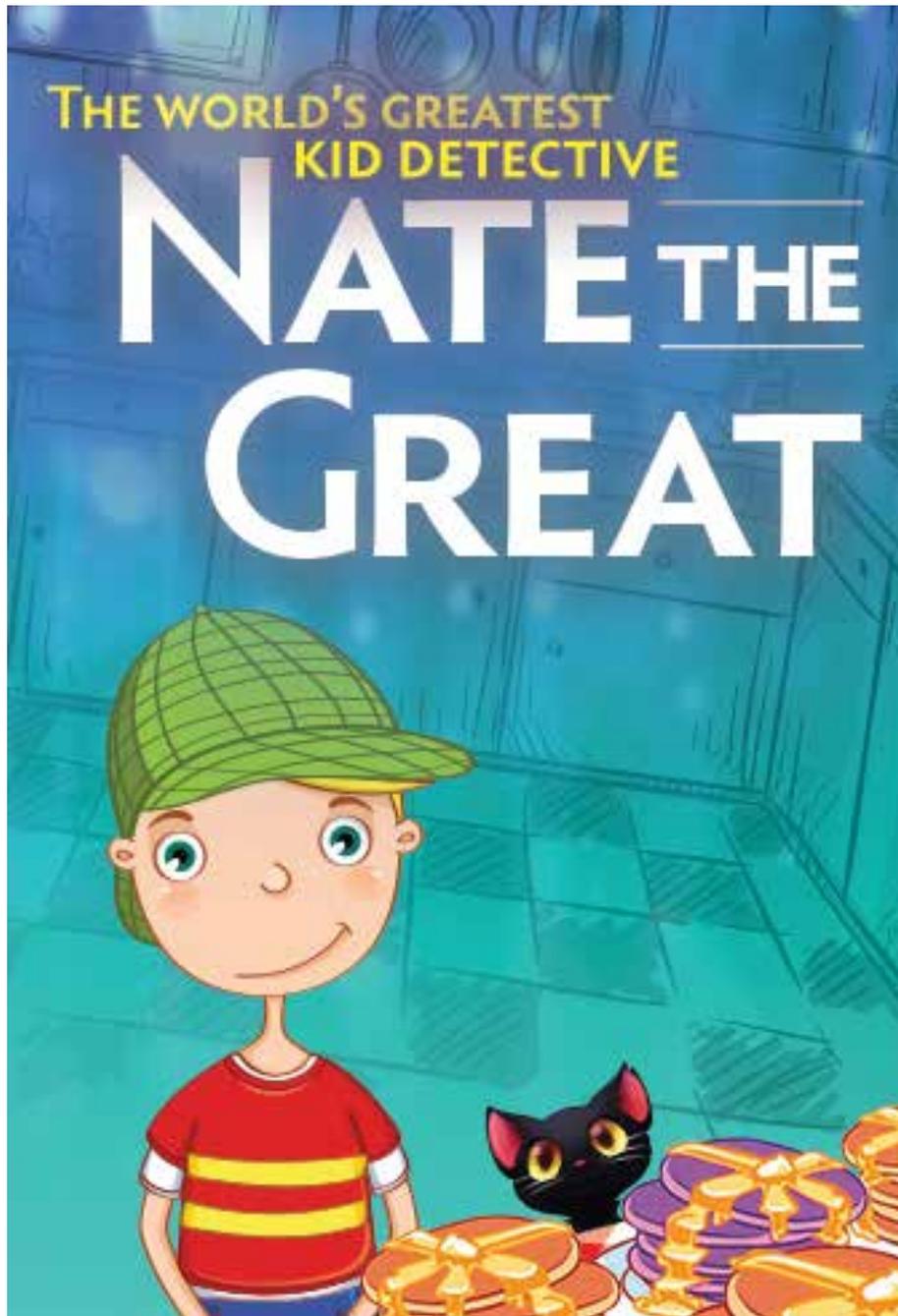


# South Coast Repertory

## STUDY GUIDE



Prepared by Literary Intern Christina Cordano

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART I: THE PLAY

The Characters .....	3
The Story .....	3
Going by the Book: An Excerpt from <i>Nate the Great</i> .....	4
Meet the Playwright: John Maclay .....	4
Meet the Composer: Brett Ryback .....	4
Meet the Author: Marjorie Weinman Sharmat.....	5
An Interview with Playwright John Maclay .....	6
An Interview with Composer Brett Ryback .....	6

## PART II: CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### BEFORE THE SHOW

Questions for Discussion .....	7
Talk Like a Detective .....	7
The History of Pancakes .....	8

### AFTER THE SHOW

Discussion About the Theatre .....	9
Discussion About the Play .....	9
Activities .....	9

## PART III: AT THE THEATRE

Welcome to the Julianne Argyros Stage.....	10
Theatre Etiquette.....	10
Student Tips for Theatre Trips.....	10
Programs.....	10

## PART IV: EDUCATION STATION

California Visual and Performing Arts Framework.....	11
Five Strands of Art Education .....	12
Basic Theatre Vocabulary.....	13

## PART V: RESOURCES



# Part I: The Play

## THE STORY

It's a day like any other for young detective Nate the Great, as he heads downstairs to eat his favorite breakfast: pancakes, juice, pancakes, milk and pancakes. (Nate likes pancakes. A lot.) He's just about to dig in when, suddenly, the phone rings. Annie, Nate's good friend, is on the other end of the line, and she's calling about a case—a painting has been stolen.

