



A.C.T. AMERICAN
CONSERVATORY
THEATER

A.C.T. PRESENTS

PASSENGERS

From **The 7 Fingers**

Directed, Written, and Choreographed by

Shana Carroll

EDUCATOR GUIDE

WELCOME!

American Conservatory Theater's Education & Community Programs Department is delighted to welcome you and your students into the magical physical realm of *Passengers*.

This guide was created in August 2022 by Natalie Greene and Josh Matthews, who are both creators of physical theater. Natalie approaches this work as a choreographer and physical storyteller, and Josh comes with 20 years of experience as a clown and performer specializing in physical theater.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This interactive, multimedia guide can be adapted to your students' grade level, interests, and needs. Take some time to click the hyperlinks and discover more about various topics. Find videos you can use alongside suggested activities and historical information.

You may notice that we share links to videos and resources created by circus companies and other arts education organizations. We are happy to share these in the spirit of virtual collaboration, having curated resources that compliment and prepare students for A.C.T.'s production of *Passengers*. We also aim to highlight the work done by colleagues in the arts education community both nationally and abroad.

As you investigate these materials, consider your own perspectives and how your students might receive this content. We hope you adapt the guide to better contextualize this information for your students, and of course, we hope you enjoy the show!

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FROM THE ARTISTIC + EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

WELCOME TO AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER—A.C.T.—AND THE KICKOFF TO OUR 2022/23 SEASON!

We are exploring the theme of HOME throughout the season. *Passengers* at first blush turns this theme on its head perhaps, by exploring the points in between home and far-flung destinations. But if the journey is truly more important than the endpoint, and if home is where the heart is, and if home is a place where there is love overflowing, and if there is no place like it, then home is in fact on these trains and these stations. Places and feelings created and invoked by these performers, with deep roots in circus and physical storytelling.

I gave originator/director/choreographer and Bay Area native Shana Carroll a tour of the theater a few months ago in preparation of the 7 Fingers touching down here this fall. I mentioned our season's theme, and she told me a small story. On tour, a reporter asked a four-year-old son of a member of the troupe where home was. He replied simply, "home is the circus." Home is the people we love through highs and lows. Home is the group we make things with and for, be it a spectacle or a meal. It is the group we look to for support and encouragement, and honest critique. Home is family—broadly defined. Home is the circus.

And we are thrilled to bring this circus into our theater, to feel collectively the fun suspense of where a feat of realized rigorous training, balance, and strength can take us, to feel the sweep of a story told more with bodies in motion than with the language of words. To gasp together and laugh in relief. There is a long tradition of theater in the Bay Area told through the body. I am excited to welcome the 7 Fingers to A.C.T., as they are a continuation of this homegrown legacy. This is a beautiful story of love and adventure. A story of a young woman, the amazing beauty of the world around her, and who she meets along the way.

Thank you for joining us at A.C.T. Please tell your friends about the show.



Pam MacKinnon
Artistic Director

WELCOME TO PASSENGERS AT AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER!

When we were exploring *Passengers* and this partnership with the 7 Fingers, one of the things we learned is that before each and every single performance, the artists do a 4-hour training session. That's a longer session than the runtime of the show—but they do it to keep themselves and each other safe. They can't walk in cold and perform this kind of physical artistry.

Lifelong training is a core value at A.C.T. as well. We know that you can't study acting once, and then never revisit that study. You need to keep coming back to the fundamentals, things like breathwork and character exploration, and continue to work those muscles, to make sure they're strong and ready for the more advanced actions you're going to put them through.

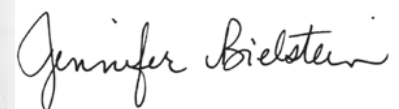
We lay that groundwork in our Conservatory programs, beginning in the Young Conservatory, where students ages 8–19 learn how to build their actor toolboxes, while also learning about how to play. As students grow out of high school, we welcome them into the San Francisco Semester or the Summer Training Congress, where they get more intensive in their work, while always remembering to exercise those basic muscles and keep play at the forefront.

For adults aged 19 and older, we offer classes through Studio A.C.T., whose tagline is "Real theater classes for real people." In Studio A.C.T. we work with a wide range of people, some who acted in college and enjoyed it, or who have never taken a class but think that clowning sounds fun, or who are terrified of being onstage but want to try their hand at playwriting. Professional artists also come to Studio A.C.T., to hone a particular skill or for career building workshops.

