Kindur

MAR 19—22
BAM Fisher

Compagnia TPO
Artistic Direction by Francesco Gandi and Davide Venturini
A co-production with Teatro Metastasio Stabile della Toscana

Study Guide written by Nicole Kempskie with excerpts from Compagnia TPO
DEAR EDUCATOR

Welcome to the Study Guide for the production of Kindur that you and your students will be attending as part of BAM Education’s School Time Performance Series. This magical tale follows the travels of three sheep as they make their annual journey through the Icelandic landscape. Three dancers bring these adventurous sheep to life accompanied by massive screens filled with gorgeous projections depicting the vast beauty of Iceland’s landscape. At this performance, students will not only sit back and watch the story unfold, they will also participate in the story, at times being invited onto the stage in order to trigger and co-create the sounds, images, music, and colors that make up this world. In addition, this performance provides a wonderful opportunity to explore the natural wonders and culture of Iceland in the classroom; its fairy-tale landscape of glaciers, volcanoes, waterfalls, and Northern Lights, as well as its mysterious elves and troublesome trolls.

“Great fun on multiple levels, and a love letter to the gift of our bodies’ senses, Kindur offers insights to participants of all ages.”

—Michelle Wang, Time Out Chicago

YOUR VISIT TO BAM

The BAM program includes: this study guide, a pre-performance workshop in your classroom led by a BAM teaching artist, and the performance (March 19-22; 90 minutes) immediately followed by a post-show discussion (30-40 minutes).

Please arrange for your students to stay and participate in this unique question-and-answer session.
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Arts experiences resonate most strongly for students when themes and ideas from the performance can be aligned to your current curriculum. This resource guide has been created to provide you with background information to help you prepare your students to see Kindur. Depending on your needs, you may choose to use certain sections that directly pertain to your curriculum, or use the guide in its entirety. We encourage you to photocopy and share pages of this guide with your students. In addition, at the end of this guide you will find suggested classroom activities that you can implement before or after attending the performance.

The overall goals of this guide are to:

☐ Connect to your curriculum with standards-based information and activities;
☐ Reinforce and encourage your students to exercise their critical and analytical thinking skills;
☐ and, provide you and your students with the necessary tools to have an engaging, educational, and inspiring experience at BAM.

THE PRODUCTION

THE COMPANY

Compagnia TPO is a visual theater company based in Prato, Italy. The company has been devising original visual theater works devoted to children’s audiences since it was founded in 1981. By using interactive technology every show is transformed into a “sensitive” environment where the thin border between art and play can be experienced. Dancers, performers, and the audience itself interact with each other and explore new expressive forms that go beyond language and cultural barriers. TPO’s shows are renowned for using vibrant visual sceneries which transform into interactive theatrical spaces, thanks to the use of sensors and digital technologies.

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS USED

TPO’s shows are created by a team of artists who use different forms (mainly theater, dance, and visual arts), as well as images projected onto large surfaces, and interactive technology. The stage space is considered to be a dynamic and responsive environment, and by using sensors (infrared video cameras, lights, and microphones) the audience is able to interact with it in the same way we interact with computers, smart phones, and tablets—through movement and voice. In Kindur, the dancers ‘paint’ and ‘play music’ on stage using their bodies. In addition, the children in the audience get to enter the playing space and explore it, experimenting with the way the environment responds to their own voices, bodies, and movements.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Each student will be given a special heart as they enter the theater. It is a woolen heart that lights up when it’s time for them to take an active part in the performance. In some cases a few hearts will light up and those children will be invited on stage in small groups, at other times all the hearts light up at the same time and the entire audience will stand and interact with the dancers from their seats.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Directed by:
Davide Venturini and Francesco Gandi
Choreographed by:
Anna Balducci, Paola Lattanzi, Erika Faccini
Written by:
Stefania Zamiga
Digital Design:
Elsa Mersi
Computer Design:
Rossano Monti
Sound Design:
Spartaco Cortesi
Computer Engineering:
Martin von Guten
Costumes:
Fiamma Ciotti Farulli
Scenery/Props:
Livia Cortesi
Sound/Light/Video:
Massimiliano Fierli and Andrea Fincato
See the Classroom Activities on page 7 for an Introductory Activity that uses these scene descriptions. All words in CAPS are defined in more detail on the next two pages.