Despite his plate of uneaten pancakes, Nate rushes over to Annie's house. When he arrives, he asks her a series of questions. What did the painting look like? When did she last see it? How much was it worth? Annie explains that she painted a yellow picture of her dog, Fang, and left it out to dry as she walked her friend Rosamond out. When she returned, the painting had disappeared! Fang, Rosamond and Annie's little brother were all in the house at the time of the robbery. Nate identifies them as his three suspects.

Nate begins his investigation with Fang. But it's pretty hard to interrogate a dog, so he decides to search for clues and observe Fang's behavior. Could Fang have buried the painting? Did he eat it? Nate can tell that Fang is definitely hiding something...but it turns out not to be Annie's painting. It's only a squeak toy in the shape of a mouse.

Next, Nate investigates Harry, Annie's little brother. Harry also loves to paint and shows Nate three red paintings (of a clown, a house and a tree), as well as an orange painting of a monster. Nate tries to question Harry, but Annie's little brother is only interested in talking about his orange monster. In the end, it's an exhausting and unproductive interrogation, and Nate the Great concludes that Harry did not steal Annie's dog painting, since it's nowhere in sight.

With only one suspect left, all signs point to Rosamond as the thief. But at Rosamond's house, Nate gets sidetracked. Rosamond introduces her cats, the Hexes, and points out that one of them, Super Hex, is missing. Nate hasn't even solved Annie's case—and now he has a second mystery on his hands. He goes home to eat his pancakes and think of solutions. However, when Nate asks his mom where his breakfast went, she admits that she ate it.

So now Nate has two unsolved mysteries and he hasn't had a single pancake all day. It's

too much for one detective to take!

With no new clues—and no pancakes—Nate mopes around the house.

Eventually, Annie and Rosamond come over to cheer him up, but it only works a little bit. After all, Nate still doesn't have any pancakes. But wait! Rosamond has pancakes at her house. Perhaps there is hope. Perhaps Nate will somehow return to his former greatness.

The three friends head to Rosamond's, where she fixes Nate a big plate of pancakes—purple pancakes, to be exact. Rosamond explains that she mixed red velvet pancake mix with blueberries, which turned the batter purple. But it doesn't matter; the pancakes are still delicious. Nate is reinvigorated and ready to get back to work. First, he'll solve the case of the missing Hex.

Nate asks Rosamond what Super Hex likes to do. She admits not much, except play with his rubber mouse...which is also missing. And with that piece of information, Nate has an idea. They all head to Annie's backyard and—as Nate suspected—they find Super Hex's mouse toy outside of Fang's doghouse. But what's it doing there? Nate explains that the reason Fang seemed suspicious earlier wasn't because he stole Annie's painting; it was because he was hiding his new friend, Super Hex! Super Hex peeks out of the doghouse and meows happily.

With Super Hex and Rosamond reunited, Nate turns his attention back to the original case of the yellow painting. But he's still stumped. Perhaps more purple pancakes would help...

That's it! Nate realizes that purple pancakes are, in fact, the answer. But this time, the solution isn't eating them, but instead thinking about how they got their color.

But what could purple pancakes have to do with the case of a stolen painting? Has Nate really solved the mystery, or is this just another dead end? Come see the show to find out how Nate the Great connects the dots.

