

**Get ready to see  
The Trumpet of the Swan:  
a play at Wheelock Family Theatre**



A guide to help you prepare to see a play at  
Wheelock Family Theatre

A publication of the  
*Wheelock Family Theatre*  
*Access and Inclusion Program*



I am going to see a play called **The Trumpet of the Swan** at Wheelock Family Theatre. In a play, people on stage tell a story — right in front of us! These people are called **actors**.



To tell the story, the actors talk and wear special clothes called costumes.





Sometimes the actors sing and dance too.



This play is based on the book **The Trumpet of the Swan**, by E.B. White. He also wrote **Charlotte's Web** and **Stuart Little**.



It is about a young swan named Louis (Loo-EE) who can't make any sounds with his voice.

So he learns to play a musical instrument trumpet instead.



He also learns to read and write...



...and to use sign language.



When I sit down in the theatre, I will see the set.

A set is an imaginary place built on the stage where the story happens.

This play only has one set, even though the story takes place in many different locations.

Here is a picture of the set.



It looks something like the outdoors and something like a playground.

There are large rocks and a pond.

There are trees and a log that moves up and down like a see-saw.

There are two slides.  
The actors sometimes  
use them to move  
from higher areas  
of the set to lower  
areas.





Sometimes, the stage crew will move extra set pieces onto the stage. This will help me know we that the story has moved to a different place. In one scene, the crew brings in a large piece that looks like a swan boat from the Boston Public Garden.



This is a picture of some of the actors on a real swan boat.

In another scene, a spinning ball covered in tiny mirrors comes down from above the stage. This lets me know the scene takes place in the nightclub where Louis works.





In two scenes, the stage crew will set up a counter with a cash register on top...

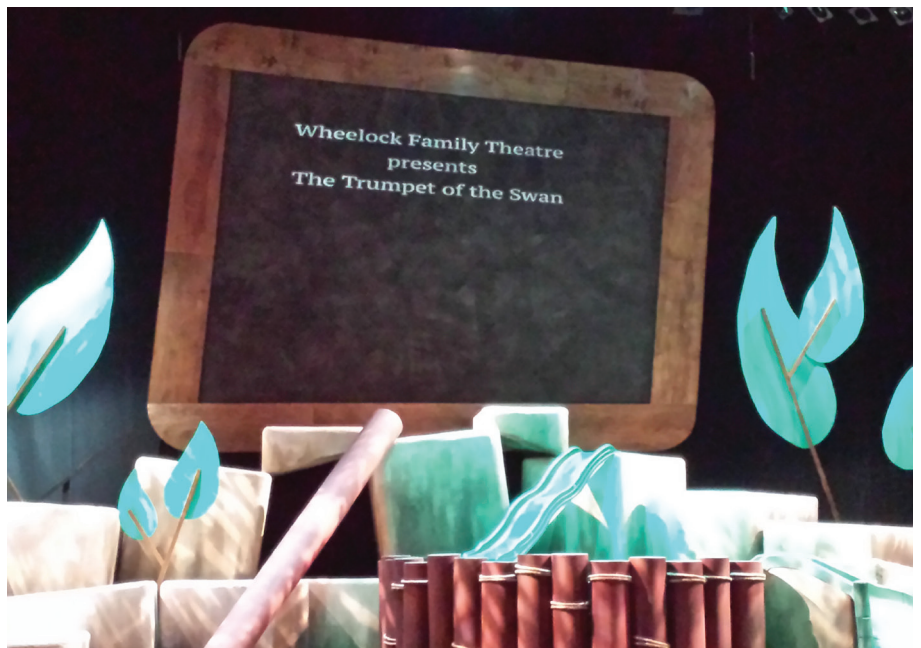


...and a large wooden frame that looks like a store window.

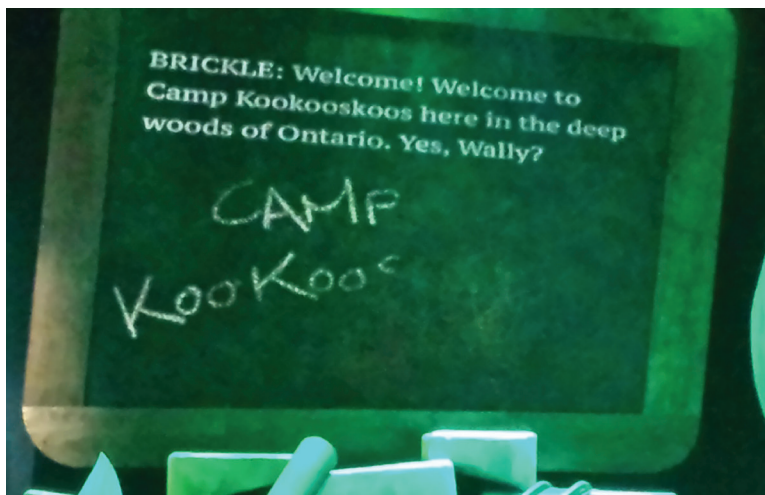


This means the scene takes place in the music store.

