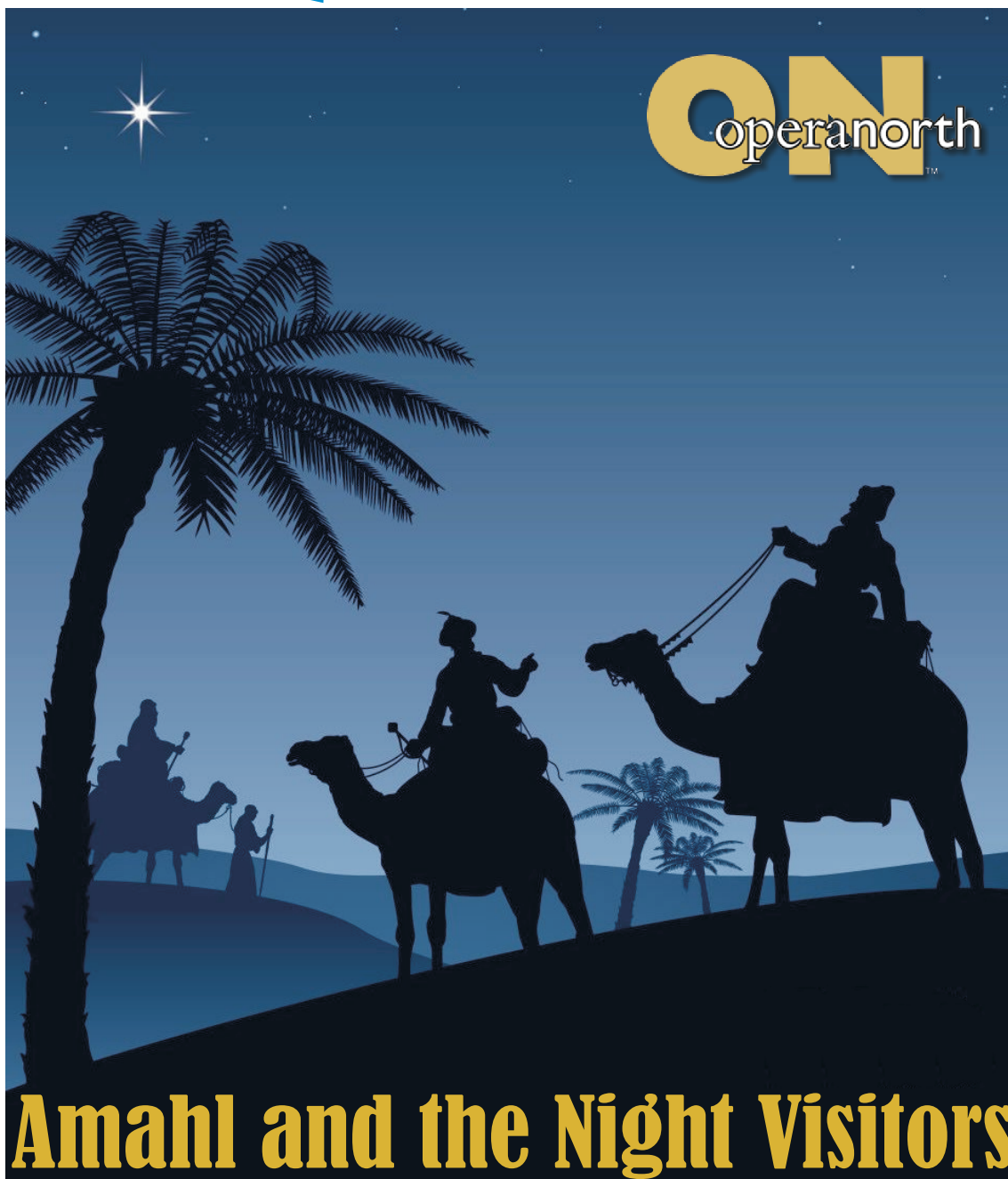




# Youth Education Series at Lebanon Opera House



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## ***Dear Teacher/Parent:***

We have included the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Opera North's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. The study guide provides pre and post performance discussion topics, as well as related activity sheets. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

### **About Lebanon Opera House Youth Education Series**

Each year, LOH presents a series of events for school children in the Upper Valley region. Made possible by support from the series' sponsors, the YES! events provide many of the region's school children with their first exposure to live performances. The series features school-day matinees by national touring companies that specialize in shows for young and family audiences.

