and circumstances are connected by using imaginative play and reflection.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Begin by asking students to move around the space like they normally walk. Call this walking speed neutral. Practice walking fast or slow and coming back to neutral speed.

When students are ready, prompt students to walk around the space like they won a million dollars! Reactions should have big choices that express their emotions. Emphasize that their goal is to express the emotion clearly. When they've explored this emotion ask students to return to neutral speed.

As students walk around the space ask them to express the following emotions based on how these situations would make them feel. Remember to return back to neutral before going into the next emotion. What would it feel like if...

- Your best friend surprised you with a meaningful present?
- Nobody remembered to wish you a happy birthday on your birthday?
- Someone lied and blamed you for doing something that you did not do?

Ask students to freeze in place. Encourage students to share a moment where they could identify how someone else was feeling based on the way that person was behaving. If they are having trouble identifying the cues for an emotion, guide their thought process with questions like, "How did you know someone was sad?"

When students get back to neutral, have students begin to think about life in a stable. Ask students to imagine that they are a horse. Some guiding questions may be: What noises would a horse make? How can you make your body into a horse? How do horses move?

As students embody a horse and move around the space, ask them to express the following emotions based on situations the horses in *Black Beauty* felt. What would it feel like if...

- Your new trainer called you his favorite horse and treated you with a lot of kindness?
- Your trainer told you that she does not want to take care of you anymore?
- A mean trainer said he will not feed you for a day if you do not gallop faster?

REFLECT:

Ask students to return to neutral and form a sitting down circle. Use the following prompts to guide reflection:

- How do the things we say and do to other people change/ influence their story?

JUMP start

IDEAS FOR THINGS TO DO, WONDER ABOUT, TALK ABOUT, OR WRITE ABOUT BEFORE OR AFTER YOU SEE *BLACK BEAUTY*.

Black Beauty is reminded to always remember his story. Tell a three-minute story of your life. What events are the most important?

What makes someone brave?

Write a letter to someone who has shown you kindness describing how it made you feel.

Tell a story from Ginger's point of view.

Black Beauty goes through many owners; some he likes and some he doesn't. What can we learn from people we don't like?

What is a secret wish you would share with Black Beauty?

Dolly wants to be a horse doctor. Research the training it requires to become a veterinarian.

How does love change your life and the way you see the world?

What are the ways you are kind to animals?

Make a list of the way animals help humans.

How did music help tell the story? Using instruments, found objects, or your own body or voice, make music that reminds you of some of the characters or actions in the story.

Draw a picture of Black Beauty's different homes—the pasture, Earl's Hall, and London.

Make a list of words describing the way it feels to ride a horse or watch a horse gallop.

Trot, run, and gallop like a horse. Blow through your lips to make a neigh sound.

BLACK BEAUTY vocabulary

MASTERPIECE (n) a work done with extraordinary skill

*The care he took of the horse was his **masterpiece**.*

INCANTATION (n) use of verbal charms as a part of a ritual of magic

*The **incantation** inspired a relaxing mood.*

VIGOROUSLY (adv) to use with force and energy

*Black Beauty shakes his head **vigorously** in excitement.*

ELIXIR (n) the essential principle

*But first you must know the secret **elixir** given to me by my father.*

FRIGID (adj) intensely cold

*He tries his best to stay warm in the **frigid** night.*

WINCH (n) various instrument for hauling and pulling

*Run for the **winch** and unscrew the carriage pole!*

PLUCKY (adj) spirited, brave

*They cut off their tails to make them look more **plucky**.*

OBLIGING (adj) willing to do favors

*I am happy to be your **obliging** servant.*

UNCHARACTERISTICALLY (adj) not typical or distinctive

*The curious boy was **uncharacteristically** disinterested.*

BRIDLE (n) headgear by which a horse is governed and holds the reins and bits

*He slipped the **bridle** over the horse's head.*

BLACK BEAUTY *activities*

USE THE CANVAS TO DRAW YOUR FAVORITE ANIMAL AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.



USE THE PAPER TO WRITE A JOURNAL ENTRY FROM YOUR FAVORITE ANIMAL'S POINT OF VIEW.
DESCRIBE YOUR DAY, ENVIRONMENT, THOUGHTS, FEARS, AND ACTIVITIES.

DATE _____

Journal entry writing area with horizontal lines.

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