## THE CHARACTERS

**Nate:** a 10 year old

**Annie:** Nate's Friend

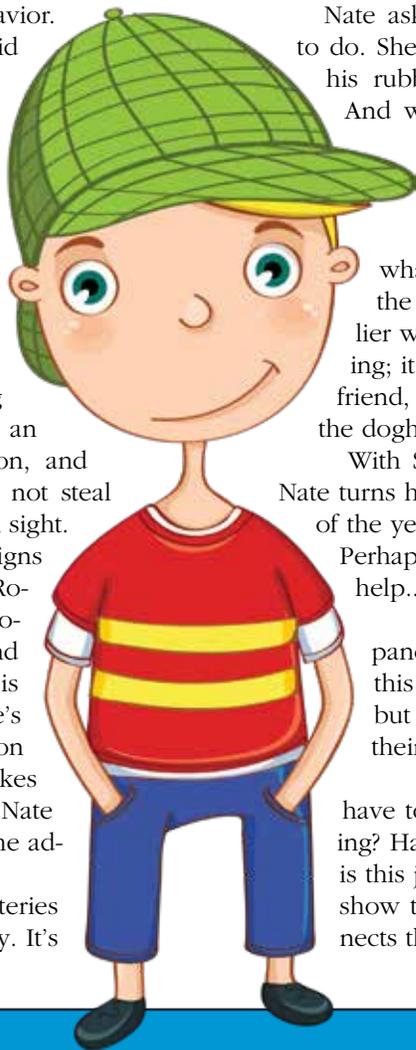
**Mom:** Nate's Mother

**Harry:** Annie's Brother

**Rosamond:** Annie's Friend

**Fang:** Annie's Dog

**The Hexes:** Rosamond's Four Cats



## MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT: JOHN MACLAY

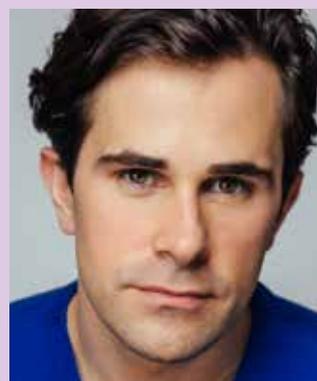
**J**ohn Maclay is a playwright who specializes in adapting works for young audiences. His plays and musicals include *Goosebumps the Musical: Phantom of the Auditorium* (with Danny Abosch), *Geronimo Stilton: Mouse in Space, Just a Little Critter Musical* (with Brett Ryback), *Nancy Drew and Her Biggest Case Ever* (with Jeff Frank), *Anatole* (with Lee Becker and James Valcq) and a new version of *Robin Hood* (with Joe Foust). His upcoming projects include writing words for the new musical *The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors* and a new play about Greek mythology. In addition to a busy schedule as playwright and adaptor of literature for the stage, Maclay proudly serves as director of artistic development at First Stage in Milwaukee, Wis., one of America's largest and most respected theatres for young audiences. Maclay has been working with First Stage in one form or another since 2000 and has directed or appeared in more than 25 First Stage productions (from classics to world premieres), as well as having produced more than 50 productions for the First Stage high school programs. His work as an actor or director has also been seen at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Milwaukee Shakespeare Company, Defiant Theatre, Bunny Gumbo, Bialystock and Bloom, Skylight Opera Theatre and others. When not doing all of that, he is busy teaching theatre at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis.



John Maclay

## MEET THE COMPOSER: BRETT RYBACK

**B**rett Ryback is an actor, composer/lyricist and playwright based in Los Angeles. He is the recipient of the ASCAP Foundation's Cole Porter Award. His plays and musicals include *Joe Schmoe Saves the World* (National Alliance for Musical Theatre 2016, ASCAP/Dreamworks Workshop), *Liberty Inn: The Musical* (Ovation Award nominations: Best Book, Best Music/Lyrics), *Darling* (Weston Playhouse New Musical Award), *The Tavern Keeper's Daughter* (Best Musical, Pasadena Weekly) and *Just a Little Critter Musical* (First Stage). His plays *Weird* and *A Roz By Any Other Name* are both published in *The Best American Short Plays 2007-08*. His musical *Passing Through* was developed at the Rhinebeck Writer's Retreat and the Johnny Mercer Writers Colony at Goodspeed Musicals, where it was recently featured in their New Works Festival. As an actor, he originated the role of Marcus off-Broadway in *Murder for Two*. His SCR appearances include the world premieres of *SHREW!*, *The Prince of Atlantis* and *Doctor Cerberus*. His recent TV and film appearances include "Mom," "Modern Family," "How I Met Your Mother," *Hail, Caesar!* and the Lifetime movie *The Assistant*. Ryback is currently writing a musical podcast called *In Strange Woods*. He created the online accompanist website [PlayThisForMe.com](http://PlayThisForMe.com), and he teaches musical theatre at the University of Southern California. [brettryback.com](http://brettryback.com)



Brett Ryback

## MEET THE AUTHOR: MARJORIE WEINMAN SHARMAT

**B**orn in Portland, Maine, in 1928, Marjorie Weinman Sharmat dreamed of becoming a writer. Little did she know that she would be the author of more than 130 books for children of all ages, that have been translated into 17 languages. Another of her childhood dreams, that of becoming a detective, has also been realized in her most popular *Nate the Great* series, begun in 1972. Many of Sharmat's books have been Literary Guild selections and chosen as Books of the Year by the Library of Congress. Several have been made into films for television, including *Nate the Great Goes Undercover*, winner of the Los Angeles International Children's Film Festival Award. *Nate the Great Saves the King of Sweden* has been named one of the New York Public Library's 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing.