### **About Opera North**

Opera North is the Northeast's premier summer opera festival, with a proud track record of presenting high-quality productions in the intimacy of the 803 seat Lebanon Opera House, and of serving as a career launching pad for Young Artists.

Opera North stays active during the off-season as well. The winter series, Always ON Sundays, presents informal talks on opera topics at private homes. Our Young Artists also perform at a myriad of venues throughout Vermont and New Hampshire introducing children, teens and adults to the wonders of opera.



## Youth Education Series at Lebanon Opera House

Please review this common theater etiquette with your class before attending the performance.

### Do:

- Arrive at Lebanon Opera House early.
- Use the restroom before the performance.
- Turn off cell phones, alarms, and other electronic devices.
- Wait for your school or group to be dismissed.
- Keep your feet on the floor.
- Show your appreciation of the performers by applauding.
- Stay with your group or school at all times.
- Watch and listen closely to the performers.

### Don't:

- Stand in the aisles.
- Put your feet on the seats or balcony railing.
- Talk, sing, hum or fidget.
- Take pictures or record the actors during the performance.
- Leave the theater during the performance.
- Kick the seat in front of you.
- Eat, drink or chew gum in the theater.
- Leave your seat before the performers have taken their curtain call.

## Enjoy the show!



# Amahl and the Night Visitors

**CHARACTERS:** Here is a list of the principal characters. Listen to the songs in the performance to answer the questions about each character.

*Amahl:* Amahl is a poor crippled shepherd boy. He loves to play his little pipe and daydream. He is very curious and tells his mother tall stories. His mother loves him but why does she scold him? How do you think Amahl felt after the miracle occurred?

*Amahl's Mother:* Amahl's mother is desperately poor and cannot even feed her son. She is sad and tired of Amahl's storytelling. She loves Amahl and feels guilty that she cannot properly care for him. What does Amahl's mother try to steal from the kings? Why do you think Amahl's mother tries to steal?

*Shepherds and Shepherdesses:* The Shepherds and Shepherdesses come to Amahl's hut to honor the Three Kings. They live in the village, and Amahl's mother asks them to bring the Kings welcoming gifts. What are some of the things they bring to the kings? Why do you think they are so eager to meet the kings?

*The Three Kings & The Page:* The Three Kings: Kaspar is a deaf King. Melchior is the King who is trying to make sure that the caravan stays on time for their journey. Balthazar is a noble Arabian King. The page, who accompanies the kings, carries a special box full of wonderful magic stones, beads, and delicious licorice. What gift is each king carrying? Why do you think the kings respond the way they do when they catch the mother stealing?

**For further information, please visit:**

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/375236/Gian-Carlo-Menotti>

<http://www.musicacademyonline.com/composer/biographies.php?bid=120>

*Information on Composer Gian Carlo Menotti*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxz-s46vjpY>

*Footage of the TV presentation of "Amahl and the Night Visitors"*

# SYNOPSIS

The opera takes place near Bethlehem just after the birth of Christ.

One night, Amahl is sitting outside playing his shepherd's pipe, when he sees a huge star over his house. His mother thinks that he is telling stories, as usual. She begins to cry, thinking that hunger has gone to his head and wondering if they may need to go begging. Amahl comforts his mother by telling her that if so, they will have fun singing and traveling. They hug and wish each other "good night."