This variety of Conservatory classes means that there is something for everyone—theater training to help prepare artists of all ages and experience levels to explore their craft

and grow as artists. You can learn more about all these programs at act-sf.org/training—and we hope you're inspired to take a class yourself, and become a part of A.C.T.'s lifelong training legacy.

See you at the theater (season tickets are still available for as little as \$90) ... or in a class!



Jennifer Bielstein
Executive Director

ACT-SF.ORG



PAM
MACKINNON
Artistic Director

JENNIFER
BIELSTEIN
Executive Director



PRESENTS

PASSENGERS

A production by The 7 Fingers

Directed, Written, and Choreographed
by Shana Carroll

THIS PRODUCTION IS GENEROUSLY
SPONSORED BY

Associate Producers: Anonymus;
John L. Garfinkle

Benefactors: Clay Foundation - West

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David Sze; Priscilla and Keith Geeslin;
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PASSENGERS

A production by The 7 Fingers
Directed, Written, and Choreographed by Shana Carroll

CAST

KAISHA DESSALINES-WRIGHT
BETO FREITAS
MARCO INGARAMO

NELLA NIVA
MANDI OROZCO
SANTIAGO RIVERA

DINA SOK
ANDREW SUMNER
MÉLIEJADE TREMBLAY-BOUCHARD

CREATIVE TEAM

COLIN GAGNÉ
Musical Director

ANA CAPPELLUTO
Scenic Design

CAMILLE THIBAUT-BÉDARD
Costume Design

ÉRIC CHAMPOUX
Lighting Design

JOHNNY RANGER
Video Design

ISABELLE CHASSÉ
Assistant to the Director

FRANCISCO CRUZ
Head Coach

ORIGINALLY CREATED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ORIGINAL CAST:

Sereno Aguilar Izzo, Louis Joyal, Maude Parent, Samuel Renaud,
Sabine Van Rensburg, Brin Schoellkopf, Freyja Wild, Conor Wild

CO-PRODUCERS

TOHU (MONTRÉAL, CANADA)

ARTSEMERSON (BOSTON, U.S.A.)

A.C.T. PRODUCING TEAM

ANDY CHAN DONALD
Associate Artistic Director

LOUISA LISKA
Director of General Management
& Operations

AMY DALBA
General Manager

MARTIN BARRON
Director of Production

Recording notice: The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production,
or distributing recordings on any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited.

THE VIRTUOSITY OF MISTAKE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CLOWNING WITH LOCAL CLOWN JOSH MATTHEWS

BY SYCHE PHILLIPS

Josh Matthews is a clown, actor, and director specializing in physical theater, interactive performance, and performer generated works, as well as co-artistic director of Under the Table ensemble theater. He has worked as a clown doctor for the last 18 years finding moments of delight, fun, and transformation within medical facilities throughout the U.S. Currently he is a lead teaching artist for A.C.T.'s education program, and has performed with San Diego Rep, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center, Big Apple Circus, and Third Rail Projects. "Through character, improvisation, and interaction I have found new spaces in places we feel are solid and immovable."

A.C.T. has been proud to present shows throughout our history that represent clowning and physical theater.

On the mainstage, you may have seen Bill Irwin's *On Beckett* (2017); *Old Hats* (2014), created and performed by Bill Irwin and David Shiner; *Humor Abuse* (2011), created by Lorenzo Pisoni and Erica Schmidt; Molière's *Scapin* (2010), adapted by Bill Irwin and Mark O'Donnell; or *Fool Moon*, which A.C.T. produced in 1998 and brought back again in 2001. Additionally, each of our MFA classes participated in clowning workshops and presented an annual Clown Show. The study of the clown increases actors' ability to access vulnerability and capacity for wonder along with the

rigor of creating a character from the outside-in.

Physical theater and circus has deep roots in the San Francisco Bay Area, in companies that are still thriving today. The San Francisco Mime Troupe was founded in 1959 by RG Davis, and from early days, incorporated facets of *commedia dell'arte*, melodrama, and farce, performing around the

a tradition of one ring, European circus. The one ring style, a more intimate style, started to cotton on in the United States in the 60s, 70s, 80s," says Josh. "The hallmarks and distinctions of *cirque nouveau*, which is what you'll see in *Passengers*, is first, no animals—it's all about the expression of the human body. And second, there is going to be more of a visual and emotional narrative, rather than a pure spectacle.

