



## ArtSmarts

2005-2006 Wells Fargo School Matinee Series

### Imago Theatre's *Biglittlethings*

April 3, 2006

11:00am

Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center

Dear Teacher,

We hope you find this CueSheet helpful in preparing your students for the school matinee presentation of Imago Theatre's *Biglittlethings*. This guide, which is intended to be used in conjunction with the Elementary Theater curriculum guide, provides information about the theatrical production and its parent company. Also included in the guide is a review of audience etiquette.

Mondavi Center gratefully acknowledges the institutional donors supporting the Arts Education Program during the 2005-2006 Season of Performing Arts:



NORDSTROM, INC



WESTAF

With additional support provided by ArtesAmericas, Bank of America Foundation, River Cats Foundation, UC Davis Health System, Teichert Foundation and UC Davis School/University Partnerships.



## ***BIGLITTLETHINGS***

"A mastery of mime, dance and acrobatics."

-The New York Times

Somewhat reminiscent of Imago Theatre's international hit, *Frogz*, ***Biglittletings*** is a visually stunning mask-and-movement spectacle that works for kids and adults alike. The cast of six performers dons elaborate masks and costumes and, without a single word, conjures up magical critters like hitchhiking rabbits, opera-singing ducks, and even some insomniac hippos. This show, full of catchy music and fantastic lighting effects, is guaranteed to tickle the funny bone as well as stretch the imagination.

**Imago Theatre** began in 1979, exclusively performing mask-theater in small communities in the Northwest United States. Only six years later, the company's international touring began and continues to this day. Imago's explorations of the stage began as a combination of theater, movement, and the visual arts, as influenced by renowned theater master **Jacques Lecoq** of Paris, France (*see article on page 7*). First working in the realm of physical comedy and mask theater, the ensemble progressed toward creating and staging experimental works, original text works and contemporary adaptations of classics. In 2001, Imago's *Frogz* completed a two week run on Broadway and returned to the acclaimed New Victory Theatre for a four week run in May 2002. Artistic Directors **Carol Triffle** and **Jerry Mouawad**, trained in the methods of Jacques Lecoq, with influences from Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, Alain Platel and Trisha Brown, have created a company that is one of the most innovative in the United States. The ensemble's ingenuity has manifested itself in numerous stage 'theatrics', including a tilting stage in Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*,

underground projections of Triffle's *Buffo*, a giant 14' metallic wheel of Richard Foreman's *Symphony of Rats*, the underwater soliloquies in Triffle's *Oh Lost Weekend*, the matrix puzzle of a set in Mouawad's *House Taken Over*. If you were fortunate to witness Imago's productions of past years you journeyed to some exciting, unusual and fantastic universes.

Learn more at the Imago Theatre website: <http://www.imagotheatre.com/> and <http://www.biglittlethings.com/>.



# SHORT PROGRAM ORDER

*Rabbits*

*Anteaters*

*Bugeyes, Snakes & Birds*

*Larvabatic*

*Polar Bears*

*Alphabet Boy*

*Raccoons*

*BigGulp*

## **Imago Theatre Staff**

### Artistic Directors

Carol Triffle  
Jerry Mouawad

### Original Music

Katie Griesar

### Light Design

Jeff Forbes  
Jerry Mouawad

### Performed by

Leah James Abel  
Matt Caffoni  
Philip Cuomo  
Emily Gleason  
Jonathan Godsey  
Kerry Silva

## STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

**CAROL TRIFFLE** (Co-creator, Co-Artistic Director) is Co-Artistic Director and founding member of Imago Theatre. She performed as Marie Helen in Imago's production of Richard Foreman's *Samuel's Major Problem*. Triffle's work has appeared in Russia, Asia, Europe, and throughout the United States. Her original work at Imago includes *Ginger's Green*, *Oh Lost Weekend*, and *No Can Do*. She has won Drammy Awards for Best Costume and Best Original Play (*Dead End Ed*). She has staged work for Jefferson High School and The Oregon Symphony. Her co-creation of *FROGZ* with Jerry Mouawad has had double visits to Broadway at the acclaimed New Victory Theatre. Most recently Triffle produced the U.S. premiere of Caryl Churchill's *A Number* at Imago.

**JERRY MOUAWAD** (Co-creator, Co-Artistic Director) is Co-Artistic Director and founding member of Imago Theatre. He staged two Richard Foreman works in the 1990's: *Symphony of Rats* and *Samuel's Major Problem*. His work for Imago Theatre has included a highly stylized *No Exit* by Jean-Paul Sartre and an adaptation of Julio Cortazar's *House Taken Over*, Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, Triffle/Mouawad's *Dead End Ed*, and others. He has staged work for Portland Center Stage and the Portland Opera. He co-created Imago Theatre's *FROGZ* with Carol Triffle which saw double visits to Broadway at the acclaimed New Victory Theatre. Mouawad staged a choreographic dance theatre work entitled *Craps in the City of Lost Wages* for BodyVox. Most recently he directed and designed the U.S. Premiere of Caryl Churchill's *A Number* at Imago.