In the distance, the voices of a traveling caravan is heard. As they approach, Amahl wakes up and listens to the singing. Suddenly, there is a knock at the door. Amahl hobbles over to the door and then returns to his mother's side quickly, telling her there is a "King with a crown!" at the door. Amahl's mother assumes that he is lying again and scolds him. The knocks at the door continue until finally, the Mother goes to the door and sees the Three Kings. She is astonished and invites them into her humble home. Ashamed of her poverty, she then runs off to fetch the Shepherds and Shepherdesses and some food and wood, as she has nothing to offer them.

Astounded and curious at the wealth of the Three Kings, Amahl asks them all kinds of questions and finds that King Kaspar has a box of magic stones and candy. The Mother returns. She sees all of their gold, jewels, and beautiful things. The Kings tell her that these are gifts for a special child and she sings of her beautiful son, Amahl.

The Shepherds and Shepherdesses, singing and dancing, come to greet the Kings, bringing with them fruit, olives, cheese, and wood with them. Then they bid the Three Kings "good night." Before going to bed, Amahl asks King Kaspar if there might be a magical stone in his box to cure a poor crippled boy. While everyone is asleep, the Mother marvels at all of the gold and jewels that the kings have brought with them. She sings of how just one piece of gold could buy wood and food and solve all of their problems. She thinks only of Amahl while reaching out for a piece of gold.

The King's Page awakes and catches the Mother. The Kings shame the Mother while Amahl beats the Page with his crutch stating that his Mother is good and kind. King Melchior tells the Mother to keep the gold, as the child that they will visit does not need gold. "On love alone he will build his Kingdom...and the keys to his city belong to the poor." The Mother returns the gold to the Kings, stating that she has waited for such a great leader her whole life. She tells them that if she were not so poor, that she would send a gift of her own to the Child. Amahl rushes over and offers to give his crutch to the Child as it is the only thing of value that he owns. A miracle occurs and at that moment, Amahl is able to walk. The Three Kings see this as a sign from the Holy Child. Amahl begs his mother to let him go with the Three Kings to bring the crutch to the Child himself. After a few moments, the Mother agrees and she and Amahl speak of how much they will miss each other. Amahl goes with the Three Kings, and the Shepherds and Shepherdesses sing of a "sweet dawn of peace."