Modern circus is going to use a theme, a setting, or an idea as a backdrop to put the circus skills into."

As you watch *Passengers*, you may find yourself drawn to the narrative themes, and extrapolating what they mean to you. Or you may find yourself focusing on enjoying the visuals and the expression of the human body. "I find it helpful to watch with an expressionist point of view rather than literal," says Josh. "A great professor once

told me when it comes to this kind of work, people want to 'get it.' But when you get into a bathtub, you don't 'get' the bath. You *soak*. You don't try to understand the bath. You experience the bath, you feel what it is, you enjoy the sensory input . . . and you may realize things it's bringing up for you along the way. It's like listening to a symphony. You don't understand the symphony. You float in the music."

If we think of clowning as being a closer relative to the symphony



Lorenzo Pisoni with an old photo of his two-year old self in *Humor Abuse*. Photo by Chris Bennion.

San Francisco area, both indoors and outdoors in a display of "guerilla theater," often centering pieces around political satire. In 1974, the Pickle Family Circus was created by the Pickle Family Jugglers, who were at the time members of the SF Mime Troupe. The Pickle Family Circus, along with the Big Apple Circus on the east coast, are both considered to be foundational in the reinvigoration of modern circus in the United States.

"Pickle Family and Big Apple are twin companies, and they come from

or ballet or modern dance than it is to traditional linear theater, some connections come into focus. The physicality of expression, for instance. The use of archetypes (known in music as leitmotifs) as a shorthand with the audience. And the distance between the audience and what's being done onstage—with traditional linear theater, there's often an emphasis on realism and an ability for an audience member to think, "I could be an actor." But "I could do that" may not occur to you watching virtuoso musicians, prima ballerinas, or acrobats throwing each other into the air.

Josh points out, "You sometimes forget that what you're witnessing is months if not years of work. That flawless moment seems impossible for you to do, and you become numb to it because it looks like they're doing it without effort. But it's months and years of work to be able to not only do the skill, but make it look effortless and fit into an artistic expression to convey emotion."

There's a thing that happens in clowning that doesn't happen in many other artistic fields. If an artist misses a move—drops a ball while juggling, or doesn't make it through the hoop—if it's safe, they'll reset and do it again and land it. It's a gorgeous proof that this isn't some magical machine, that these are real people doing incredible tricks,

and sometimes they're going to miss a step. But like any normal person, you reset and fix it and you persevere. And the audience goes wild.

"Personally, that's why I'm a clown," Josh says. "The clown's job is the vulnerability of the human, the celebration of folly. You see the mistakes. The whole thing becomes about the virtuosity of mistake."

"And sometimes those drops are planned. Jugglers call it 'the juggler's drop.' It's how you get the audience on your side. It's been so magical for so long, it's the artist's way of saying, 'Don't forget that this is very hard.' If I see you do ten backflips in a row with no effort, then when you do one backflip it doesn't mean anything. Of course you can do it. You can do impossible things. But if

I see you struggle and not land it, over and over, in an interesting, artistic, beautiful way . . . then when you do land it, I'm jumping out of my seat."

The roots of clowning, as they come from commedia dell'arte and traditional melodrama, grew out of a popular form of theater—meaning theater for the populace. Circus and clowning are intended to connect bodies in space and time, to evoke emotions, and to entertain. Like many art forms, if you study it and learn about it, your appreciation of it may grow—but you can also just let yourself be entertained.

We hope you're able to float in the artistry and the music of Passengers, and to open your mind to the virtuosity of mistake. Enjoy the show.



PHYSICAL THEATER

BY NATALIE GREENE

All theater is physical, as it relies on bodies in space. However, **physical theater** places the body at the center of storytelling. While words and dialogue might be included, the body is the primary method of communication. This makes room for the audience to have a visceral experience and allows for expansive interpretations of the work onstage.



Passengers cast in rehearsal in August 2022. Photos by Francisco Cruz.

Here are some things to look for when you're watching physical theater:

Focus

- Where are the performers looking / not looking? What can they see / not see?
- What energy or emotions are they sending in the direction of their focus?

