

**CAHOOTS**



**Segerstrom  
Center for the Arts®**

The Musicians of Bremen Live!



Sample Study Guide

# The Musicians of Bremen Live!

Inspired by the Brothers Grimm story 'The Musicians of Bremen', the story features a band of characters who have a distinct disliking for each other, until circumstances force them together to discover they have more in common than they ever knew.

These characters, played by a cast of actor-musicians, are all down on their luck. They meet at a crossroads - a literal one in the desert and also at a crossroads in their lives.

Overcoming obstacles they eventually reach their destination and sing in harmony. Uses live music, magic and digital technology to tell an impactful, global story.

Meet Ruffles - a hen with a voice that can stop a freight train. Lost at a crossroads, she meets Mule, Bobcat, and Coyote. Together they undertake an epic journey across the desert to the big city, following a big dream. They have hopes of becoming a famous musical band - but can they make it?



Inspired by the much-loved Grimm's Fairy Tale and set in the American Southwest, The Musicians of Bremen Live! is a brand-new musical play for the whole family featuring live music, story, song, and plenty of surprises from Cahoots, makers of The Vanishing Elephant, Shh! We have a Plan, Secrets of Space, Egg and The University of Wonder & Imagination.

Cahoots is one of Northern Ireland's leading professional theatre companies. Since it was founded in 2001 it has been committed to producing original, high quality work for children, some of it staged in conventional theatre venues and some in purpose-built or site-specific locations. Its work concentrates on combining the visual potential of theatre, with the age-old popularity of magic and illusion.



The Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Costa Mesa, California, is one of North America's most respected multi-disciplinary cultural institutions. Orange County's largest non-profit arts organisation, the Center features six impressive venues ranging from a 3,000 seat theatre, a 2,000 seat concert hall, a 300 seat studio theatre, outdoor spaces and more. The Center is committed to supporting artistic excellence, and to engaging communities in new and exciting ways through the unique power of live performance and

a diverse array of inspiring arts-based education programs. The Center has a focus on meaningful collaborations with diverse communities, embracing

creativity and enabling a more inclusive, vibrant performing arts scene at the Center and across the region.

In this pack you will find some educational resources for your use before and after your visit to The Musicians of Bremen Live!

We do hope you find them useful and can use them to extend our story of inclusion, empathy and acceptance beyond the theatre and into the classroom

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## Who's Who?

### Ruffles The Hen - Philippa O'Hara.



*A professional actor and singer from Belfast. She has been lucky enough to tour Ireland, China, Norway and America five times with various Cahoots N.I. shows. She is a guest vocalist with Lush! Classical and Cream Classical performing in huge venues with symphony orchestras in front of up to 18,000 people, videos of which have garnered over 9 million views on YouTube. She performs regularly with her sister as the O'Hara Sisters at prestigious events all over the U.K. and Ireland including The Players' Dinner at The Open 2019 and at extremely exclusive, bespoke events at The Tate Modern, London. Her recent theatre credits include The Vanishing Elephant at New Victory Theatre New York, Secrets Of Space USA tour, and Cinderella at The Mac.*

### Bobcat - Gavin Cole.



*A professional actor and singer, originally from Centreville, VA currently residing in Los Angeles, CA. Gavin is a graduate of The Sanford Meisner Center in Burbank and holds a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from The University of the Arts. Recent Credits include Theatre: Rent (Roger) The Chance Theater, Emma (Frank Churchill) The Chance Theater, White Girl in Danger(Matthew/Scott/Zack/Others) Polyphone New Musical Theater Festival 2018. Film: Wander Women(Billy), Spring on Amazon Prime (Jay). TV: Killer Siblings (Bryan Freeman) Oxygen, Extreme Measures (Tug) Investigation Discovery. Gavin is represented by Quartz Talent Agency. Follow Gavin on Instagram @reallygavincole, and listen to his music on Spotify and Apple Music.*

**Mule - Christina Nelson.**



*Christina is a dynamic and versatile actor and director, renowned for her compelling performances and innovative direction. Her recent stage credits at the Lyric Theatre include memorable roles in "Hansel and Gretel", "Snow Queen", "Pinocchio", "Lady Killers", and "Sinners". Each performance has showcased her exceptional talent and ability to bring complex characters to life.*

*Earlier this year, Christina took her talents to New York, performing with the Irish Arts Centre in "Good Vibrations," following a successful run at the Grand Opera House in Belfast. Other acting credits further highlight her range and skill, including roles in "Cassandra of Ulster" in Dublin, "McCooeys" at the Grand Opera House, "Betty and Bernie's School Reunion" at the SSE Arena, and "Ring of Steel" with Kabosh. With a passion for storytelling and a dedication to her craft, Christina continues to make a significant impact on the arts, both on stage and screen. Her work not only entertains but also engages and inspires*

*audiences, solidifying her reputation as a talented and influential figure in the industry.*