Marjorie Weinman  
Sharmat

# AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT JOHN MACLAY



## What was your path to writing plays?

**JOHN MACLAY:** I was trained and worked as a classical and musical actor first, then I evolved into a director. I found myself at the children's theatre First Stage in Milwaukee and just fell in love with the importance of the work of theatre for young audiences. After a bit, I began directing a lot of new works—specifically adaptations for young audiences and think I became hungry to just do one myself. And then writing one play led to 10. I still act and direct a bit, but writing is my greatest passion.

## How and when did you first come across Marjorie W. Sharmat's *Nate the Great*? What made you want to adapt it for the stage?

**MACLAY:** I actually read the books as a child (when they were new) and then read them to my son. I just love them and always thought they would make a great family musical. I've been wanting to create this show ever since I wrote the words for my first musical. I have great affection for mysteries as well as theatre, so that helped. But mostly, I just love the trio of characters (Nate, Annie, Rosamond) at the center of the story. All three characters are *such* characters. So quirky and fun. I wanted to hear them sing.

## What is the difference between writing a play for children and a play for adults?

**MACLAY:** For me, I don't know that there

is much difference beyond subject matter. This is a show based on a book intended for children, so the vocabulary and subject matter are appropriate for younger audience members. However, I do try to write "family theatre" rather than "children's theatre." As such, I want a show that is enjoyed by the whole family. Children are at the center of that, of course, but I want Mom and Dad and teachers to enjoy it, too. Otherwise, I don't think it's too different. Great children's theatre requires the same quality as any other theatre, which is why it's so great to see it at a place like South Coast Repertory, where the quality and rigor have the same standards for children's theatre as any other style or type of theatre.

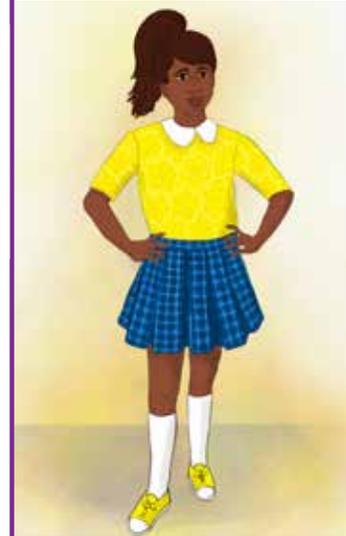
## What do you hope audiences will take away from *Nate the Great*?

**MACLAY:** I try to focus on writing a good story more than delivering a "moral." But with this one, a couple of ideas were obviously traveling with me throughout the writing process. The value of art is clearly there, but also the value of perseverance, picking up your friends when they're down, creative thinking and keeping an open mind to new ideas. These are all things I think we can't get too much of in our lives.

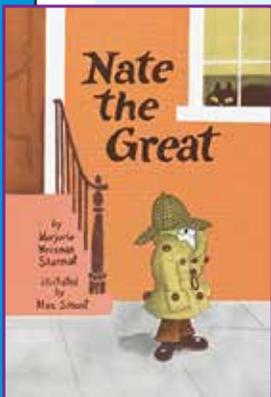
Oh, and pancakes. I hope you leave the theatre and have some pancakes. Because you? You deserve some pancakes.



Nate the Great.



Annie.  
Costume designs by Kaitlyn Kaufman.



## GOING BY THE BOOK: AN EXCERPT FROM NATE THE GREAT

**I**n this excerpt, *Nate the Great* learns some important details about Annie's case.

"Tell me about your picture," I said.

"I painted a picture of my dog, Fang," Annie said. "I put it on my desk to dry. Then it was gone. It happened yesterday."

"You should have called me yesterday," I said, "while the trail was hot.

I hate cool trails. Now, where would a picture go?"

"I don't know," Annie said. "That's why I called you. Are you sure you're a detective?"

"Sure, I'm sure. I will find the picture of Fang," I said. "Tell me. Does this house have any trapdoors or secret passages?"

"No," Annie said.

"No trapdoors or secret passages?" I said. "This will be a very dull case."

"I have a door that squeaks," Annie said.

"Have it fixed," I said.

# AN INTERVIEW WITH COMPOSER BRETT RYBACK

How would you describe the music in *Nate the Great*?

**BRETT RYBACK:** There are two main styles of music in this show. There's Nate's music, which leans towards jazz and big band—styles that are usually associated with film noir and private-eye stories. You can hear it in all of Nate's songs and also a little bit in "Fang Tango" and "The Hexes," too. And then there's Annie's music, which is more colorful, playful and lyrical. That style is on display in "Art Matters," "Colors" and also "Monster."



Rosamond.