Spatial relationships

- Proximity - are they near? far? evenly spaced? randomly staggered?
- Do the positions of their bodies suggest other things? (like a train? love? loneliness?)
- Who and how many? Look for: Solo / Duo / Small Group / Large group, then ask yourself how the groupings of bodies suggest emotions, ideas, and stories.

Time and quality

- TEMPO: Fast? Medium? Slow? When the tempo changes, is it abrupt or gradual? What could that mean?
- DURATION: How long does something last? How quickly does something pass?
- Does the tempo, texture or duration suggest an emotion or story? For example, SLOW can be sorrowful or sleepy, but can also be calm & at peace. FAST can be stressful & anxious, but can also be joyful & exuberant. What emotions or stories do the tempo changes convey?

Kinesthetic response

- What qualities or sensations do you notice, physically?
- Does it make you want to move your body?
- Does it impact your breath? Give you butterflies? Does it make you pull back in surprise?

Movement and shape

- Are the performers portraying human characters at this time? Look for: quotidian (everyday) movement and behavioral gestures, such as waving at someone or picking up a suitcase.
- Are the performers portraying bigger ideas or abstract elements? Look for: symbolic gestures representing inner states, or combined bodies representing large concepts.
- How are the bodies situated in relation to other elements? Consider how the body relates to props, architecture, and apparatus, as well as how performers' bodies interact with video, lighting, and sound.

The elements described above are also the tools that creators of physical theater use to make new work. I hope these lenses support your viewing and enjoyment of the stories and ideas expressed in *Passengers*.

MOMENT AS METAPHOR / SIMILE:

INTRODUCTION

Major themes and sources of inspiration for the creators of *Passengers* are **trains** and the **fleeting encounters one might have while traveling by rail**.

The director / choreographer uses this backdrop as a jumping off point for the visual narrative of the show. In this dream-like production, circus arts are used as **metaphor** and **simile** for train travel.

| METAPHOR (noun) met·a·phor | SIMILE (noun) sim·i·le |
|--|--|
| Definition: a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. | Definition: a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as (as in) |
| Example: “she is drowning in money” | Example: “his face is red like an apple” |

Simile vs. Metaphor according to Miriam Webster:

<https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-metaphor-and-vs-simile/>

Simile comes from the Latin word *similis* (meaning “similar, like”), which seems fitting, since the comparison indicated by a simile will typically contain the words “as” or “like”. Metaphor, on the other hand, comes from the Greek word *metapherein* (“to transfer”), which is also fitting, since a metaphor is used in place of something. “**My love is like a red, red rose**” is a **SIMILE**, and “**love is a rose**” is a **METAPHOR**.

OPTION: Consider having students write their own similes and metaphors before progressing to the next activity. Have students pick one to read aloud (without sharing if it’s a simile or metaphor), and have the class indicate which one they think it is.



MOMENT AS METAPHOR / SIMILE:

ACTIVITY

In physical theater, circus, and dance, **simile** and **metaphor** can be used to create moments onstage, and can also be used to interpret moments onstage.

Let's examine how artists create in this fashion! One way is to creatively break down an image...

STEP 1: Project and enlarge the image, and give students time to digest it.

STEP 2: Keep the image on screen and have students either, write their answers in a journal or on a worksheet, discuss these questions in small groups or discuss together as a class, some combination of the above

QUESTIONS:

What is happening in this image?

What is the light like?

What shapes do I see?

What sounds can I imagine? What music would fit with this image?

What time period does this image take place in or remind me of?

What kind of movement do I imagine in this image? What might happen right before or after this?

What feelings are invoked by this image?

What does this image remind me of?

STEP 3: Once you have brainstormed these questions, find a metaphor or simile that describes that image. This can act as a title of the piece you create. From there you have a ton of material that you can use to make your own art from.