SCENE 1: Rèttir
It is September in ICELAND. The sound of scampering around and shuffling in the mud can be heard. On stage there is a round space. In Icelandic it is called RÈTTIR, and it’s the sheep’s meeting point after their long summer journeys.

SCENE 2: The Breathing Pen
It is getting dark and the sun is setting. It is autumn! There is some wind moving the grass. The sheep start breathing and as they do, the turf houses behind them start to “breathe,” too! These turf houses are the pens the sheep will spend the winter in.

SCENE 3: The Wind is a Wolf
Now it is winter. All the sheep are inside the pen because outside there is a bitter wind coming straight from the GLACIERS. The sheep move here and there, afraid of their own shadows in the middle of this windy night.

SCENE 4: The Sheep’s Dream
When the winds die down, it begins to snow. It would be impossible for the sheep to be outside. The only thing they can do is lie down, sleep, and dream. But in their dreams they are outside playing, becoming as light as snowflakes.

SCENE 5: Northern Lights
The sheep are still fast asleep. They dream of painting with their bodies. As they move they leave streaks of colors all around the stage, just like the NORTHERN LIGHTS that appear in the sky during the long winter nights in Iceland.

SCENE 6: Spring
Spring has come and the sheep can leave their pen. Now there is light and there is sun. There are many busy bees buzzing around and lots of puddles to jump in as the RAVENS fly about.

SCENE 7: The Journey
It’s time to leave, time to go away. Our sheep’s journey through Iceland begins. On stage you can see valleys, mountains, and rivers. The weather keeps changing. Near a beach there’s a desert of stones.

SCENE 8: Trolls
The sheep meet up with stone giants that are very ugly. Sometimes they do funny dances because. They are TROLLS and they might be the guardians of a volcano.

SCENE 9: The Volcano
During their long journey, the sheep also have to face a VOLCANO spitting fire like a dragon. The sheep have to run from one place to another to avoid being burnt. No part of the ground seems safe. The volcano is always ready to attack. But fire and ice live together in Iceland. Water stops fire and fire warms water, and in the end, a white cloud rises and hides everything.

SCENE 10: Waterfalls
We hear a big noise. The ground vibrates. Magnificent WATERFALLS appear and resound like a big musical instrument. The water leaps high and falls on the round.

SCENE 11: The Elves’ Party
The journey of the sheep is almost over. But why have they traveled all this way? To meet the ELVES and join their party! The elves are magical creatures hidden among the grass blades, but the sheep know just how to find them: you have to look around and see if there are hairy flowers called COTTON GRASS. Where there are hairy flowers, there are elves!
ICELAND: A MAGICAL LAND

ICELAND is an island in the North Atlantic Ocean, just below the Arctic Circle, between Greenland and the rest of Europe. It is a small country but it has many natural wonders: meadows and deserts, glaciers, volcanoes, waterfalls, and magical colored lights called “Northern Lights,” that fill the sky in the winter. During the winter, the nights are very long and in the summer, the days seem to be never-ending. It is also said that Iceland is the land where magical creatures like trolls and elves live.

As a class, look at Iceland on a map. Which continents and countries are near it? What do you think the weather is like there? How long do you think it takes to travel to Iceland from the United States?

RÉTTIR means ‘round up’ in Icelandic, and this is a special time in September when the sheep who have been wandering all summer are rounded up and taken back to the valley. Men on horseback, or sometimes jeep and helicopter, look for the sheep for three or four days and take them back to the round fence (also called rèttir) where they are collected. The villagers hold a big festival to celebrate this event and then find and group the sheep that they will be taking care of over the winter and bring them to their pen.

Learn more about Icelandic sheep here: http://www.isbona.com/icelandicsheep.html

GLACIERS make up close to 11% of Iceland. Glaciers begin to form when snow remains in the same area year-round and transforms into ice. New layers of snow bury and compress the previous layers, causing the icy snow to re-crystallize, and form tiny grains the size and shape of sugar crystals. Over time, the grains grow larger and the pockets of air between them get smaller and more packed, creating a dense mass of ice. Vatnajökull, the fourth biggest glacier in the world, can be found in Iceland. This glacier covers more than 8% of the country.

