Lights! Camera! Action!

HOW THEATER BEGAN

As we began our Theater Unit, we traveled back in time to Ancient Greece, exploring how performances took place in round theaters that were outside. The actors would express their emotion by wearing masks that represented either sad or happy faces. The Kindergarten friends then made their own masks and explored ways to add features in order to express the emotion they were given: sad, happy, excited, or mad. The friends discovered that in order to be heard from behind a mask, the mouths were made in a cone-like shape to project the sound, much like a megaphone.

Important Notes

- Spring Break dates: March 13th-17th, 2017
- Our new unit after Spring Break is Ancient Egypt!
- Please send extra clothes that are weather appropriate as we enter a new season and possible size changes.

Annika working on her mask.

Jovie creating the background of her mask.

Ben's completed mask representing a sad emotion.

Betsy and Javi exploring sound with a megaphone.
The Kindergarten friends continued their travels to the Medieval times in England where they discovered that theater left the round outdoor stages and became traveling shows from town to town, performing in outside town squares. We were entertained by Ms. Hancock who traveled from the far off land of the Office to show us her flag performing skills. We were wowed by the high flying flips she would perform. Mr. Salinetro then traveled from the Blue Room to share his juggling talent. He brought laughs to his production, showing us how we can juggle in many different ways.

After learning the history of theater and watching traveling performances, the friends were eager and excited to leap into their own performances. Drawing inspiration from books read in class, the Greek tragedy “Theseus and The Minotaur” and Fred Penner’s musical story “The Animal Boogie”, the friends set to work turning these books into Kindergarten productions. The friends began by Auditioning, trying out for a part in a production, by performing songs, reciting lines, added acting emotions. They then received the cast list and discovered who would be our Actors, the performers on stage, the Prop Masters, those responsible for making the props for a production, the Set Design Team, the people responsible for creating the backdrops and scenery, and the Sound Effects team, the people who create different sounds using their voices or props backstage to help enhance the performance. Before beginning rehearsals for our first production, the Kindergarten friends decided they wanted to put a twist on the original story of Theseus and The Minotaur. They rewrote the tragedy to turn it into a comedic story, so that everyone lived happily ever after in the end of the production. After the Script, the play’s written words, was set, the actors stepped on stage to began learning their lines and where to stand during the play. The friends quickly learned that it takes a lot of hard work and practice to memorize their lines.
While the actors rehearsed, the Prop Masters and Set Designers set to work diligently. The friends first brainstormed what the costumes and backgrounds should look like and then gathered the materials. Paying attention to detail, the friends discovered it takes patience and time for all the parts to come together.

THE SCIENCE OF THEATER

During rehearsal, the friends learned that there are other hidden pieces that are added to a production, the sound effects and lighting that add finishing touches. They explored the science of theater by carrying out various experiments to determine what helps carry a sound and what are the best materials to make a sound. After identifying what are sources of light, the friends began working with snap circuits. The friends discovered how to connect various wires and batteries to send an electrical current through the circuit to turn on a light. After discovering that electricity powers light, the friends began exploring properties of light by testing objects to determine if light can pass through fully (transparent), partially (translucent) or not at all (opaque).
After the actors rehearsed and the costumes and set were ready, the friends needed to get the word out for the preschool friends to come see the show. Learning the importance of advertising, the friends set forth to design a **Program**, a booklet giving details of the performers and event. They illustrated a cover page, wrote the names of the actors and then brought it to the printing press (the office copier) to be put together. They then illustrated and wrote the title on tickets that were delivered to the preschool teachers and friends. The kindergarten friends then prepared a snack to be delivered with the tickets as a thank you for coming to see our production.

**THE STAGE IS SET**

After weeks of rehearsal and hard work, the production was ready to take flight. The Kindergarten friends readied the classroom for the Green Room friends to enjoy the production of “Theseus and The Minotaur”, a Kindergarten comedy.
THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR PERFORMANCE
THE ANIMAL BOOGIE PERFORMANCE

After perfecting their dance moves and warming up their voices, the Kindergarten friends took “The Animal Boogie” on the road and traveled to the preschool to perform for the Red Room and Blue Room Friends.
Collaborative Puppet Theaters

Working in pairs, the Kindergarten friends looked through fairy tale stories to find their favorite book. Once they decided which story they both liked best, they then choose a scene from the story that would serve as a background. They set to work illustrating the scenery on a poster board to begin creating a mini puppet theater. Once the scene was set, they began to illustrate characters from the story, which they then cut and turned into puppets. The friends discovered that there needed to be good communication in order to reach a completed product that satisfied them both. After the theaters were completed, the friends took turns being the audience and the performers, enacting the scene from the book.

Marina and Mao illustrating the background.

Ksenia and Norah working on puppets.

Annika and Penelope painting the theaters.

Atticus and Javi enacting the story of The Three Little Pigs.
CMU THEATER TOUR AND OUR MANY TALENTED FAMILIES

The kindergarten friends were wowed by a tour of the CMU Theater Department. The friends were able to observe a dance class, explore the hallway of many faces, be dazzled by the many props and scenery in the Prop Shop, and experience sitting in the audience while viewing in the parts of a theater. The tour provided much inspiration and excitement that was carried into the classroom.

During our theater unit, we discovered the many talents of our Children's School family and friends. We were awed by the musical elements that drumming can add to a production that Owen's Mom, Heidi, performed for us. Max's Uncle, Patrick, a professional actor, played acting games and taught us the important parts of rehearsing for a production by watching and giving feedback to one of our scenes from Theseus and The Minotaur. We were dazzled by Javi's Mom, Lauren, during her magic show performance, assisted by Javi. A preschool parent, Jonathan Fortier, let the lights shine by giving the friends a presentation on lighting elements for theater. Julie, Robin's Mom, worked with the children to make puppets. Marina, her Mom and her sister shared their wonderful acting skills while performing a play for the friends. Thank you for sharing your talents with the Kindergarten friends!