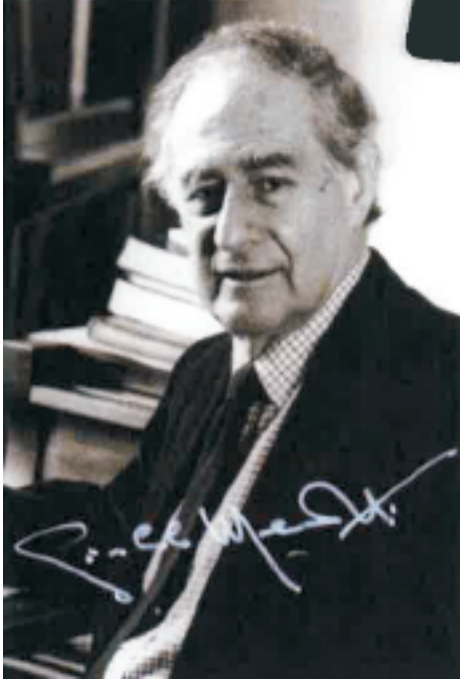


## Simple Vocabulary for Amahl and the Night Visitors

<b>Act</b>	One large part of an opera; “Amahl” is a one act opera
<b>Alto</b>	The lowest female and child voice
<b>Aria</b>	A solo sung by one person conveying feeling rather than fact; a generic Italian word for featured solos in opera; (pronounced ARE-ee-ah)
<b>Ballet</b>	A dance performed in an opera; the shepherds dance in “Amahl”
<b>Baritone</b>	The male voice range between tenor and bass; Melchior is a baritone
<b>Bass</b>	The lowest male singing voice; Balthazar and the Page are basses
<b>Boy Soprano</b>	The highest of a boy’s unchanged voice; Amahl’s part is for boy soprano
<b>Chorus</b>	A song sung in parts by a group of people; the shepherds are a chorus
<b>Conductor</b>	Directs music to keep both orchestra and singers together
<b>Costumes</b>	Clothing worn by the actors to establish the time, place, and mood adding color and interest to the story
<b>Duet</b>	Two people singing two different parts together; the mother and Amahl sing a duet
<b>Librettist</b>	The person who writes the libretto or words; in some cases this person is different from the composer of the opera, and in other cases this person is also the composer
<b>Libretto</b>	Literally, “little book”, it is the actual text of the opera
<b>Opera</b>	A play that is sung; a drama with costumes and scenery in which all or most of the text is sung to the accompaniment of an orchestra
<b>Orchestra</b>	A group of musicians accompanying the entire opera and occasionally playing purely instrumental sections
<b>Pit</b>	The area where the orchestra is located below and in front of the stage
<b>Recitative</b>	A song-speech performed by one person which is half-sung; half-spoken; it is used to quickly convey ideas important to the action of the story; (pronounced reh-chit-a-TEEVE)
<b>Scene</b>	A part of an act
<b>Set</b>	Scenery used to establish the time, place, and mood adding color and interest to the story
<b>Soprano</b>	The highest female and child voice; the Mother in Amahl is a soprano
<b>Tenor</b>	The highest male singing voice; Kaspar is a tenor
<b>Trio</b>	Three people singing three different parts together

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

by Gian Carlo Menotti, Composer



This is an opera for children because it tries to recapture my own childhood. You see, when I was a child I lived in Italy, and in Italy we have no Santa Claus. I suppose that Santa Claus is much too busy with American children to be able to handle Italian children as well. Our gifts were brought to us by the Three Kings, instead.

I actually never met the Three Kings -- it didn't matter how hard my little brother and I tried to keep awake at night to catch a glimpse of the Three Royal Visitors, we would always fall asleep just before they arrived. But I do remember hearing them. I remember the weird cadence of their song in the dark distance; I remember the brittle sound of the camels' hooves crushing the frozen snow; and I remember the mysterious tinkling of their silver bridles.

My favorite king was King Melchior, because he was the oldest and had a long white beard. My brother's favorite was King Kaspar. He insisted that this king was a little crazy and quite deaf. I don't know why he was so positive about his being deaf. I suspect it was because dear King Kaspar never brought him all

the gifts he requested. He was also rather puzzled by the fact that King Kaspar carried the myrrh, which appeared to him as a rather eccentric gift, for he never quite understood what the word meant.

To these Three Kings I mainly owe the happy Christmas seasons of my childhood, and I should have remained very grateful to them. Instead, I came to America and soon forgot all about them, for here at Christmastime one sees so many Santa Clauses scattered all over town. Then there is the big Christmas tree in Rockefeller Plaza, the elaborate toy windows on Fifth Avenue, the one-hundred-voice choir in Grand Central Station, the innumerable Christmas carols on radio and television -- and all these things made me forget the three dear old Kings of my own childhood.

But in 1951 I found myself in serious difficulty. I had been commissioned by the National Broadcasting Company to write an opera for television, with Christmas as a deadline, and I simply didn't have one idea in my head. One November afternoon as I was walking rather gloomily through the rooms of the Metropolitan Museum, I chanced to stop in front of the Adoration of the Kings by Hieronymus Bosch, and as I was looking at it, suddenly I heard again, coming from the distant blue hills, the weird song of the Three Kings. I then realized they had come back to me and had brought me a gift.

*The composer's comments are excerpted from "The Genesis of 'Amahl,'" liner notes that appear on RCA recordings of the work, VIC-1512 and LSC-2762.*

Excerpt from <http://www.andrews.edu/~mack/pnotes/dec691.html>

## MENOTTI'S INSPIRATION

Menotti said his inspiration for Amahl and the Night Visitors was The Adoration of the Kings, by Heironymous Bosch, painted in 1510. This painting reminded him of happy childhood memories from the holiday season.