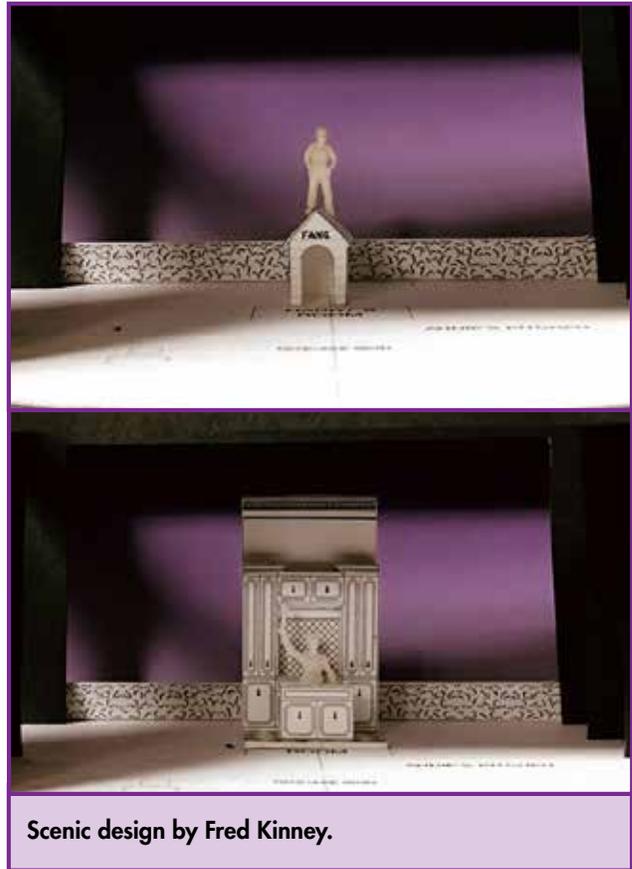
Harry.  
Costume designs by Kaitlyn Kaufman.

How do you approach writing a song?

**RYBACK:** It always varies, but I usually start by asking a lot of questions. What is the character feeling when they sing or what do I want the audience to feel? What does the character want, and what is the conflict that is making it difficult for them? I translate the answers to these questions into musical gestures—harmonies, rhythms, motifs, etc. Then, once a lyric is written, I'll start to sing whatever comes into my head and craft the rest of the melody from there. But no matter what, the story always comes first.

You're also an actor—how does that inform your writing?

**RYBACK:** My writing and my acting absolutely inform one another. When it comes to music, you're practically dictating the exact way a line of music is going to be



Scenic design by Fred Kinney.

performed—how loud, how fast, how high, how low. So you're doing a lot of the acting work for the actor. Therefore, when I'm writing a song, I think about the acting process that an actor will go through to bring a moment to life. This helps me create melodies or lyric scansions (how the lyric is rhythmically situated) that support the actor's intention. On a bigger level, I also think about things like how does this character talk or what style of music do I identify with this character. I also think about what a character's super-objective or bottom line is. This helps me decide what musical moments need to really land, or sing out, and which themes are going to be important to craft the character's arc. Hopefully, you can see how acting and writing come from the same creative place when you watch this show.

Do you have a favorite character in *Nate the Great*?

**RYBACK:** Yes, but don't tell the other characters. My favorite character is Rosamond. I love how unapologetic and bizarre she is. She's the best kind of character to write for. I was able to give her a super unique musical voice and also some of the best lyrics in the whole show.

# Part II: Classroom Activities

## BEFORE THE SHOW

1. Have your students read Marjorie W. Sharmat's *Nate the Great* independently or aloud in class.
  - a. Ask the students to identify the story's themes and underlying messages
  - b. Ask the students to identify the characters' journeys. What do they want to achieve, and what's standing in their way?
  - c. Ask the students to think about the novel's tone. What moments are funny? What moments are suspenseful or exciting? How does this variety make the experience richer?
2. Ask your students to identify other mystery or detective stories they know. What do they like about these stories?
3. Discuss the concept

of first-person narration and how it is used in *Nate the Great*. (You can also talk about its use in other detective stories.) What kind of mood does it create? What does it add to the storytelling? When is it funny? How does a window into Nate the Great's feelings and opinions serve the mystery?

4. Discuss the difference between fiction and drama, and explore

5. Based on your knowledge of the story, what do you think some of the musical's songs will be about?
6. Discuss the physical life of the production. Ask the students to predict what it will look like.
  - a. What will Nate's house look like?
  - b. How will the animals, Fang and the Hexes, come to life?

7. Discuss the different jobs involved to bring a production like *Nate the Great* to life. Explain, or have the students research the occupations on this list, and discuss the findings with the class.
  - a. Actor
  - b. Director
  - c. Playwright
  - d. Composer
  - e. Designer
  - f. Stage manager
  - g. Stage crew



## TALK LIKE A DETECTIVE

In *Nate the Great*, the young detective at the center of the story attempts to solve a mystery using a series of different methods. Below are some key vocabulary words that all good detectives have got to know!

