

presents

Grandfather Frost's Stories of



Russia

Combined Folk Tales told by Baba Yaga and her magical Cat

A Study Guide for K-6 Grade Classrooms

performance education museum of masks and puppets community

Visit the castle on North Salina Street
Telephone: 315 476-0466 Fax: 315 472-2578
Mail: 518 Prospect Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13208

On the Web: www.OpenHandTheater.org Email: info@OpenHandTheater.org

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Open Hand Theater's "Grandfather Frost's Stories of Russia" is an original play by Geoffrey Navias, developed in part through workshops with Russian folklore and folk music themes

Any or all of the pages of this study guide can be found and printed from the Open Hand Theater website. Go to:

http://www.openhandtheater.org/traveling-theater/grandfather-frosts-stories-of-russia





Dear Teacher,

Welcome to **Open Hand Theater**'s production: **Grandfather Frost's Stories of Russia**, a touring stage performance written by Geoffrey Navias featuring Russian artist in residence Vladimir Vasyagin, several ancient Russian folk characters and folk music adapted by musician Leslie Archer.

Grandfather Frost inhabits the Russian forest and brings the winter cold. BabaYaga conveys many lessons in the telling of her stories, and Silver the Cat brings just about the right amount of mischief and fun. The children in this story are faced with universal fears and challenges. Children in the audience are drawn in to this beautiful and imaginative world where they can experience familiar yet distinctively different perspectives on life.

Open Hand Theater's revised study guide focuses on just a few of these perspectives. Please refer especially to the worksheet titled: "A Little Poetry to Illustrate." I suggest that you to reproduce this sheet for your students so they can participate more in the story. You may print any or all of these pages by going to our website address found at the bottom of the page, clicking on "Traveling Theater" and the show title.

Sincerely,

Leslie Archer

Coordinator of Arts Education Programs

Open Hand Theater

Dear Educator:

As an educator for the past 25 years, I have come to appreciate the value, the absolute necessity of Arts Education that touches on all subject material. **Open Hand Theater** provides a rich collection of delightful performances and artistic concepts to enhance the learning environment.

Our study guide is designed to help you prepare your students for attendance while meeting your curriculum needs. The study guide contains pre-performance activities and after-performance activities designed for grades 3-5 and for grades 6-8. These educational materials follow guidelines set for New York State curriculum standards.

Sincerely,

Barbara Curley Arts Education Consultant Former teacher of English Literature Cicero North Syracuse High School





Book in Open Hand Theater for more exciting performances and programs

The Chocolate War about bullying and conflict

Unbridle That Mule about Erie Canal History

The Stonecutter a folktale from Japan

Grandfather Frost's Stories of Russia

fun with Russian folktales

The Secret of the Puppet's Book

fun with books and reading

Masks of Life about masks in time and culture

Complementary Workshops

The Traveling Mask and Puppet Museum

a school residency program that brings traditional masks and puppets to the classroom and reveals their cultural stories

Commedia Dell'Arte

a mask improvisation performance workshop based on the traditions of early Italian street theater

Monkey Business

a traveling puppet stage where young readers can explore the action and sounds from the story: "Caps for Sale"

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About Open Hand Theater

Open Hand Theater's Education Objectives

- Bring the arts to schools and offer an effective medium for cultivating student appreciation of creative expression and artistic discipline.
- Promote the use of arts for discovery of human commonalties, as well as celebrating and respecting cultural differences.
- Create ideas and methods to promote the interdisciplinary use of the arts.

The open hands are an age-old symbol of welcome, willingness, and commitment as we work to make a better world.

Open Hand Theater is an ensemble of performing and teaching artists committed to involving children in creativity and the arts. It was formed in 1981 by a group of community artists and Artistic Director Geoffrey Navias.

The theater's mission is to connect the ancient art and ritual of mask and puppetry with contemporary life. We strive to explore the concerns of our technologically advanced culture through the wisdom of myth and bring to life the magical wonder of children's fantasy.