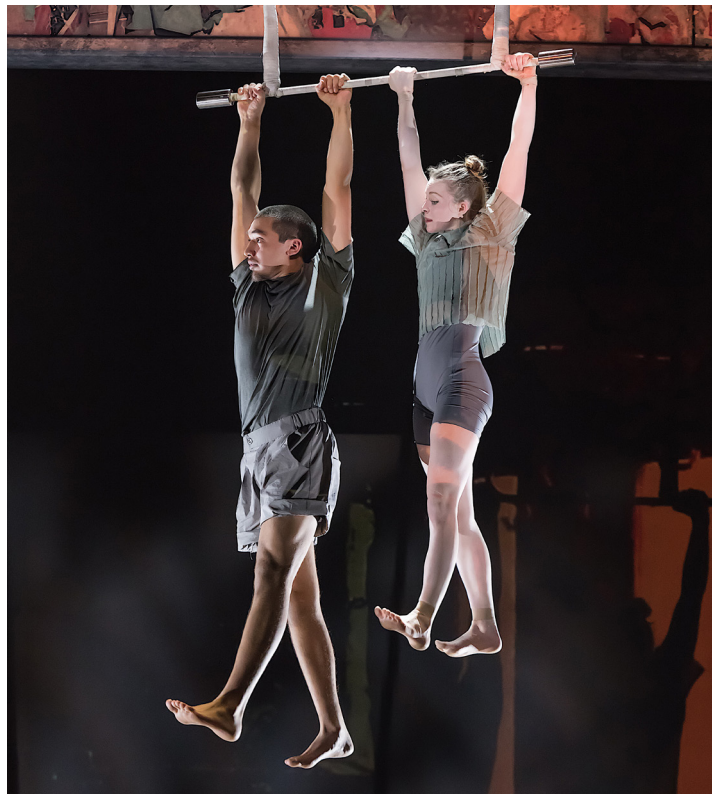
STEP 4: Repeat the activity with additional images, below.

Additional options for teachers:

- Have students search for their own images that contain rich visual metaphors.
- Assign different groups of students different images. e.g. Group 1 look at Image 1, and came up with metaphors and similes. Group 2 look at Image 2, etc... - then groups can present their images and phrases to each other, broadening exposure and creative investigation for the full class!
- Play these songs while students study the image (e.g. 30-60 seconds of each song, then switch). Observe how the music changes the feeling of the image. For advanced writers, have students write a different metaphor or simile for each song.
 - <https://youtu.be/zKJV8VjyKeQ>
 - <https://youtu.be/3QWaNv4EWb8>
 - <https://youtu.be/eonPVJO5mVg>



MOMENT AS METAPHOR / SIMILE:



GESTURE STUDY AND ABSTRACTION:

ACTIVITY, part 1

gesture (noun) ges·ture | \ 'jes-chər

definition: a movement usually of the hand, arm, body, head, or face that expresses or emphasizes an idea, sentiment, or attitude

example: she raised her hands overhead in a gesture of triumph

WARM UP:

- Define gesture and remind students:
 - They will be communicating with their bodies
 - No sounds or words
 - Only school-appropriate gestures!
- Have students gesture for the following words and ideas (either from their desks or standing in a circle):
 - Yes / No (point out there are many correct answers! e.g. nodding head can mean yes, but so can thumbs up. remind students to create their own gestures and responses, encourage originality!)
 - Excited / Nervous / Surprised (happy) / Surprised (scared)
 - Brushing Teeth
 - Something Stinks
 - Come Here / Go Away
- Explain that they were just performing **literal gestures**, but that some gestures can be **abstract**.
 - Ask students to create a figure 8 with their hands or arms. Lead a short brainstorm re: what this gesture could mean. e.g. infinity, continuation, life and death... point out the **literal** interpretation is the number 8, and the **abstract** interpretation contains multitudes!



BUILD-A-PHRASE

Introduce the exercise by doing a simple gesture and then ask everyone to repeat it, say something like, “Let’s make a series of gestures, here is count number one.”

From this beginning, movements are added, one to a count. You can continue to demonstrate the next counts, or ask someone to suggest a movement to add, or begin to solicit ideas from the group based on a question or another prompt. We suggest you source gestures from the students!

As the phrase builds through the accumulation of successive movements, it is important to return to count one and repeat the succeeding counts as often as seems necessary for the group to stay connected to the developing movement. You might start with 4-5 gestures, or challenge the class to remember a sequence of 8 or 10. As the activity gets harder (on the next page), it helps to remember the numbers. We suggest you and the students count out loud as you create and practice.

Once you’ve reached the desired number of gestures, practiced and refined them, explain to the class that **you’ve just created choreography!** This is called a movement phrase, which is a fragment of choreography, just like a written or spoken phrase can be a fragment of a sentence. Now, you can abstract or create variations of this phrase.