- **Alibi:** An explanation that a person uses to show that he or she was not at the scene of the crime.
- **Breakthrough:** A discovery that helps solve the crime.
- **Clue:** A fact or object that gives information about the crime
- **Deduction:** Drawing a conclusion through logic and process of elimination
- **Hunch:** A guess or feeling not based on facts
- **Motive:** A reason that a person might commit a crime
- **Red herring:** A false clue that throws the investigator off track
- **Suspect:** A person who might have committed the crime
- **Witness:** A person who has knowledge about a crime

**Activity:** Now that you have the vocabulary of a detective, you've got the tools to write your own mystery! Write an original story as a class that incorporates some or all of the words above.



## THE HISTORY OF PANCAKES

It's no secret that Nate the Great loves pancakes. But did you know pancakes have been around for thousands of years and are enjoyed all over the world? The earliest references to pancakes are in the plays of 5th-century BCE Greek poets Cratinus and Magnes. These pancakes were made for breakfast with wheat flour, olive oil, honey and curdled milk. In 4th-century BCE China, people enjoyed fragile cakes made from wheat flour. Playwright William Shakespeare even mentioned pancakes four times in two plays (*As You Like It* and *All's Well That Ends Well*)!

**Activity:** What's your favorite food? What do you know about its history? Do some research and share your favorite facts about your favorite food.



### Discussion about the Play

Now guide the discussion through the content of *Nate the Great*.

## AFTER THE SHOW

### Discussion About the Theatre

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance and ask the students about their experience attending live theatre

1. What was the first thing you noticed about the theatre? What did the stage look like?
2. Discuss the technical elements of the production—the set, costumes, lights and sound. Ask the students what they liked best and why. How did these elements help to tell the story of Nate the Great and how he solved the mystery of the missing painting?
3. Discuss the ways in which the play was surprising. Was the story told in the same way that you imagined it would be?
  - a. How did the songs in the play add to the storytelling?
4. How is attending a live performance different from attending a movie? How does your experience change when you know that the story is being performed live and that the actors can see and hear you?
1. What was your favorite moment of the play? What was the funniest? What was the saddest?
2. Did you notice anything different between the book and the musical adaptation? How did that change your understanding of the story?
3. In *Nate the Great*, Annie sings a song called “Art Matters.” Discuss why Annie thinks that art is important.
4. What lessons does Nate learn over the course of the play? What does he learn about being a detective? How are Annie’s and Rosamond’s perspective on things different from Nate’s? And what do they teach him?
5. Nate almost gives up trying to solve the cases of the stolen painting and the missing Super Hex, but his friends come over and offer him encouragement. Can you think of a time when you accomplished something because your family and friends supported you? What was the situation, and how did they help you?
6. Nate the Great loves solving a good mystery. Annie loves painting. Rosamond loves piano (and her cats). Do you have a favorite pastime? What is it and why do you enjoy it?

## ACTIVITIES

1. Vocabulary activity: Reintroduce the detective terms that the students learned before the show. (See “Talk Like a Detective” section on p. 7 of the study guide.) Now have them apply them to *Nate the Great* using the prompts below.
  - What is the crime (or crimes) that Nate tries to solve?
  - Who are the suspects?
  - What could be some motives for each suspect?
  - What clues does Nate the Great find?
  - How does Nate use deduction to solve this mystery?
  - What is the breakthrough in Nate the Great?
2. There are more than two dozen titles in the *Nate the Great* series. Have the students make up their own original titles for another *Nate the Great* play (*Nate the Great and the \_\_\_\_\_*). Now have the students write a scene from their plays. What kind of case does Nate investigate? How does he solve it? Do any of the characters from the musical appear in their play? Are there any new characters?
3. Divide the students into two groups. Have one group create a mystery and a series of clues about that mystery. And then have the other group try to solve it!

## LETTERS OF THANKS

**G**ive the students the opportunity to write letters of thanks to SCR describing the most memorable aspects of attending a performance of *Nate the Great*, and what they enjoyed the most about their visit to SCR.