**KATIE GRIESAR** (Resident Composer) is a graduate of Vassar College and the American Repertory Theatre Institute at Harvard University. She has contributed original music/sound to the following productions at Imago Theatre: *Symphony of Rats* (1997 Drammy, Best Sound Design), *Half Light*, *Ginger's Green*, *Trailer Park Paradise*, *House Taken Over* (1999 Portland Drama Critics Circle Award, Best Original Score), *Blood Wedding*, *Oh Lost Weekend*, *No Can Do* and *Exit the King*. Griesar has also contributed original music to works by choreographers Linda Austin, Catherine Egan and Cydney Wilkes and currently plays in the band Durango Park. She is resident composer for Imago and her compositions for *FROGZ* played at The New Victory Theatre in New York in 2000 and 2002.

**JEFF FORBES** (Light Design) Jeff is a Portland-based lighting designer working primarily in theater and dance. He is an eight-time winner of the Willie and Drammy Awards for theater, for such companies as Storefront Theatre, Artists Repertory Theatre, Tygres Heart Shakespeare, and the Musical Theatre Company. He has been lighting director for the Portland International Performance Festival since its inception. His work in dance and performance includes frequent collaborations over the last 15 years with choreographers such as Linda Austin, Mary Oslund, Josie Moseley, Minh Tran, Linda Johnson, Drew Pizarra, Katherine Petersen, Sue Brantley, Do Jump Movement Theatre, Imago Theatre, and the original staging of *Talk Radio* with Eric Bogosian and Tad Savinar. Jeff is co-founder with Linda Austin of Performance Works NW, for which he serves as technical director. He has designed lights for the following Imago shows: *Verdad*, *Buffo*, *Oh Lost Weekend*, *Blood Wedding*, *No Exit*, *House Taken Over*, *Trailer Park Paradise*, *Symphony of Rats*, and *FROGZ*.

**LEAH JAMES ABEL** (Performer) began clowning around in Cambridge, Massachusetts at the age of four. She has since performed in such exciting places as New York, Hawaii, Korea, and Scranton, Pennsylvania — dancing, clowning, stilting, twisting around trapezes, and parading around with people standing on her shoulders. Abel has training in theater, dance, and a variety of circus arts, and has been a proud company member, performer, and choreographer with two New York-based

circus-theatre companies, Kirkos and Cirque Boom. When she's not hanging from a long piece of cloth or other aerial apparati, she might be perched in a tree or developing her new one-woman show, *Dirty ol' Men*.

**MATT CAFFONI** (Performer) Matt is thrilled to be a part of Imago Theatre's production of *Biglittlethings*. This is his debut season with the company. Some of Matt's most recent work includes: *A Secret Garden* (Fakir), *ONE* (Gene), *As You Like It* (Hymen), *A Christmas Carol* (Dick Wilkins, Tailor), *Fiddler on the Roof* (title role), *Hamlet* (Osric), *Measure for Measure* (Lucio/Elbow), *Angels In America* (Prior Walter), *Bent* (Rudy), and *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio). Before graduating from the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts, Matt worked as a choreographer, assistant director, and producer.

**PHILIP CUOMO** (Performer) appeared in the world premiere of *Biglittlethings* and in Imago's *Missing Mona*. In Portland, he played Puck in ART's multi-cultural production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He wrote, directed and performed in *Hermes' Mother* at the Seattle Fringe Festival. His New York credits include: Edmund in *King Lear*, Hubert in *King John*, Slender in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, multiple characters in his own adaptation of *The Brother's Grimm Fairy Tales*, and the narrator/mime in *Peter and The Wolf*. Regionally he performed at The Hartford Stage, The Civic Theatre of Central Florida, the Sterling and Pittsburgh Renaissance Festivals. He is a founding member of the New York based contemporary Commedia Dell'Arte group *Lick The Spoon*, with whom he wrote and performed several original pieces including Arlecchino in *Pantalone's War*. He created and performed several one-man, curriculum-based, character-driven, interactive shows, which he performs in schools. He is currently a faculty member at the Portland Actor's Conservatory teaching voice, movement and mask.

**EMILY GLEASON** (Performer) is embarking on her second season with *FROGZ* and *Biglittlethings*. Other theatre credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *To Gillian on Her 37th Birthday*. Gleason is also an avid traveler, and has just returned from a solo adventure in Europe.

**JONATHAN GODSEY** (Performer) became interested in theatre in 1998 at the age of 28. Since then, he has performed in numerous national *FROGZ* tours with Imago, including runs at American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and on Broadway in the Big Apple. Jonathan's other Imago appearances include *Oh Lost Weekend*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, and *Biglittlethings*. He currently studies Aikido at Two Rivers Aikikai in Portland, Oregon, and eventually plans to apply his extensive studies of Taichichuan and Aikido to the art of stage combat.

**KERRY SILVA** (Performer) graduated with a degree in Theatre, Speech, and Dance from Brown University in 2002. She works with many theatres in Portland, performing, puppeteering, teaching, writing, directing, dancing, clowning, booking, and managing. Silva is also a co-founder of the Cardboard Box Theatre Company, a new addition to the Portland arts scene.