Open Hand Theater uses traditional and improvisational acting blended with puppetry, masks, original music and dance. The company creates unique original theater pieces that draw from historical and modern traditions, reinforcing the core values emphasized by the world's great storytellers.

Open Hand Theater presents collections of masks and puppets from around the world and offers classes in a variety of the performing, visual and folk arts. Call us to explore a performance, classroom workshop, or residency project with your school.

Open Hand Theater

is located at the Castle on North Salina Street in Syracuse, NY

The theater engages in four program areas:

- Performance
- Education
- Museum of Masks and Puppets
- Community

For more information visit our website at www.OpenHandTheater.org



Introduction

Grandfather Frost's Stories of Russia

...an original performance of Russian folk tales

Open Hand Theater's puppetry production introduces Russian folk characters and folk music in the portrayal of a combination of several Russian folk stories. The leading puppets were designed and created in Russia by crafters at the acclaimed "Skomorokh" Puppet Theater of Tomsk, Siberia. They are operated in a uniquely Russian theater style where puppeteers are visible onstage, often acting the role along with the puppet characters themselves. Open Hand Theater designed this production to introduce children to the enchanting traditions of eastern European folklore and puppetry.

Grades: K-6

Audience Size Limit: 300 students

Venue auditorium, library or large classroom

Performance Time: 45 minutes, can be followed by a brief talk-back **Setup and strike:** 30 minutes each.; 15 minutes between shows

Program Requirements: The performance requires a minimum area 15' deep x 15' wide with at least 10' ceiling clearance. A raised stage and stage lighting is recommended for large audiences.

The staging is adaptable for smaller audiences and spaces.

Introducing the Artists

Vladimir Vasyagin International Artist in Residence

puppet and set construction

... performing the roles of the Cat and

Grandfather Frost

Leslie Archer *Music Director and Set Designer*

... performing the roles of Baba Yaga, Alonushka

and Matriona

Geoffrey Navias Playwright and Artistic Director

Andrea Martin Costume Designer

Kathy Ferro *Administrative Assistant*

booking arrangements



The Story

The performance opens with themes from several Russian folk songs, introducing the old storyteller and wise woman Baba Yaga and her mischievous black cat, Silver. After some coaxing the cat finally appears and he in turn introduces Vladimir and the Balalaika, then proceeds to take over the singing of the next folk song. Baba Yaga comes on to admonish him, and they begin relating the story of Matriona and Alonushka, two sisters who live near the edge of the vast Russian forest.

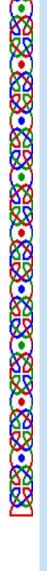
Matriona sends her younger sister Alonushka out alone to gather firewood for the house. With the conniving of Baba Yaga and the help of the cat, Alonushka becomes hopelessly lost. Her travels to Grandfather Frost's house, to the south wind, and back home are likewise manipulated by Baba Yaga and confounded by the cat, who can't seem to get anything right. But Alonushka's good nature prevails despite the troubles she encounters, and she eventually is allowed to return home with just rewards.

Upon seeing her sister's wonderful gifts the jealous Matriona sets off to find her own treasures, rudely confronting the entire audience and Grandfather Frost himself. She is of course sent home with nothing. Both sisters have learned something valuable from their experience, and Baba Yaga gets the last word of course... or is it Grandfather Frost? In any case, the characters and the audience get one last chance to reprise the folk song, and the lovely birch tree stands straight and tall in the middle of the great green meadow.

"Grandfather Frost is only one of my many different names."

In other parts of the world I have been given other names."

Synopsis





The Arts Standard 3:

Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

Theater Etiquette

Questions for your class to ponder

What is the job of the performer?

We are here to tell you a story. The story unfolds and comes to life before you when all of your senses are engaged as much as possible. As performers we want to bring you into the story and experience it with you.

Puppeteers have an extra job. We must help you believe in characters that are made of wood, cloth, metal and string. As actors we must be those characters, and as puppeteers we must project ourselves onto those puppets, so that their personalities come through as they travel through the story. And for the story to work, we must also help you understand them and like them!