Share the photos of Vatnajökull found here: http://www.vatnajokulstjodgardur.is/english

WINTER nights in Iceland are very long. On the Winter Solstice (December 21), the shortest day of the year, night skies begin to darken around three o’clock in the afternoon and the sun doesn’t rise the next day until around noon.

Discuss with students what it would be like here if we only had a few hours of daylight in the winter.

NORTHERN LIGHTS, also called aurora borealis, are beautiful streaks of color that fill the night sky during the winter in countries near the North Pole. These lights are produced by the sun and its winds. The sun sends particles called ions that are charged with electricity into our solar system. These particles travel millions of miles per hour and when they encounter the Earth’s magnetic field, the Earth bounces them back. But some of these particles are able to make it into the atmosphere in areas near the poles, and when they do they clash with the atoms in the air creating beautiful ribbons of color in the sky.

Share the following NASA video about the Northern Lights with students: http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/videogallery/index.html?media_id=97423582

VOLCANOS can be found all over Iceland, often inside glaciers. There are 130 volcanoes in Iceland, mainly because Iceland lies on an ocean fault. A fault is a very deep breach that separates enormous pieces of land, and in this case, two continents—Eurasia and North America. As these pieces of land separate, they throw out lava causing volcanic eruptions. Over time that lava slowly becomes new land. That is how Iceland was formed. The most famous Icelandic volcano is Etna.

Explore volcanoes further with this lesson plan from PBS Nature: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/lessons/vibrant-volcanoes/lesson-overview/5159/

WATERFALLS can be found in various parts of Iceland during the summer, especially the north and west, when the enormous glaciers formed during the cold winters begin to melt.

Discuss waterfalls with students. Has anyone ever seen one? Swam in one? Where might we find waterfalls in New York?

COTTON GRASS is a kind of flower that looks like white fuzzy hair. It can be found in Icelandic meadows near marshes and bogs.

Share the following photograph of Cotton Grass with students: http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photo-of-the-day/cotton-grass-iceland/
ICELAND: ITS MAGICAL CREATURES

ICELANDIC SHEEP
While we may not think of sheep as being magical, the Icelandic sheep in Kindur truly are. (“Kindur” is the Icelandic word for sheep.) Sheep arrived in Iceland with its first inhabitants, who came from Denmark over a thousand years ago. The Icelandic sheep is one of the world’s oldest and purest breeds of sheep. The average ewe weighs 130-160 pounds, and the average ram weighs 180-220 pounds. Icelandic sheep sometimes have a special gene called the “Thoka gene” that results in them giving birth to triplets, quadruplets, quintuplets, and sextuplets regularly. As a breed, Icelandic sheep are very resilient when it comes to cold weather and they have strong immune systems. Unlike most sheep, they do not have a shepherd: they stay together inside pens during the winter and then travel and roam in the summer, surviving on pasture.

RAVENS
Ravens are very important in Icelandic culture and mythology. In the legends about Icelandic gods it is said that the powerful God Odin always had two ravens named Huginn and Muninn on his shoulders that served as his eyes and ears. Each day the ravens would fly out into the world, and each night they would return with news for Odin. That is why Odin is also called “The Raven God.” In another important story, Floki, an explorer looking for new lands through the northern seas, reached Iceland by following a flock of ravens. It was Floki who gave Iceland its name, meaning “land of ice.”

TROLLS
Many Icelandic people believe that trolls really exist. According to most legends, trolls were magical creatures who lived inside rocks and volcanoes. They were human-like in form, but inhumanly strong, huge, and ugly. They often guarded treasures and were good at metal-working. While there were many different types of trolls, one thing they all had in common was that they could only travel by night. If they were exposed to sunlight they would immediately turn to stone.

ELVES
According to the Icelandic sagas and Eddas (ancient Icelandic myths) elves were originally a race of minor gods associated with nature and fertility. It is believed that there are thirteen different types of elves living in Iceland and they can be the same size as humans or very tiny. Elves are usually invisible, but they can be seen if they choose to. They can be helpful and kind to those who do them no harm, and they will repay favors with favors. On the other hand, they can also be malicious and take revenge if mistreated. Iceland has an Elf School where Icelandic people and visitors can go to learn more about these tiny mythological creatures.
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

BEFORE THE SHOW....