Gesture Study and Abstraction: ACTIVITY, part 2

After you **Build-a-Phrase**, add **Abstraction!**

Using the movement phrase that you just built, repeat the movements with the following variations or abstractions:

- TEMPO:
 - Slow Motion, Fast Motion
- QUALITY:
 - Underwater, like seaweed!
 - Sharp and Angular, like robots!
- SIZE of MOVEMENT:
 - As small as possible, like it got shrunk in the dryer
 - As big as possible, integrating other body parts
- ORDER of MOVEMENT:
 - Retrograde or Backwards (e.g. instead of 1-2-3-4-5, try 5-4-3-2-1)
 - Invite students to create their own abstractions! Consider having small groups create their own variations of the phrase, and integrate other elements of physical theater in their creations.

APPLICATIONS

Limitless variations are possible depending on the context and the movement source. Here are some examples of different movement inspirations:

- Add music to the phrases. Use music you select, music we linked on the '[Moment as Metaphor / Simile](#)' page above, or have the students pick their own
- Try this activity with a theme related to your existing curriculum. For example:
 - Take one important sentence from a textbook, have students create movements based on each word, so building-a-phrase becomes choreographing-a-sentence. Students divide into groups and create phrases for various sentences, and then the class can present a page from the book in dance form.
 - Review a concept and have students demonstrate their understanding with movement. If students studied a specific ecosystem, for example, ask them to come up with movements that represent different plants or animals from that ecosystem. Or, if students studied a specific historical era, have students create movements that represent important people, facts, events or ideas of that era.
- If you tried the Moment as Metaphor / Simile activity above, have students Build-a-Phrase based on the metaphors and similes that they wrote!

Sources of movement can be quite varied for Build-a-Phrase, so among its many uses it makes a great introduction to choreographic thinking. The leader may draw a spontaneous gesture that people use in telling their stories; she may ask participants to state what they found striking and give a movement assignment based on that; she may ask for a suggestion in abstract or spatial terms (e.g.: All of our movements so far have been arm movements. Can anyone suggest something that could use other body parts?); she can tie together stories expressed by several different participants by suggesting a movement of her invention that encompasses several ideas. When constructed with thought and care, a Build-a-Phrase can demonstrate a range of possibilities, going from large to small, smooth to angular, high to low, etc. As the phrase is built the leader can state why she is making particular choices, providing a potent introduction to the choreographer's craft.

This is a powerful tool because of the endless number contexts in which phrase-building can happen, the different ways the movement can be initiated, and ultimately the satisfaction even for those unfamiliar with dance and choreography of participating in a simple but authentic form.

*This activity was adapted from the **The Dance Exchange Toolbox**, a wonderful and expansive resource containing instructions for a variety of art-making techniques and concise descriptions of principles and practices: <http://www.d-lab.org/toolbox/about> (P.S. we recommend checking out the "Tool Chooser!")*

ORIGINS OF ‘ACROBAT’ AND ‘ACROBATICS’

The word **acrobat** is French in origin. The French word, however, was borrowed from Greek—specifically the Middle Greek word *akrobátēs*, meaning “tightrope walker,” which itself is derived from *akróbatos*, meaning “walking on tiptoe.”

akro- is from Greek **ákros**, meaning height, “at the farthest extreme, topmost”

batos is from *baínein*, meaning “to walk, go”

SO....

akro → HIGH + batos → WALKING = **akrobatos → HIGH WALKING**

Greek → French ... **akrobátēs → TIGHTROPE WALKER**



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How do you feel about heights, “high walking,” or even balancing on a tightrope?
 - Do you enjoy heights? Or perhaps do you have **acrophobia** (“fear of heights”)?
- Have you ever seen acrobatics before? How does it make you feel? and why?

Sourced from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/word-history-of-acrobat>, where you can learn more about this word and its history!

VIDEOS OF THE 7 FINGERS

What is The 7 Fingers? Who are The 7 Fingers?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN5Qw0S2T5g>

1 min. 9 sec.

We are a creative collective

We are writers, directors, choreographers

We merge acrobatics and theatre, dance and multimedia, music and storytelling

We create, produce, collaborate

We do cultural and commercial, global and local, small and large scale

We push the definition and potential of live performance

WE TELL HUMAN STORIES WITH SUPERHUMAN SKILLS

Previews of this show: Passengers

Decide how much time you'd like to spend

Super Short preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOuYHC2eqh0>

1 min. 10 sec.