What is the job of the audience?

You are here to see, hear and imagine the story as it unfolds. Your most important job is to try and take in every sight and sound on the stage. Try to imagine how you might feel at different times in the story.

What are the five senses?

Think of an example of how each sense can be engaged in a stage performance.

As an audience, *reacting* to characters and events of the story is real. You might laugh, cry, be amazed or be excited by what you see and hear. Giving your attention to other people or things happening in the audience is *distracting*. Use all of your senses to experience the story; use your hands to applaud at the end!

Before the Performance

for all grades

Theater Etiquette



ELA

Standard 1: Students will listen for information and understanding...

Students will collect data, facts and ideas and discover

relationships, concepts and generalizations.

Standard 3: Students will listen for critical analysis and understanding.

Things to Consider

In your classroom, discuss some of the vocabulary words on the next page.

1. Students may find the names from Russian Language unfamiliar and difficult to pronounce. If there are students in your class who know these words, encourage them to help others with them. For example:

Baba Yaga the accent is on the last syllable
 Matriona is a common Russian name like Mary

• Alona is a formal name, the nicknames 'Alonka' or 'Alonushka'

are given to connote a little girl or a term of endearment.

• Beriosa is a birch tree, Berioska is a (cute) little birch tree

2. Students may have seen examples of puppetry on TV and the movies. Puppets have a long tradition in Russian theater. They are often incorporated into a stage show that also features live actors, dancers and musicians.

In this performance, there will be two actors and two basic types of puppets:

- Actors: play at different times or all at once as puppeteers, characters, dancers and musicians
- Rod puppets: the puppeteer moves sticks or rods underneath the puppet
- Hand puppets: the puppeteer moves his hand and fingers inside the puppet
- 3. Folk Stories are stories that are told over and over again in a culture. There are several parts of well known Russian folk stories in the play you are about to see. In Russia, children are very familiar with these stories because they have heard them since they were small.
- 4. Have students give some examples of stories from our culture that we all know. Students may recall:
 - Different versions of the same stories
 - Different places where they have heard or seen the stories
 - Different parts the characters play

Before the Performance

for all grades

Things to Consider



Vocabulary and Interesting Concepts

Puppet a figure whose movements are controlled by someone through

strings, rods or hand movements. A puppet can represents a person, an animal, an inanimate object or an abstract idea. Most puppetry involves story-telling, perhaps as its most ancient form,

and has been used in almost all human societies.

Russia a country whose borders span both Europe and Asia, with a land

mass over three times that of the United States. Russia has an

ancient rich history and culture.

Taiga Russian forest of birch and cedar that covers much of the vast

northern regions of Russia

Tundra Russian plains, specifically the vast northern regions which are

snow-covered and bitterly cold

Berioska a young birch tree.

Magic the supposed use of the unnatural or supernatural power by a

being. The pretended or supposed art of making things happen by

secret charms and sayings.

Mischief misbehavior or naughtiness that results in some sort of trouble.

Balalaika a Russian folk instrument played like a lute or guitar, with a

wooden sounding base and three fretted strings

Harmonium a tabletop organ with keys and air baffles like an accordian, that

originated in India and was played throughout southeastern Russia

by Roma or gypsy traveling troupes

Lullaby a soft, sweet melody sung to put the hearer to sleep

Baba Russian grandmother

Frost flaky ice resulting from cold and moisture on a smooth surface

Snow soft, flaked frozen rain

Icicle a buildup of ice resulting from constant dripping and freezing

Before the Performance

for all grades

Vocabulary and Interesting Concepts



Objectives of the performance:

- Introduce characters and songs from Russian folk lore
- Tell a Russian folk story through character interaction, imagination, song and puppetry
- Present an authentically Russian style of puppetry, with puppeteer and puppet sharing the stage and interacting as and with the characters
- Introduce the lessons inherent in folk tales and illustrate their relevance to all cultures and times

The Characters

In this performance there are three 'layers' of Characters:

Actors performers who introduce the characters and scenes, and interact

with the audience. Leslie and Vladimir are the actors in the play.