**South Coast Repertory**

**Attn: TYA**

**PO Box 2197**

**Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197**



# Part III: At The Theatre

## WELCOME TO THE ARGYROS

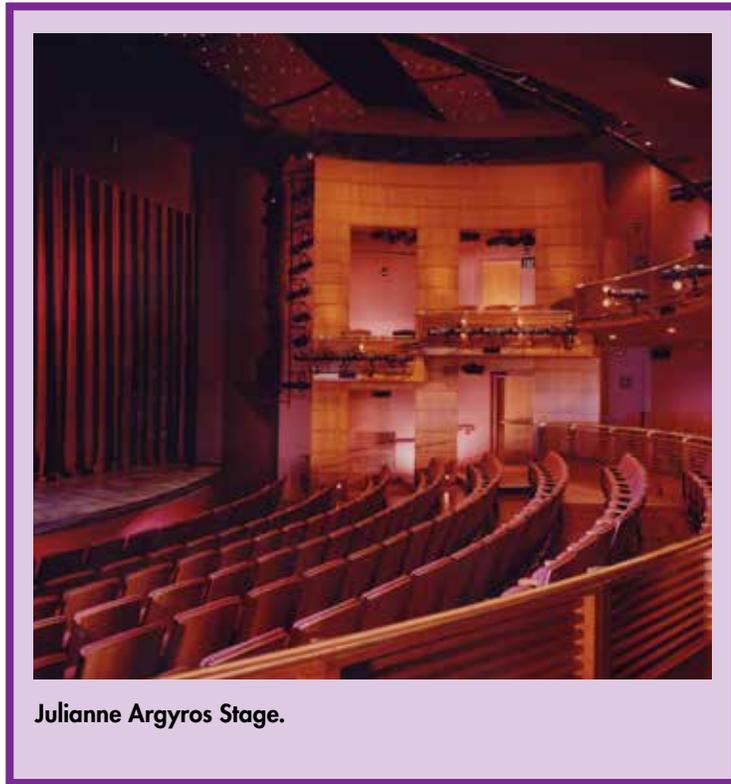
**T**he 336-seat Julianne Argyros Stage opened in 2002 and we are delighted that thousands of Orange County school children fill this state-of-the-art facility each season to enjoy our Theatre for Young Audiences productions. The Argyros is a proscenium theatre designed to provide audiences a feeling of intimacy; no seat is more than 39 feet from the stage.

## THEATRE ETIQUETTE

**T**heatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. With this play, the artists and staff of South Coast Repertory have created a special new world for you to visit. When you walk into the theatre, you will have a sense that behind the curtain is the secret of that new world that is about to come to life before your eyes. Sometimes it's so exciting that you can barely hold still. But remember: once the play begins, you have a very important job to do. Everybody in the theatre is a part of the play. You are connected to all the other people in the audience, as well as to the actors on the stage because you're all in the same room. The actors can SEE you, HEAR you and FEEL you, just as you can SEE, HEAR and FEEL them. Your attention, involvement, responses and imagination are a real part of each and every performance. The play can actually be made better because of you!

## STUDENT TIPS FOR THEATRE TRIPS

- Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.
- Listen carefully to the SCR staff member who boards your bus with last-minute tips.
- Take your seat in the theatre before going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.
- Do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat in front of you.



Julianne Argyros Stage.

- Absolutely no chewing gum, eating or drinking in the building.
- No backpacks, cameras or electronic devices are permitted in the theatre.
- Feel free to talk quietly in your seats before the show.
- Show your appreciation by clapping for the actors at the end of the play.
- After the lights come back up, wait for the ushers to escort your group out of the theatre.

## PROGRAMS

**E**veryone who attends a Theatre for Young Audiences performance at SCR receives a program, also called a playbill. At weekend public performances, patrons receive their programs from the ushers upon entering the theatre. At the conclusion of each weekday matinee, teachers will be given programs for their students, which can be distributed back in the classroom. In addition to the customary information about the play and the players, the program contains features and activities that students will have fun working on after the show, either in class or at home on their own.

# Part IV: Education Station

Here are some of the California state standards that apply to attending this performance of *Nate the Great* and doing the activities in this study guide.

## FROM VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS:

### Theatre Content Standards for Grade Three

For other grades, see <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/thmain.asp>

#### 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre

Students observe their environment and respond, using the elements of theatre. They also observe formal and informal works of theatre, film/video, and electronic media and respond, using the vocabulary of theatre.

##### Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

- 1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as character, setting, conflict, audience, motivation, props, stage areas, and blocking, to describe theatrical experiences.

##### Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre

- 1.2 Identify who, what, where, when, and why (the Five Ws) in a theatrical experience.

#### 2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing and Participating in Theatre

Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

##### Development of Theatrical Skills

- 2.1 Participate in cooperative script writing or improvisations that incorporate the Five Ws.



Nicole Erb, Gio Munguia, Rosemary Brownlow and Jasmine St. Clair in the 2018 Theatre for Young Audiences production of *Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook*.

##### Creation/Invention in Theatre

- 2.2 Create for classmates simple scripts that demonstrate knowledge of basic blocking and stage areas.

#### 3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre

Students analyze the role and development of theatre, film/video, and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theatre.

##### Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

- 3.1 Dramatize different cultural versions of similar stories from around the world.