**Coyote - Casting TBC**

**Story Teller 1 - Kyron Bourke.**



*Born into a theatrical Dublin family, Kyron Bourke worked as a wardrobe man in theatre and film before becoming a full-time musician and singer after signing to Polygram Records. Kyron has acted in theatre, television, and radio, and has written drama for radio.*

*Kyron is Co-founder of Teatro Nua Productions which produced the premiere of his jazz and blues opera No Citation at the Lyric Belfast in May 2022. Directed by Rhiann Jeffrey, No Citation in which Kyron played the part of Jeremy d'Wolfe McCarthy premiered in May 2022 to*

*critical acclaim. With musical direction by Kyron, No Citation was enthusiastically received and Teatro Nua is presently planning a Dublin production later this year.*

*Kyron played leading roles in the Lyric Theatre Belfast's 2015 and 2016 Christmas shows and toured Ireland with The Assistant's Revenge, in the role of Sullivan, a piano playing private detective. In 2021 he composed the music for Cahoots first production at the Grimm Hotel Theatre and in 2022, he was both composer and musical director for When We Were Wild at the MAC, Belfast. Kyron also appeared in Kathryn Baird's acclaimed film An Buachaill Gealgháireach and in his own award winning movie, No Explanation.*

## Story Teller 2 - Padraig Dooney.



*Padraig Dooney is a Dublin based actor and musician. He is a classically trained saxophonist with nearly two decades of experience performing nationwide, who also sings, plays recorder, clarinet, piano, guitar, bass and drums. Padraig trained as an actor at Bow Street Academy of Screen Acting. Currently you will find him playing saxophone in various venues across Ireland with the band Shakalak, fronted by Poetician John Cummins. Recent theatre credits include: No Citation (Lyric Theatre, Belfast), The Commitments West End and UK Tour (Phil McIntyre Productions) and A Dickensian Christmas (Ha-Hum-Ah Theatre).*

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## Science

### Useful Information about our animals

#### **Coyote**

Coyotes can be found in all of the United States, except Hawaii. Their range now extends from Central America to Canada. Adult coyotes weigh between 20 and 45 pounds. Coyote pups are born between early April and late May. The average litter contains four to five pups. They are active both day and night, but most sightings are close to sunrise and sunset. Noted for their nightly serenades of yaps and howls. Coyotes are extremely efficient hunters, and their senses are keen. They are visual predators in open areas, but they mostly use smell and hearing to locate prey in thick vegetation or forest.

#### **Bobcat**

Bobcats have excellent vision and hearing and a well-developed sense of smell. Unlike the domesticated house cat, bobcats enjoy the water and are very good swimmers. As incredibly skilled climbers, bobcats easily manoeuvre around rocky terrain and climb up tall trees when pursuing their prey.

They emit an eerie scream that can be heard for miles and are often found throughout Southern Canada, the United States, and Oaxaca, Mexico. Communication is very important for them and they do this in many ways via scent, visual signs, and vocalisation. Bobcats can survive for long period without food, they prefer to wait out adverse weather conditions in their shelters.



## Hen



A Hen is a female chicken and just like 'Ruffles' chickens love to play, run, skip and flap their wings.

Hens teach sounds to their chicks while they are still in the egg.

Chickens have a profound memory and are able to distinguish between more than 100 faces of their species. They can also recognise people. Chickens are able to distinguish colours. They also see ultraviolet light and iridescent hues. Their world looks more colourful than ours.

Chickens demonstrate REM (Rapid Eye Movement) when sleeping. That means they are capable of dreaming, just like us human beings. Chickens can show empathy and hens can act as a 'social buffer' for their baby chick. The cognitive skills of chickens are similarly high to those of a dog or cat. Chickens understand that when an object is taken away and hidden, it still exists.

## Mule

A mule is the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse, and typically possesses a mix of horse and donkey characteristics (long ears, for example). Mules come in all sizes. Because of this, mules are versatile and excel in many areas. Mules have long been popular as pack animals and they were of historical importance during the era of Western Expansion. Mules are found in a variety of colours and patterns (including Appaloosa patterns), and sometimes exhibit characteristics of donkey colouring, such as lighter-coloured muzzles (this trait is known as pangaré).

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## The Arts

Now that you know all about our wonderful animals and the differences of each, how about you become one of your own.

### Stop/ Start

Everyone uses their bodies and voices to become an animal that was in the show. They all walk collectively around the space as their chosen animal.

Different emotions are shouted out to change the way in which the animals are moving around the space. Eg. Angry = stomping/Happy = skipping etc.

"Stop!" - is then shouted randomly. When this is said the collective group must all work together to stop at the same time. Once everyone has frozen, they must all then work together to start walking around the space again as a group.

Just like in the show, this encourages team work and inclusion just as the animals had to ensure when crossing the desert.

Follow up: ask the students how it felt to notice and recognise the other animals movements. Were their big differences? Did one animal take up more space than the other? Were there slower/ faster animals?



This discussion develops an understanding for diversity across the range of animals and can play into teachings on diversity in the classroom.