Story characters puppets who portray the characters in the story.

Matriona and Alonushka are the primary story characters. Grandfather Frost and the Cat are story characters but also

sometimes act as storytellers.

Storytellers puppet characters who introduce the story and manipulate the

action to move it along. Baba Yaga is the primary storyteller.

"Grandfather Frost is only one of my many different names. In other parts of the world I have been given different names."

1. Read holiday stories from around the world to find out some of these names.

"Mortar, pestle time to fly ~ Lift me up into the sky!"

Baba Yaga is the old woman of autumn, a fearsome witch. She flies through the air in a mortar, rowing with a pestle. She lives in a hut surrounded by a fence of bones. It stands high off the ground balanced on two legs of a chicken. If she wants the house to move, the legs simply walk the house to where she wants them to stop. Her realm is the birch forests, the tree of beginnings and endings. Baba Yaga represents the power of old age and the power of the cycles of life, death and rebirth.

In Russian folk lore, there are many stories of Baba Yaga. Some elements of the Baba Yaga stories can also be found in folklore from other parts of the world.

- 1. Read some of the stories about Baba Yaga that are found in your library.
- 2. Talk about the story of Hansel and Gretel. How does the witch in that story compare to this description of Baba Yaga?

Before the Performance

Activity for grades 4-6

Russian Folk Characters



| v your own illustrations o | of one or two of the. | se poems. | |
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Grandfather Frost's Poetry

Tonight I ride
The North Wind wild.
Sometimes I'm harsh,
Sometimes I'm mild.
With a blanket of snow
I cover the night.
With a sprinkle of jewels
I welcome first light.
These are the true gifts
I bring to you,
If you are kind,
And brave, and true.

A Little Poetry to Illustrate

Before the Performance

Worksheet for grades K-3



| Name: | | |
|---|--|--|
| Draw your own illustrations of one or two of these poems. | | |
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Silver the Cat's Poetry

Looks like fun
Trouble ahead
Trouble behind
Time to run
Count the deed done!

Off to the deep dark forest to find Alonushka
Let's see... is she here?
Nope de ope de ope de ope Over here?
All clear.
Over there?
Be ware!
Oh - here she comes!

I'll go to Grandfather Frost's house.
While he is far away
Alonushka will give me milk
All the long day,
All the long day...

Before the Performance

Worksheet for grades K-3



Student Objectives:

- Reflect on and discuss theater's connection to their own lives through examining the themes and lessons of the play
- Examine issues of the individual's relationship to self and community

Through attendance and/or participation in performances, students recognize how associated art forms enhance theater production. These art forms include:

- a) written and spoken text; b) music and song; c) plot, time, place, and setting;
- d) characters and relationship among characters; e) moral and ethical conflicts;
- f) dramatic structures such as narrative and dialogue.

Introduction to the Six Lessons and Activities

The lessons on the following pages can be used for all grade levels after seeing the play. In conjunction with the pre-show activities, they serve as a basis for better understanding the elements of folk tales and music that are common to all cultures. Each lesson is a stepping off point that can be applied in discussing other stories and music from around the world.

- Page 15: The Story Lesson gives students some interesting character ideas and an understanding of different ways the story line was conveyed in the play, allowing them to practice different ways of describing and recreating the story.
- Page 16: The Forest Maze gives younger children a visual timeline that conveys the events of the story.
- Page 17: The Story Worksheet provides older students with a method of analysing character emotion, interaction and motives within the story.
- Page 18: The Music Lesson explains how folk music can express common themes of everyday life and has been created and recreated from simple children's play to complex orchestral pieces.
- Page 19: The Folk Song from the play is compared with well known folk tunes young children will know. The lesson gives them an opportunity to sing.
- Page 20: The Folk Song from the play is a theme found in classical music. In this listening exercise older students are encouraged to recognize melodic themes in several different forms.
- Page 21: This is a limited but well-practiced list of useful teacher references.