View this painting online at

[http://www.metmuseum.org/works\\_of\\_art/collection\\_database/european\\_paintings/the\\_adoration\\_of\\_the\\_magi/objectView.aspx?&OID=110000157&collID=11&vw=0](http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/european_paintings/the_adoration_of_the_magi/objectView.aspx?&OID=110000157&collID=11&vw=0)

Teachers, locate a copy of this painting online. Ask your students to look at the painting, and then ask them the following questions:

- 1) How do you celebrate the winter holidays?
- 2) Do you see anything in this painting that reminds you of the way your family celebrates?
- 3) If you had a painting that represented your holiday celebration, what would it include? What would your picture look like?





# PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
(Optional) (Optional)

What grade levels attended the performance? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the performance appropriate for this grade(s)? Yes No

Was the post-show discussion valuable to your students? Yes No

Did this performance fit in with your curriculum? Yes No

Was the study guide helpful? Yes No

How would you rate the entertainment quality of the performance?

Outstanding Above Average Average Below Average

How would you rate the educational quality of the performance?

Outstanding Above Average Average Below Average

To what extent were your students challenged by the content of this performance?

Very Challenged Challenged Not Challenged

How did this program compare to similar programs you've attended in the past?

Above Average Average Below Average

Will you bring your students back to another YES! performance? Yes No

What types of shows would you like to see us present in the future?

☐ Music ☐ Dance ☐ Musical Theater  
☐ Non-musical Theater ☐ Puppetry ☐ Historical  
☐ Literature based ☐ Multicultural ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Youth Education Series?

☐ LOH Website ☐ Mailing ☐ E-mail  
☐ LOH Brochure ☐ Poster ☐ Radio  
☐ Newspaper ☐ Teacher ☐ Parent  
☐ Enrichment/Arts Coordinator ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments:

Please return your evaluation to:  
Lebanon Opera House | PO Box 384 | Lebanon, NH 03766

Evaluations can also be completed online at [www.lebanonoperahouse.org/yesloh/](http://www.lebanonoperahouse.org/yesloh/)

## A Note to Families

Dear Family,

Today, Lebanon Opera House presented Opera North's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* to your child's class. This performance was made possible by generous support from our underwriters and sponsors:

### Hypertherm HOPE Foundation, The Valley News, and Gnomon Copy.

Below are a few questions that might help initiate a conversation about your child's experience at the performance. For more information about *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, including suggested reading and other performance related activities please download a copy of our study guide at [www.lebanonoperahouse.org/yesloh/](http://www.lebanonoperahouse.org/yesloh/)

What type of performance did you see? (Music, theatre, etc.)

What was the performance about?