## JACQUES LECOQ

**Jacques Lecoq** was born in Paris on December 15, 1921. In 1937 he began studying physical education which he taught from 1941 to 1945, gaining teaching diplomas from the French athletics and swimming federations. His interest in physical education brought him into contact with Jean-Marie Conty, a master of physical education and friend of Antonin Artaud and Jean-Louis Barrault.

By 1945, Jacques Lecoq had started acting with Gabriel Cousin and the two founded a drama group. He was then taken on by actor and producer Jean Dasté as part of a theatre company known as the **Comédiens de Grenoble**, where he was put in charge of the physical training and body movements of his fellow actors. Here he discovered masks and was introduced to the ideas of Jacques Copeau (author, theatre producer and French actor (1879-1949)) to the point of later identifying with him as his indirect heir.

In 1948 Jacques Lecoq went to Italy where he settled for eight years. He staged his first pantomimes at the university theatre in Padua, while in the city markets he discovered Commedia dell'Arte. He met the sculptor Amleto Sartori and together they embarked on research into masks, ultimately leading to joint projects including, *inter alia*, the "neutral mask". Invited by Giorgio Strehler and Paolo Grassi, he joined them for the launching of the school at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan. Later ventures included work as a director and choreographer, working together with figures such as Dario Fo, Franco Parenti, Luciano Berio, and Anna Magnani, pursuing the quest for new movements suited to contemporary music, reviews, opera, and devising movements for choruses in Greek tragedy in Syracuse.

In 1956 he came back to Paris and opened his **School of Mime and Theatre**. At the same time he set up his own theatre company, worked at the T.N.P. (National Popular Theatre) with Jean Vilar, and also on television. However, before long the school had expanded and he devoted all his efforts to teaching.

From 1968 to 1988, Jacques Lecoq was a teacher at the French school of fine arts (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts) where he developed a teaching program on architecture based on the human body, movement and the "dynamics of mime." In 1977 he founded the stage design department of the school, known as LEM (Laboratoire d'étude du mouvement — movement research laboratory). Jacques Lecoq was a member of the Union of Theatres of Europe, touring the world as guest teacher and speaker, giving master-classes and lectures, including the performance lecture entitled "Tout Bouge" (Everything Moves).

In 1997 and 1998, Jacques Lecoq worked in close partnership with Jean-Gabriel Carasso, Jean-Claude Lallias and Jean-Noël Roy, ultimately producing the book *Le Corps Poétique* and producing two 45-minute documentaries for French television.

Only a few days before his death, on January 19, 1999, Jacques Lecoq was still teaching at the school. The International Theatre School Jacques Lecoq is now administrated by his wife, Fay Lecoq.

For more information, visit [http://www.ecole-jacqueslecoq.com/index\\_uk.htm](http://www.ecole-jacqueslecoq.com/index_uk.htm).



## THINK ABOUT IT!

Talking with your teacher, friends and family about a performance after attending the theater is part of the experience. When you share what you saw and felt, you learn more about the performance. You can now compare ideas and ask questions and find out how to learn even more. Here are some questions to think about:

1. How would you describe the ***Biglittlethings*** performance to a friend?
2. One of the show's directors said this in an interview: "The title of the show is significant. Things that are normally small are big, and things that are normally big are small". Discuss the ways in which the ordinary size of objects became extraordinary in the production.
3. What did you like best and why? Was the program different from what you expected?  
How?
4. Did you have a favorite selection? A least favorite? Explain.

This CueSheet was written by Anett Jessop, Graduate Researcher, Davis Humanities Institute.

# ATTENDING THE THEATER

## *What is expected of student audiences at the matinee:*

- \* Enter the auditorium quietly and take seats immediately;
- \* Show courtesy to the artist and other guests at all times;
- \* Demonstrate appreciation for the artist's work by applauding at the appropriate times;
- \* Refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements;
- \* Please eat lunch before or after the performance to avoid disruption;
- \* Please turn off cell phones and pagers;
- \* Flash photography is strictly prohibited;
- \* Relate any information acquired from the pre-matinee discussion to the new information gained from the matinee.

## *What you can expect of your experience in a performing arts theater:*

A theater is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. When the house lights (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, the excitement level goes up! Theaters are designed so that the voices of the singers and actors and the music of the musicians can be heard. But this also means that any sound in the audience: whispering, rustling of papers, speaking and moving about, can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these upset everyone's concentration and can spoil a performance.

The performers on stage show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their very best possible work. The audience shows respect for the performers by watching attentively. Applause is the best way for audience members to share their enthusiasm and to show their appreciation for the performers. Applaud at the end of a performance! Sometimes the audience will clap during a performance, such as after a featured solo. Audience members may feel like laughing if the action on stage is funny, crying if the action is sad, or sighing if something is seen or heard that is beautiful. Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. While the audience at a dance performance will sit quietly, other types of performance invite audience participation.