After the Performance

for all grades

Introduction to the Six Lessons



Russian Folk Characters

There are no fairies in Russian folklore, so I guess you could say there are no fairy tales. There are tales, though, with male and female heroes, with animals that talk and behave like humans, with characters who encounter good or sometimes bad fortune. There are three main types of Russian folk tales, and each has its own characteristics:

1. The magic tales with a male or female hero.

All heroes embark on some kind of a quest. It may be a trip to the forest to gather firewood, mushrooms, or berries; or it may be a journey into a far-away kingdom.

2. Animal tales

Animal tales are not magical, nor are they cute stories about nice furry creatures. Animal characters have strict personality characteristics in every story.

- Wolves (in Russian: Volk) are greedy and rather stupid.
- Cats (in Russian: Kot) are opportunistic and lazy.
- Bears (in Russian: medved) are big and lumbering (naturally), clumsy and not very bright. 'Mikhail' is the standard first name of folk-tale bears. 'Misha' is the nickname for the name Mikhail, the Russian equivalent of 'teddy bear.'

3. Magic tales about everyday life.

These are tales about characters returning home who meet (and defeat) terrible obstacles, who encounter a witch or other magical being and gain fortune in the end.

Questions to discuss

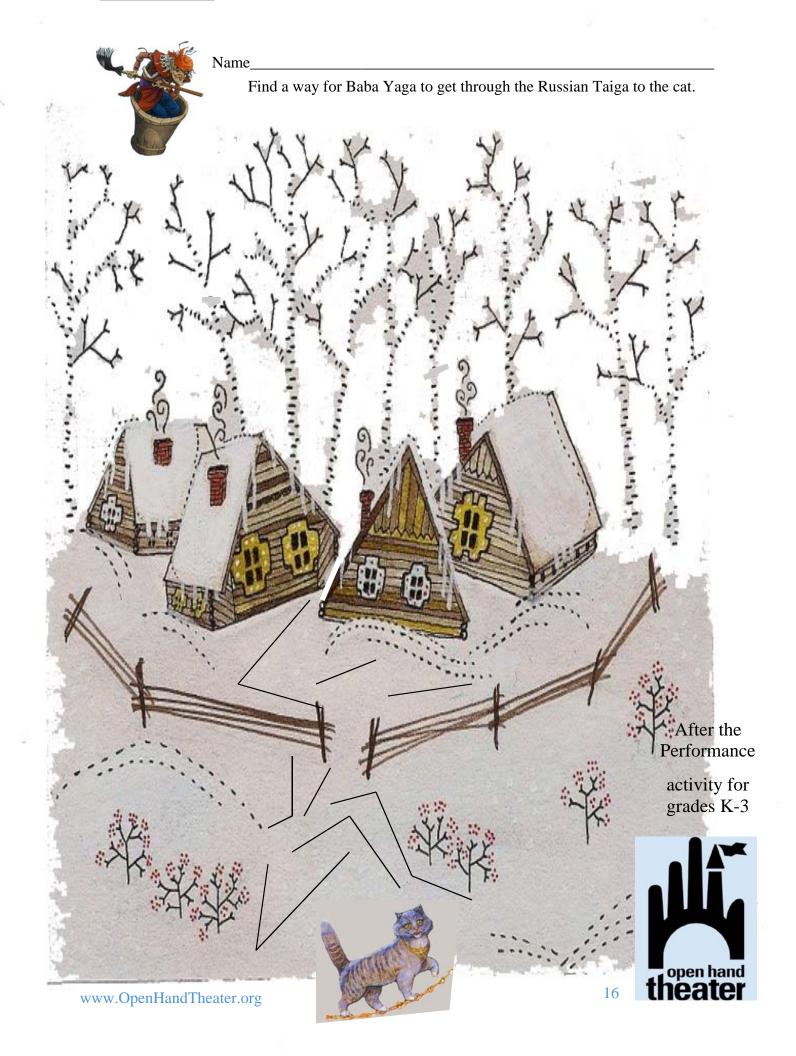
- 1. Alonka, Matriona, and even the Cat each embark on a quest. What do they each hope to accomplish, and what is the outcome?
- 2. Even thought this is not a tale about animals, the Cat is very predictably Russian. Yet he is the special messenger of Baba Yaga. How do his personality characteristics: opportunistic and lazy, help make the story work? How does he muddle things up? What do you think Baba Yaga intends?
- **3.** What obstacles did each character have to overcome? What parts of the story were a result of magic? What "fortune" was gained by each character? How did each character change or grow by the end of the story?