Above the whole set, at the back of the stage, is a huge chalkboard.



For much of the play, Louis wears a small chalkboard (or slate) around his neck. He uses it to write messages.



Whenever Louis writes a message on his slate, it will also appear on the giant chalkboard.

Throughout the show, the chalkboard will **also** show captions.

This means the words being spoken by all the actors will appear on the giant chalkboard behind them.







I will know that the play is about to start when the lights in the room get darker and the lights on the stage get brighter.

The audience will get very quiet.

It is important that I try to be quiet during the show, so I can hear everything.

This is Louis's human friend Sam Beaver. He is the narrator of this story.



He tells us what happened as he remembers it from his boyhood.

Adult Sam is on stage most of the time, and tells the story by talking directly to the audience.

Young Sam is a character in the story he tells.







This actor is named Danny and he plays Adult Sam.

He also plays the grain man; Mr. Brickle the camp director; and a few other characters.

I will know Danny is being Adult Sam whenever he puts on his baseball cap.

This actor is named Sebastian and he plays Young Sam.



Adult Sam and Young Sam are both human characters. There are lots of other human characters in the story.



The actors who play them all wear regular human clothes for their costumes.

Some actors play animals. They wear costumes that look \*mostly\* like regular clothes, but have extra parts to them, like animal ears or a cape that looks like wings.

I will usually be able to tell which characters are animals because they will move around the stage like animals.

The actor playing the frog will hop like a frog.



The actor playing the bobcat will sneak like a bobcat.



The actor playing the fox will crouch like a fox.



The actor playing the sparrow will swoop and hop like a sparrow...





...and the actors playing swans will leap and swirl gracefully like swans.

A young actor named Georgia Odle plays Louis as a cygnet (a baby swan).



This actor is named EJ and he plays Louis as a grown-up swan.





This is Jaime. He plays Louis's father, Cob. (Cob is also the word for a male swan.) Jamie plays a human in a few scenes too.

This is Caroline. She plays Louis's mother, Cygnus. (Cygnus is also the word for a female swan.) She also plays a human in a few scenes.



This is Jordan Clark. She plays a girl swan named Serena. She also plays a police officer in some scenes.

Some of the actors in this play are adults...



(Don't worry. Danny isn't really hurt in this scene. He is just pretending to be hurt.)

...some are teenagers...



...and some are children.

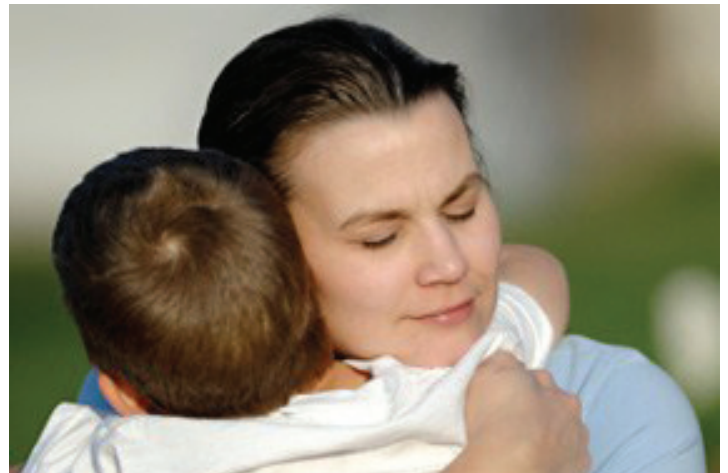


Even though I might be scared, I know that these actors are all nice people and they will not hurt me.

If anything is too loud, I can cover my ears.



I can hug or hold hands with my mom or dad or with someone else who came with me to the theatre.



If I need to take a break, I can go into the lobby, or go to a quiet, cozy space nearby.



If I need something to hold onto, I can ask the usher for a squishy toy.



During the play, Louis wears a lot of things around his neck. First Sam gives him a slate, so he can write on it to communicate with others.



