

Family Guide

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Welcome to the **Walton Arts Center Performance Guide**, published by the Programming department of Walton Arts Center. This guide is designed to enhance your learning in the arts. Enjoy the performance, and thanks for being part of the 2008-09 Kleenex © Kids Series.

Stellaluna



How can we be so different and feel so much alike? Through imaginative puppetry, music and storytelling, a tiny bat's journey towards self-discovery is revealed. Live performance of children's stories extends the learning of readers.



Walton Arts Center
life is sweet



Part of the Kleenex[®] Kids Series

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Turn off your cell phone, turn on your imagination! Enjoy the show and don't miss out on the fun of reflecting. This guide suggests ways to support your child's creativity while having fun as a family. Share your conversations and thoughts with us on our BLOG at <http://blog.waltonartscenter.org>

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Stellaluna art work used with permission.

Ready, Set, Show



Speeltheater Holland is the premier puppet theater in the Netherlands. Onny Huisink and Saskia Janse created the production of *Stellaluna* with The Seattle Children's Theater. Original music was composed by Guus Ponsioen.

About the Performance

Janell Cannon wrote *Stellaluna* in 1994 to transform young people's fear of bats into informed affection. She also wanted to share a story about a friendship between two different kinds of creatures, a bat and baby birds.

The play is based on the book and is performed by 5 actors. The actors portray both human characters and puppet characters on stage. They sing, dance, play the piano and/or sign-language interpret. As puppeteers, the actors use their whole body to manipulate the puppets expressively. The audience sees the puppet and puppeteer together onstage. When the puppet *Stellaluna* is flying the audience has the feeling that the actor is flying also. Puppeteers are skillful at keeping attention focused on the puppet.

Seeing the performance of *Stellaluna*, children more deeply understand the written text.



Learning Activities

Words, Vocabulary, Pictures and Thoughts

BEFORE reading the book and seeing the play, make a list of words you think of when you hear the word “bat.” Write down all responses. Draw a picture in response to the word “bat.” Discuss experiences you may have had with bats. Save lists, pictures and notes from the discussion.

AFTER the play, make a list of words and draw a picture you associate with the word “bat”. Share the original list and picture. Are there differences? Why or why not? How did the play change your feelings about bats? What would you like to learn about bats?



Stellaluna is an amazing character. Her story is about exploring two worlds, the bird world and the bat world. What questions would this character ask if she could talk to you?

Character Interview

After reading the book and seeing the performance, use your acting skill in a role-playing drama. In role drama, pretend to be characters in the story. Role drama is improvised based on your prior knowledge of the story and performance, so there is no script.

One person will:

- Play the role of the imaginary reporter of an imaginary news network.
- Select the text to be examined and the reading comprehension objectives.
- Ask questions.

Children will portray the characters of Stellaluna, Mother Bat, Birds Flitter, Flap and Pip or Mother Bird:

- Review the basic plot of the story.
- Select a character to play, then communicate the character’s thought and feeling.
- Act the answer to questions as if they are asked.

Role playing for comprehension helps readers:

- Clarify the story or performance
- Inquire for deeper meaning
- Discover new insights or possibilities



Language and Science Activities



Simile:

Stellaluna's wings are described "as limp and useless as wet paper". When we use words "like" or "as" to compare something, it is called a simile (SIM-uh-lee). Work in groups of two and write down four similes. Share your similes with your whole group. One person will take on the role of "announcer" and the other will play the "actor" and create an image of the simile using his/her body. Children should take turns as "announcer" and "actor".

Onomatopoeia:

While reading *Stellaluna* aloud, point out when the author uses sounds in the story. A word whose sound is like the sound the word names is onomatopoeia (ON-no-MA-tuh-PEE-uh). Words like "Flump!" and "Plop!" are both examples that are in the story. Prepare for the performance by asking students to listen for the times when the actors use sounds to help tell the story.

Make connections to everyday life by asking children how their life and learning is similar to the experiences described in the story.