After the Performance

for all grades

About the Characters





| The state of the s | |
|--|--------------------|
| Date | |
| 1. Each character in the performance of "Grandfather Frost's Stories of Russia" something, to overcome some problem, and to learn something about the world an Write a sentence about for each of the characters below: | |
| Alonka, the younger sister | |
| wants to find fears | |
| learns | |
| Matriona, the older sister | |
| wants to find | |
| fears | |
| learns | - |
| Silver, the Cat | |
| wants to find | |
| fears learns | |
| 2. Write a sentence about your favorite character, how they face their problem and how they learn from the other characters. | |
| | After the Performa |
| | activity grades 4 |
| 3. In the play, some characters were played by both puppets and real actors. How did the other characters act when these characters changed roles? | Story Workshe |
| Matriona | |
| | |
| Silver, the Cat | A |
| | |
| Baba Yaga | |

Curriculum Correlations:

THE ARTS:

Understanding the cultural dimensions of Russian folklore, music and styles

Responding to materials and resources: unusual musical instruments and puppets

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

Listening and singing along with folk tunes

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH:

Listening to the rhythm of Russian language in songs Learning the English translation of a Russian song

SOCIAL STUDIES:

Understanding differences in other cultures and stories Understanding relationships between culture and geography

Folk Songs

Folk Songs are like stories set to music. The first ones were created long before newspapers or books. The songs were passed orally person to person, generation to generation and from place to place.

Every country has its own unique type of folk songs composed not by professional musicians but by the common folk. Folk songs can be:

- 1. just for play
- 2. telling about how the world works
- 3. telling about customs and beliefs of families and communities
- 4. telling of the sorrow, despair, hope and joy of times past and present

Try to remember some nursery rhymes we all learned in pre-school, or other songs we sing together. Which of the four categories do they belong to? Why? Some examples:

- Ring around the Rosie
- I've Been working on the Railroad
- Row row row your boat
- Home on the Range
- My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean

Folk Songs are a universal history.

After the Performance

for all grades

About the Music



Folk Songs we all know

The song we sang in the play sings of the simple delights of nature as the seasons change. The Russian words are printed here phonetically. Try singing it again.

Vo po-lay berioska stoyala Vo po-lay koudriavaya stoyala Luly, Luly stoyala Luly, luly stoyala

See the little birch in the meadow Curly leaves all dance when the wind blows Luly, Luly, the wind blows Luly, Luly, in the meadow

Other traditional folk songs that we all know are sometimes translated into English from other languages. Just like in the Russian translation, the English words are rearranged to fit the music and the rhyme.

With the class, sing this French folk tune:

Frere Jacques, frere Jacques. Dormez-vous, dormez-vous. Sonnez la matine, Sonnez la matine, Ding dong dong, ding dong dong.

Are you sleeping, are you sleeping Brother John, brother John Morning bells are ringing, morning bells are ringing Ding dong dong, ding dong dong.

Sing another song we all know: *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. Listen to the melody, or sing it with La-la instead of words. What other songs sung with the same melody? How about:

The ABC Song Baa Baa Black Sheep

These songs have all been sung by children as they play all around the world. This is how folk songs are created! Try singing these songs in rhythm as you:

- skip, walk or jump
- clap hands
- pass a ball

After the Performance

activity for grades K-3

Fun with Folk Songs



Folk Songs in famous Music

1. Symphonic music is often written with traditional folk themes. Listen to:

Tchaikovsky. Symphony #4; the 4th movement

The tune is played as a theme many times. It is played by different instruments, at different tempos (speeds) and even in differ keys, with different moods.