### **Loud Luggage**

Put any musical instruments or objects that can be used as instruments into a large container. This represents the suitcase of instruments that appears in the show.

Each student is given the opportunity to pick an instrument.

Familiarise children with a basic 4/4 beat: count one, two, three, four, clapping with each count and placing an extra emphasis on the 'one'. This is the first beat of the bar. Get the children to join you.

Split the class so that one half is clapping 'one, two' and the other 'three, four'.

Continue by introducing a half-beat: one-and two-and three-and four-and, with the children still clapping on the number. Once they have got used to this, instruct one half to clap the numbers, and the other half to clap the ands. Use your finger or a stick to conduct, pointing at each group in its turn. After that, have one group clap 'one-and two-and' and the other group 'three-and four-and', making eight claps (or half-beats) in all per bar.

Get them to strike their instruments as you clap out the 'one two three four' beat. Once they've got into the rhythm, start singing '*Row, row, row your boat*' in time to the beat, while still conducting to keep them in time.

Split the class into three groups. Two groups will be singing (you might need an additional adult to help here). Ask them to sing '*Row, row, row your boat*' as a round song. Continue to clap the beat yourself until they've got into a flow, then invite your third group – the musicians – to beat out the four beats for you.

Practice this a few times and then hand over to the children at this point you will become the MC for this newly formed 'band', hype up the students and have them give a spectacular live performance just like the animals did when they reached the big city!

This activity encourages inclusion, teamwork and develops children's musical and rhythm skills.

### **Rain / Desert / City**

The animals cross many terrains throughout the show. Divide the room into three sections. Section One is a rain storm, where the students must all pretend to struggle to stay upright; Section Two is the Desert, where all animals must slowly and carefully cross the salt flats and Section Three is the City, where all animals must come together and sing as if on the street in the city. At different intervals shout out 'RAIN', 'DESERT', or 'CITY', enabling the class to move to the correct position. The last student to the correct section is out of the game. Continue until there is a winner.



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## Geography

### Around the World

In the show many different landscapes are visited with the mission of travelling to the city! The animals travel through the western lands, passing a bus stop, they come across a desert, through a river during a storm and of course make it to the BIG CITY!

Have the students work in groups to create a craft project of one of these landscapes - if possible allow them to go on a computer to research different images of these landscapes, before building their project.

When the projects are completed have each group present their findings, these can then be taken further with a narrowed focus on the weather and the elements each landscape faces Eg. the storm when crossing the river. Have the students add each of these elements into their projects using various forms - paint, materials, recyclable waste, or even natural materials like sand, grass or water.

Why not put these on display in the classroom as a reminder of the production!

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## Language and Literacy

The production is based on one of the Grimm Fairytales - The Musicians of Bremen. Why not pick up a few copies of this book and read together as a class. Once read discuss the similarities and differences between the book and the production script. What changes were made? How did the story differ? Was there anything that was changed massively?

Have the students write a journal entry from the point of view of one of the characters in the production. This could be a journal entry about a specific part of the characters journey, a day in the life, or a few journal entries detailing the journey throughout the story. Encourage the students to give as much detail as possible and put themselves in the characters shoes to capture as much of their thoughts, feelings and emotions as they can.



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## Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

The animals at times become irritated and angry with one another, this is due to a number of reasons throughout the story, however, one of the key issues is that they have all been displaced from the environments they are used to. How would you feel if you were no longer at home with your family? What does home mean to you?

Encourage the children to discuss how their homes make them feel and how they would feel if they were no longer at home with their families.

As the story continues the animals put forward different ideas on how they can solve the issues they are facing such as missing the bus at the beginning of the show. It becomes apparent that in order to get to the big city the animals are going to have to unite and work as one. Discuss the benefits of working as a team and how to overcome obstacles together.

### Bus Stop

Setup 2 chairs side by side (like a bus stop).

Have one child sit at the bus stop as their chosen character, incorporating the voice and body language. This person must now become their character with an understanding of their background, personality, feelings and emotions.



The second child must then enter and join them at the bus stop as another character from the show, taking into account the same as above.

The two then must interact, beginning a conversation. Give them reason for being at the bus stop to get the conversation started.

The other children must then observe as the conversation unfolds, taking note of the differences of each character's voice, body language, background, feelings and thoughts.

Have the children discuss what this represents and ask if they can think of any situations they have experienced that have been similar. How has this made them feel? What do they think they could do to ensure inclusivity and mutual understanding.



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## Recommended Reading and Further Resources

- <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/nature/habitats/article/desert>
- <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/coyote>
- <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/bobcat>
- <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/nature/habitats>
- <https://www.britannica.com/Animals-Nature>
- <https://www.britannica.com/Geography-Travel>
- <https://www.bremen.eu/tale-of-the-bremen-town-musicians>
- [https://www.grimmstories.com/en/grimm\\_fairy-tales/the\\_bremen\\_town\\_musicians#google\\_vignette](https://www.grimmstories.com/en/grimm_fairy-tales/the_bremen_town_musicians#google_vignette)