SCR's 2008 world premiere Theatre for Young Audiences production of *Imagine* whose cast included *Nate the Great* composer Brett Ryback (he's the one in pink).

## History of Theatre

- 3.2 Identify universal themes in stories and plays from different periods and places.

## 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences

Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media, and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

### Critical Assessment of Theatre

- 4.1 Develop and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics for evaluating a theatrical experience.

### Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

- 4.2 Compare the content or message in two different works of theatre.

## 5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video, and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to theatre.

### Connections and Applications

- 5.1 Use problem-solving and cooperative skills to dramatize a story or a current event from another content area, with emphasis on the Five Ws.

### Careers and Career-Related Skills

- 5.2 Develop problem-solving and communication skills by participating collaboratively in theatrical experiences.

## BASIC THEATRE VOCABULARY

**Acting** The process by which an individual interprets and performs the role of an imagined character.

**Action** The core of a theatre piece; the sense of forward movement created by the sequence of events and the physical and psychological motivations of characters.

**Ad-Lib** To improvise stage business or dialogue; to make it up as you go along.

**Apron** The area of the stage that extends toward the audience, in front of the main curtain.

**Audience** The people who come to see a performance.

**Backstage** The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience.

**Balcony** An upper floor of seats projecting out over the main seating area of a theatre.

**Blocking** The movement and stage business, designed by the director and performed by the actors.

**Boxes** Seats separated from the main seating area located on the upper level near the stage.

**Box Office** A windowed space at the front of the theatre building where tickets are sold.

**Business** Any action performed on stage.

**Character** The role played by an actor as she or he assumes another's identity.

**Choreography** The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.

**Conflict** The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.

**Costume** The carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors.

**Cross** The actor's movement from one stage location to another.

**Cue** The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.

**Dialogue** The stage conversation between characters.

**Diction** The clarity with which words are pronounced.

**Director** The person who oversees the entire process of staging a theatrical production.

**Downstage** The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower ("down") part closest to the audience, and the higher ("up") part further away.

**Ensemble** A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance.

**Flats** Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.

**Green Room** A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests. The room's name comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real "green" (or patch of grass).

**Improvisation** The spontaneous use of movement and speech, made up by an actor to create a character.

**Lobby** The public waiting area outside the theatre space.

**Matinee** An afternoon performance of a play.

**Mezzanine** Lower level seating area beneath the balcony overhang.

**Monologue** A solo speech during which the character reveals personal thoughts.

**Narrator** A character who tells the story of the play directly to the audience.

**Orchestra** Lower-level seating area immediately in front of the stage.

**"Places"** Direction given by the Stage Manager for actors to be in position before each act begins

**Plot** The "what happens" in a story: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem); middle (how the characters work to solve the problem); and the ending (resolution of the problem).

**Project** To speak loudly so the entire audience can hear you.

**Props** All the stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.

**Proscenium Stage** A traditional theatre with the audience seated in front of a proscenium arch framing the stage. SCR's Argyros Stage is a proscenium stage.

**Rehearsal** Time performers use to practice privately before a performance in front of an audience.

**Run** Length of time the play will be presented (i.e. two weeks, two months, two years).

**Script** The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

**Set** All of the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play.

**Stagecraft** The knowledge and skills required to create the physical aspects of a production; i.e. scenery, lighting, costumes, props and recorded sound and music.

**Stage Left** That part of the stage to the actor's left when the actor faces the audience.

**Stage Manager** The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance.

**Stage Right** That part of the stage to the actor's right when the actor faces the audience.

**Strike** Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the run of a show.

**Theme** The central thought, idea or significance of the action of a play.

**Upstage** The area of the stage farthest away from the audience and nearest to the back wall.



# PART V: Resources

## OTHER BOOKS IN THE *NATE THE GREAT* SERIES

*Nate the Great and Me: The Case of the Fleeing Fang*

*Nate the Great and the Big Sniff*

*Nate the Great and the Boring Beach Bag*

*Nate the Great and the Crunchy Christmas*

*Nate the Great and the Fishy Prize*

*Nate the Great and the Halloween Hunt*

*Nate the Great and the Hungry Book Club*

*Nate the Great and the Lost List*

*Nate the Great and the Missing Key*

And more! <http://rhcbooks.com/series/NTG/nate-the-great>

Profile of author Marjorie Weinman Sharmat:

[http://www.librarypoint.org/author\\_marjorie\\_sharmat](http://www.librarypoint.org/author_marjorie_sharmat)

“Ingredients of Mystery” Lesson Plan from the Scholastic website:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/ingredients-mystery/>

For more information on the history of pancakes:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/people-and-culture/food/the-plate/2014/05/21/hot-off-the-griddle-heres-the-history-of-pancakes/>