As you listen to the music, how many of these differences can you identify? How does the composer lead into this theme? How does the composer finish the theme and tie it in with the rest of the music?

2. Other well known folk tunes are used in classical music as well. **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** used the tune to "Twinkle, twinkle little star" in some of his music, leading some to believe he wrote the melody himself. In fact, it was a common tune often sung by children in the streets.

How many other songs can you identify that use this tune, but with different words?

3. Aaron Copeland, an American composer in recent time also used the melody of a common folk song from the "shakers," a religious group in the Northeastern Appalachian region of the US. The suite was originally written as a ballet and performed by the famous dancer, Martha Graham. Listen to:

Aaron Copeland, Appalachian Spring:

Can you identify the melody of the tune that is played as a theme during the symphony? It is played many times by different instruments, at different tempos (speeds) and in differ keys, with different moods.

As you listen to the music, how many of these differences can you identify? How does the composer lead into this theme?

How does the composer finish the theme and tie it in with the rest of the music?

This theme is perhaps not as popular or well known as Mozart's tune, but it was sung to Traditional Shaker words:

Tis a gift to be simple, tis a gift to be free
Tis a gift to come down where you want to be
And when you find yourself in the place just right
T'will be in the valley of love and delight

When true simplicity is gained To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed To turn, turn will be our delight 'till by turning turning we come 'round right After the Performance

activity for grades 4-6

Famous Folk Songs



A Bibliography of References for Russian Folk Tales

Arnold, Katya. Baba Yaga & the little girl: a Russian folktale.

New York: North-South Books, 1994. A clever young girl uses kindness to escape from the fearsome witch Baba Yaga. LZ PZ 8 .A868 Bac 1994

Phinney, Margaret Yatsevitch. Baba Yaga: a Russian folk tale.

Greenvale, N.Y.: Mondo Publishing, 1995. A clever girl is sent by her father's cruel housemaid into the forest where the fearsome Baba Yaga dwells. When she is captured by the witch, the girl uses kindness to make her escape. LZ PZ 8. P5495 Bac 1995

Tolstoy, Aleksey Nikolayevich. The great big enormous turnip.

New York: F. Watts, 1968. A mouse adds just the necessary weight to a line of animals trying to pull up a giant turnip. LZ PZ 7.T58 Gr3

Winthrop, Elizabeth. Vasilissa the beautiful: a Russian folktale. 1st ed.

New York: HarperCollins, 1991. A doll helps the beautiful Vasilissa escape from the clutches of the witch Baba Yaga. LZ PZ 8 .W74 Vas 1991

Puppet and storytelling Workshop References:

Champlin, Connie. Storytelling with Puppets.

Chicago: American Library Association, 1985.

This is a practical guide on how to use puppets in stories. The authors provide information on adapting stories, types of puppets, finger stories, and numerous suggestions on puppetry as a form of innovative storytelling.

Hamilton, Martha and Weiss, Mitch. Children Tell Stories.

New York: Richard C. Owen. 1990.

Great for anyone who wants to empower kids to become storytellers.

Yolen, Jane. Favorite Folktales From Around the World.

Pantheon: NewYork, 1987. Jane Yolen is one of our favorite illustrators and collectors of fantastic stories from all over the world

A website for additional references:

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/5873/index.html

References for Teachers





Evaluation Arts in Education with Open Hand Theater

Grandfather Frost's Stories of Russia

Open Hand Theater strives to provide useful arts education tools for your classroom. Please take a moment to fill out this form and mail, email or fax your comments to Open Hand Theater this week.

| | Date: |
|--|--|
| Name | Grade(s) |
| School | Subject |
| What expectations did you and/or your | students have before the performance? |
| | |
| | |
| What comments do you would from atou | Janta aftantha ngaaantati an 2 |
| What comments do you recall from stud | ients after the presentation? |
| | |
| | |
| What parts of this study guide were mo | st usable? |
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| What would make the presentation and | or this study guide materials more useful? |

Evaluation



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