Make connections between the text of the story and children's personal experiences. After the performance make connections between the text and the performance.

Math and Science:

Time Estimation – Estimate the amount of time *Stellaluna* lived with the birds by researching how long it takes a baby bat to mature and be able to fly.

Build a Bat House – As a family build bat houses for placement in the backyard, schoolyard and all around town. Go to www.batconservation.org to learn all about the importance of bat houses, how to build one and hang it properly.

Sensory Images:

Develop sensory images to enhance understanding. Writers use multiple senses to create mental images when they are read. Create a puppet show in your head to visualize the setting, characters and action. Imagine the textures, sights and sounds described in the *Stellaluna* Use vocabulary in the yellow box below.

Stellaluna vocabulary

Clutch	to hold on tightly
Downy	soft like fine, fluffy feathers
Limp	ready to bend or droop
Graceful	with beauty & ease of movement
Clumsy	lacking grace or skill in motion



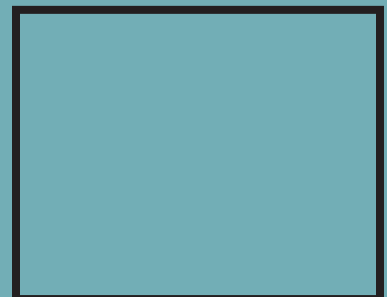
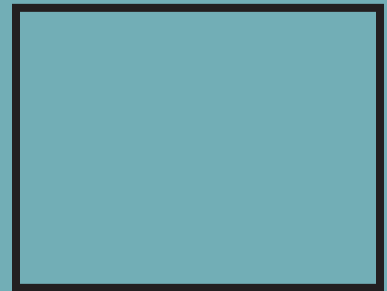
Family Activity Page

> 1. Read the sentences below.

- Plop! The bat eats a bug.
- The bat falls into the nest.
- Momma bird is mad at the bat.
- The birds and bat can fly.
- Momma bat finds the little bat.
- The birds are happy to see the bat.

> 2. Put *Stellaluna's* story in order by putting a 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 in each box above to show the right order of the sentences.

> 3. Draw a picture of your favorite sentences in the squares.





On Line Resources:

- > www.speeltheater.nl/Ehome.html
Speeltheater's official web-page
- > <http://ca.youtube.com/watch?v=PvIhEanPuX8>
8-minute video of the original production translated into English
- > <http://www.batcon.org/home/default.asp>
Bat Conservation International
- > <http://www.speeltheater.nl/Estellarec.html>
Seattle Times review of Stellaluna
- > www.batconservation.org
learn how to build a bathouse

Arts Education Resources:

- www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org
- www.kennedy-center.org/education/cuesheets/home.cfm

Read and Discuss:

- > Read "Bat Notes" at the end of the book and discuss with children:
Discuss the friendship between Stellaluna and the birds. What obstacles might there be to continuing the friendship?
Discuss what might have happened to Stellaluna and the birds if Stellaluna had not found her mother. Would Stellaluna have tried to continue behaving like a bird? Would the birds have tried to behave like bats? Would Stellaluna have returned to her bat ways as she got older?

Ask if the children's feelings about bats have changed since reading this book. How do they feel about owls, typically? Discuss the owl's role and image in this story. Talk about stereotyping and how the seemingly bad actions of a few can lead to labels for a whole group.

Group Discussion:

In small groups choose an animal that is often thought of negatively (snakes, rats, owls). Tell the children that they must tell or draw a story that will change people's feelings about this animal.

After the Performance:

- Talk about:
- > Tell me what happened in the story.
 - > What did you notice about the scenery and characters?
 - > In what ways did the performance differ from the storybook? In what ways similar?
 - > How did the actors portray each character? Show me how you would play each of the characters. What choices would you make and why?
 - > How did the music help tell the story? Think of a moment in the play and describe the music. Show me with your body – how the music sounded.
 - > How did the performance make you feel? Scared, excited, sad, etc.
 - > Is there anything about the performance that makes you wonder something?

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