****OR****

Medium-length preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3q90RNh7Vg>

1 min. 57 sec.

****OR****

Long-ish preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek-4TrLg47Y>

3 min. 47 sec.

The 7 Fingers Reimagines Passengers in Short Film “Boxed In”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RsrBrlhiWA>

5 min. 45 sec.

In this short film, an acrobat from Montréal’s award-winning circus troupe The 7 Fingers explores a more intimate side of the show Passengers from his home in Guanajuato, Mexico. In the show, this act is about trying to do something private in a public space, but in the film, it becomes about offering something public in a private space.

The 7 Fingers performing on America’s Got Talent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLX3B8ksAdA>

3 min. 45 sec.

Interview with Director / Choreographer Shana Carroll (Reading)

<https://blog.7doigts.com/en/index.php/2018/12/04/interview-with-shana-carroll/>

MORE VIDEOS

A, B, Circus! is an incredible educational video series created by Canadian entertainment company **Cirque du Soleil**, the largest contemporary circus producer in the world. The series takes you through the origins of the circus, from ancient times to the present day, including how acts like aerial acrobatics, juggling and the clown came into being. In addition to history, anecdotes and impressive visuals, it covers technical information including various aerial apparatus, answering many “how did they do that?!” type-questions.

History of the circus | A, B, Circus! | Episode 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3uXVuXk8s4>

5 min. 2 sec.

History of Juggling | A, B, Circus! | Episode 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HlpM7zRtbY>

5 min. 36 sec.

History of Aerial Acrobatics | A, B, Circus! | Episode 5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-hxJf1hbm8>

7 min. 49 sec.

*PRO TIP: If you share these videos, consider reminding students that they are not going to see Cirque du Soleil. They are seeing a smaller, younger circus company from Montreal, who has roots right here in the Bay Area! Only a few of the apparatus and circus elements you see in these videos will appear onstage in **Passengers**.*

What is Physical Theater?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjnKwTAmSNs>

2 min. 32 sec.

An overview of Physical Theater as an art form.

The Extreme Day Of A New Cirque du Soleil Artist in Training

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nI-MtMM3M1A>

24 min. 27 sec.

A day in the (very intense and interesting) life!

Movement Metaphor

<http://www.d-lab.org/toolbox/view/Movement-Metaphor>

---> Another great activity from the Dance Exchange / Liz Lerman, exploring metaphors through movement.

LESSON PLANNING

We suggest you look through this guide and consider which activities, readings, and videos will be most interesting and appropriate for your students, and most applicable to your existing curriculum. Then, remix it like a DJ!

Here are two example lesson plans:

LESSON 1 (more physical)

- **Homework:** have students read:
 - “Circus Roots”
 - “Physical Theater”
- **Watch:** [What is The 7 Fingers? Who are The 7 Fingers?](#) (1 min. 9 sec.)
- **Activity:** Gesture Study and Abstraction, parts 1 and 2
- **Watch:**
 - Tell students they will see a preview of the show they are going to see at A.C.T., and to watch for gestures, abstractions, and what the movement might mean.
 - [Medium-length preview](#) (1 min. 57 sec.)
- **Discuss:** What kinds of gestures and abstractions did you see in the short video? What stood out to you, and why? What are you most curious about as you prepare to see the performance?

LESSON 2 (more language-based)

- **Homework:** have students read:
 - “[Moment as Metaphor](#) / Simile INTRODUCTION”
 - “[Origins of ‘Acrobat’ and ‘Acrobatics’](#)”
- **Watch:** [Super Short preview](#) (1 min. 10 sec.)
- **Activities:**
 - Class discussion using the questions at the bottom of Origins of ‘Acrobat’ and ‘Acrobatics’
 - Moment as Metaphor / Simile: ACTIVITY
- **Watch:**
 - Read the description on the YouTube page. Ask students to remember moments that stand out to them, bonus points if they consider visual metaphors and similes (e.g. the performer is juggling his life between the circus and his hometown, or throwing the balls is like tossing his worries around)
 - [The 7 Fingers Reimagines Passengers in Short Film “Boxed In”](#) (5 min. 45 sec.)
- **Discuss:** What visual images, metaphors, and similes did you see in the video? What stood out to you, and why? What are you most curious about as you prepare to see the performance?