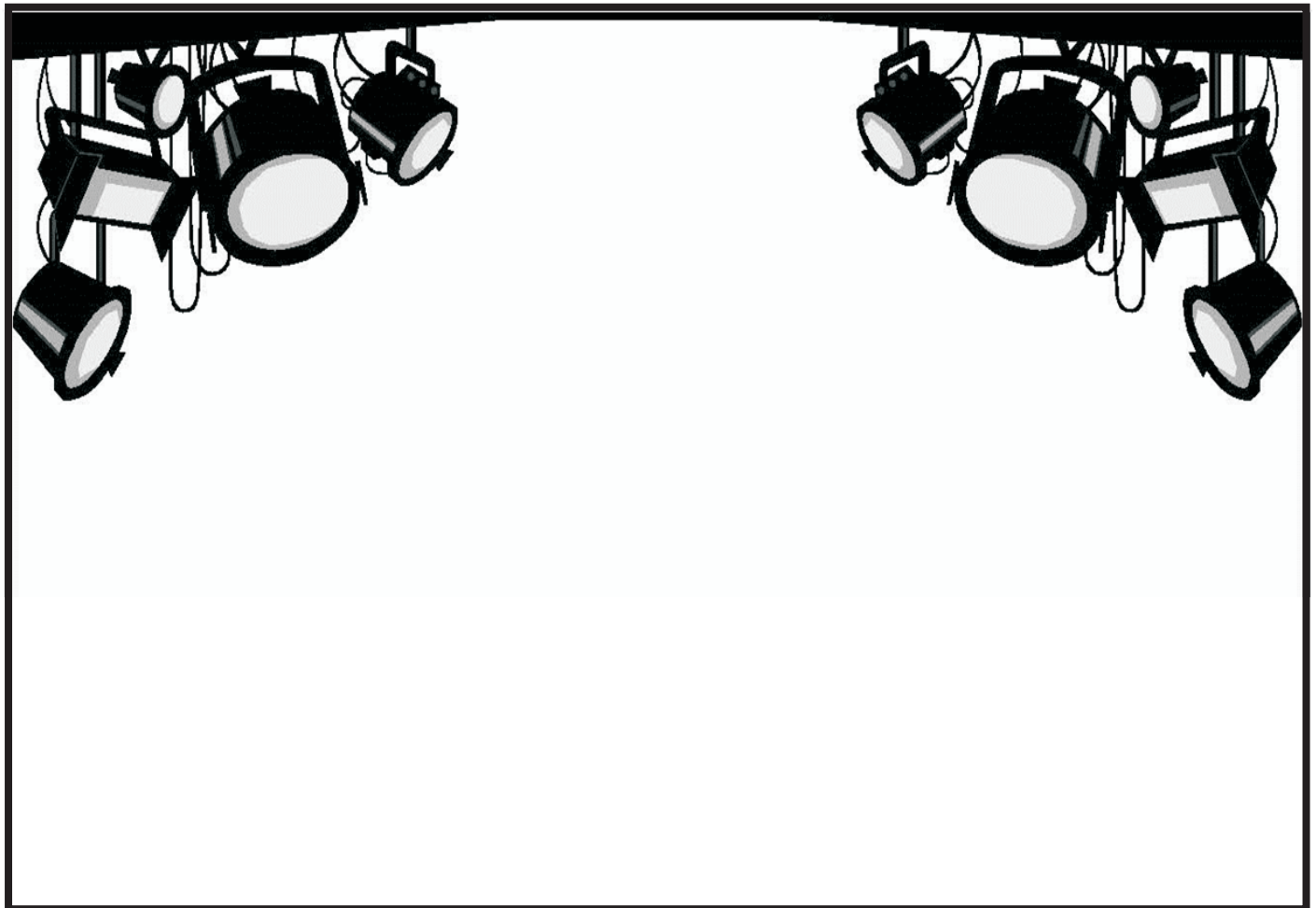
What was your favorite part of the performance?

What did you learn from the performance?

How did the performance make you feel?

If you could be one of the performers/characters, which would you choose and why?

Draw a picture of your favorite moment in the performance:





# Youth Education Series at Lebanon Opera House

## 2014/2015 Programs

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia in  
**STELLA, QUEEN OF THE SNOW**  
Tuesday, January 20, 2015 @ 10 am  
*Recommended for Pre K – grade 2*

Artspower in  
**FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO**  
Thursday, February 12, 2015 @ 10 am  
*Recommended for grades 3 – 6*

**BEYOND THE BOG ROAD WITH EILEEN IVERS**  
Thursday, March 12, 2015 @ 10 am \* a 75 minute show  
*Recommended for grades 5 – 8*

Theatreworks USA in  
**FLY GUY AND OTHER STORIES**  
Monday, March 16, 2015 @ 10 am  
*Recommended for grades 1 – 4*

Theatreworks USA in  
**MISS NELSON IS MISSING**  
Monday, April 20, 2015 @ 10 am  
*Recommended for K – grade 5*

Artspower in  
**DOG LOVES BOOKS**  
Tuesday, May 19, 2015 @ 10 am  
*Recommended for K – grade 2*

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