Soon he gets a brass trumpet...

...then a life-saving medal on a ribbon and a money bag.



Louis goes to school and learns to read and write.



He also learns to use American Sign Language (ASL). He uses ASL to talk with his teacher, with Sam, and with some other humans. Adult Sam translates the signs for us by speaking everything Louis signs.



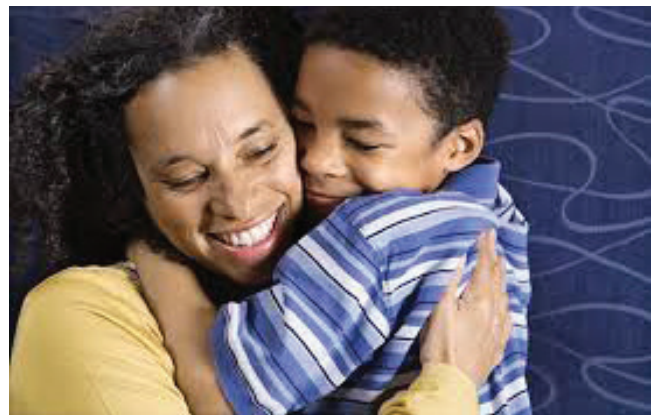
When Louis plays the trumpet, the music may be a bit loud, but I will be ready for it. Whenever Louis puts the trumpet to his lips, there will be trumpet music.



If it is too loud, I can cover my ears.



I can hug or hold hands with my mom or dad or with someone else who came with me to the theatre.





If I need to take a break, I can go into the lobby, or go to a quiet, cozy space nearby.



If I need something to hold onto, I can ask the usher for a squishy toy.

Sometimes characters come down the stairs from the stage, and walk in the aisles. If they walk near me, I may be excited, but I won't worry. I know these actors are nice people and will not hurt me.



I will stay in my seat and watch. Soon the actors will go back up on the stage.

Sometimes characters in the story may be sad or scared or hurt, but I won't worry. They are just actors pretending to be sad or scared or hurt.



During one scene in Act 1, Cob crashes through the window of the music store and steals a trumpet.

There will be a loud sound like glass breaking, but I won't worry. There won't be any real glass on the stage and no one will get hurt.



At the end of a scene or a song, some people will clap. Clapping tells the actors that I liked their performance.

If I want to clap, I can. I don't have to clap if I don't want to.





If the any sounds are too loud, I can always cover my ears.



I can hug or hold hands with my mom or dad or with someone else who came with me to the theatre.



If I need to take a break, I can go into the lobby, or go to a quiet, cozy space nearby.

If I need something to hold onto, I can play with a squishy toy.





In the middle of the play, we will have a break.  
The break is called Intermission.



During the Intermission, lots of people will get up from their seats, and go back to the lobby.

I can go to the lobby if I want to.  
I can also stay in my seat or go to the quiet, cozy space.

I can ask for a snack. I can eat my snack in the lobby or outdoors. But there is no eating or drinking inside the theatre.



I can ask to use the bathroom if I need to.

If I am thirsty, I can ask to use the water fountain.



After Intermission, everyone will come back to the theatre and sit down in their seats again.

It will get darker and quieter again, just like at the beginning of the play.

It is important that I try to be quiet, so I can hear everything.

The actors will come back on stage to finish telling the story.



During one scene in Act 2, Mr. Watson, the music store owner will use a rifle to shoot at Cob.

There will be a loud sound like a gun shot, but I won't worry. It is just a pretend gun and a recording of a bang sound. No one will get hurt.

If this is too loud, I can cover my ears or play with my squishy toy.

I can hug or hold hands with my mom or dad or with someone else who came with me to the theatre.

At the very end of the play, all of the actors will come out on stage and bow.

This is called a curtain call.



People will clap a lot, so the actors will know how much they liked the play. Sometimes people will stand up and clap.



If I want to clap, I can.

I don't have to clap if I don't want to.





When the play is over, we will go back to the lobby. It might be crowded.

I will be patient as we move through the crowd.

Sometimes, there is a red carpet in the lobby after the show. Then the actors come to the lobby in costume.

If I want to, I can say hello to the actors. If I want to I can get my picture taken with them.

I don't have to say hello to the actors or get a picture taken.



After this we will leave Wheelock Family Theatre.

Going to the theatre is very exciting!



I hope we will have a great time when we go to see **The Trumpet of the Swan!**

This social story is a publication of the *Wheelock Family Theatre Access and Inclusion Program.*

We hope you found it helpful!