However you remix these educational materials, remember **the goal is preparing students to enjoy the show!** We hope these readings, activities, discussions, and ideas cultivate curiosity and excitement around *Passengers*. We’re hoping for less “I don’t get it” and more “what I really liked about it was _____” and “it reminded me of _____” and “circus and physical theater are AMAZING!” ... which we think they are.

We’ll see you at the theater, and we hope you enjoy the show.

HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR EXPERIENCE

PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT

- Double check A.C.T.'s COVID-19 updates: <https://www.act-sf.org/about-us/covid-19-updates/>
- If you are feeling unwell, please stay home. If you or a member of your party is experiencing symptoms similar to those of COVID-19 or have had known exposure to someone with COVID-19, please stay home.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE THEATER

- Masks are recommended for all students, staff, and guests and are available upon request. Masks should fit well, meaning they cover your nose and mouth comfortably without need of frequent adjustment. We request that you and your students wear your mask for the full performance.
- No food and beverages will be served or allowed. Water fountains are unavailable.
- Hand sanitizer stations are available throughout the theater.
- Front of House Staff including Security personnel, ushers, and house managers are trained to assist guests and ensure that safety measures are followed. If you feel uncomfortable or perceive a risk at any time, please speak with one of these team members.

DURING THE SHOW

- Stay in your seat unless using the restroom.
- Read the ACT "Rules of Play" to learn more about how we hope you arrive, engage and enjoy the show! <https://www.act-sf.org/your-visit/a-c-t-s-house-rules-of-play/>
- If your students would benefit from additional information about theater etiquette, consider discussing some of the points made by Blake Theater here: <https://www.blaketheater.com/theater-etiquette/>

AFTER THE SHOW

- Revisit parts of the Educator Guide that you didn't use before, including readings, videos & links, as well as activities and discussion prompts.
- Use a "**See, Think, Wonder**" reflection model:
 - What did you see in the show? What were some of your favorite things you saw?
 - What did the show make you think about? What did it remind you of? What, specifically, did you see that made you think that?
 - What did the show make you wonder? What are you curious about now that you've seen it? How did the show engage your imagination?
- Consider using student responses to a "**See, Think, Wonder**" discussion as prompts for writing assignments, choreographic inquiry, and more.

NATIONAL ARTS STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS GUIDE

<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>

THEATER STANDARDS

CREATING

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

- TH:Cr1.1.1 - c. Identify ways in which gestures and movement may be used to create or retell a story in guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama).
- TH:Cr1.1.4 - a. Articulate the visual details of imagined worlds, and improvised stories that support the given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.
- TH:Cr1.1.8 - a. Imagine and explore multiple perspectives and solutions to staging problems in a drama/ theatre work.
- TH:Cr1.1.I - a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

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

- TH:Cr2-3 - a. Participate in methods of investigation to devise original ideas for a drama/theatre work.
- TH:Cr2-6 - b. Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work

RESPONDING

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

- TH:Re8.1.3 - a. Consider multiple personal experiences when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.
- TH:Re8.1.5 - c. Investigate the effects of emotions on posture, gesture, breathing, and vocal intonation in a drama/ theatre work.
- TH:Re8.1.I - Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works.

DANCE STANDARDS

CREATING

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

- DA:Cr1.1.2 - a. Explore movement inspired by a variety of stimuli (for example, music/sound, text, objects, images, symbols, observed dance, experiences) and suggest additional sources for movement ideas.
- DA:Cr1.1.2 - b. Combine a variety of movements while manipulating the elements of dance.
- DA:Cr1.1.6 - b. Explore various movement vocabularies to transfer ideas into choreography.
- DA:Cr1.1.8 - a. Implement movement from a variety of stimuli (for example, music, observed dance, literary forms, notation, natural phenomena, personal experience/recall, current news or social events) to develop dance content for an original dance study or dance.
- DA:Cr1.1.II - a. Synthesize content generated from stimulus materials to choreograph dance studies or dances using original or codified movement.

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

- DA:Cr2.1.3 - a. Identify and experiment with choreographic devices to create simple movement patterns and dance structures (for example, AB, ABA, theme and development).
- DA:Cr2.1.5 - b. Develop a dance study by selecting a specific movement vocabulary to communicate a main idea. Discuss how the dance communicates non- verbally.