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY
One of the unique aspects of Kindur is the visual art element—large projections that comprise the “set” and backdrop for the journey of the sheep. This activity will introduce students to the story elements in Kindur and activate their imaginations by allowing them to think about the visual aspects of the show.

Each student will need a blank sheet of paper, a pencil, and markers/crayons for this activity.

Using the Scene-by-Scene breakdown on page four of this guide, assign students a number 1 through 11. Tell students that they are going to design a “backdrop,” an image that could be the background for the scene that that corresponds to their number.

Read each scene description, and have students listen closely and think of ideas for their backdrops. They can even start sketching.

After all the scene descriptions have been read, provide students with a written copy of their scene description and let them create their images using pencil and markers/crayons.

Have students share their images with the class.

Look at photographs of Iceland and compare them to the drawings the students made, or alternatively, explore the geography of Iceland first and then do the activity.

ARRANGE THE DESKS IN THE CLASSROOM so that you have a large open space.

Have everyone find his or her own spot in the space.

Explain to the students that you are going to give them an emotion, and they are going to become a statue of their emotion using their bodies. Remind them that statues don’t move or talk. Examples of emotions that can be used are: happy, sad, exhausted, excited, scared, and confused.

Tell students that you will say the emotion and then count to three. By the time you get to three they should be frozen in their statue.

Say the emotion and count to three.

Walk around the space and tap a few students who have made great statues and ask them to remain frozen. Ask the other students to look and comment on what makes those statues so great. (How are they using their facial expressions? How are they using gestures? How are they moving? What might be happening for their “character” at that moment?)

Repeat the exercise with different emotions. In addition, you can repeat the activity using characters (sheep, troll, raven, elf) and geographical elements (glacier, volcano, waterfall).

Blueprint: Making Theater and Dance

AFTER THE SHOW....

MAGICAL LIGHTS
Native and indigenous cultures used legends and myths to try and explain the Northern Lights. In Finland they believed that the lights were caused by a magical fox that swept his tail across the snow and sprayed it up into the sky. Norwegians believed the lights were the spirits of old maids dancing in the sky and waving. The Inuit believed that the lights were the spirits of animals and sea creatures, and the Algonquian Indians of Canada believed that the lights were reflections from a huge fire built by the “Great Spirit.”

As a class, explore some of the myths associated with the Northern Lights. Share images of them with students and have them create or write their own legends about the Northern Lights.

CCR K-5 Writing 1-9; Speaking and Listening 1-6; Language 1-6; Blueprint: Making Connections

PHYSICAL STORYTELLING
There are many ways to tell a story, and some of the most engaging ones don’t use words at all. In Kindur, the story is told through movement, visual images, and sound. The following activity will give students the opportunity to experiment with non-verbal storytelling.

As a class, read the Norwegian folktale The Billy Goats Gruff found here: http://americanfolklore.net/folktale/2010/10/three_billy_goats_gruff.html

Put students into groups of four or five and assign each group one section of the story. Working together, students must create a one-minute movement sequence that depicts their section of the story.

This will entail deciding who is going to play which character, and creating a pattern of movement that can be repeated.

Have students share their movement sequences with the class in the order they appear in the story.

CCR K-5 Speaking and Listening 1-6; Language 1-6; Blueprint: Making Theater and Dance

In addition to these, you will find the following activities in the Student Guide that can be used before or after the performance:

ART ACTIVITY: NORTHERN LIGHTS

ONCE UPON A TIME
About BAM Department of Education & Humanities

BAM Education is dedicated to bringing the most vibrant, exciting artists and their creations to student audiences. The department presents performances and screenings of theater, dance, music, opera, and film in a variety of programs. In addition to the work on stage, programs take place both in school and at BAM that give context for the performances, and include workshops with artists and BAM staff members, study guides, and classes in art forms that young people may never have had access to before. These programs include Shakespeare Teaches, AfricanDanceBeat, AfricanMusicBeat, Dancing into the Future, Young Critics, Young Film Critics, Brooklyn Reads, Arts & Justice, and our Screening programs, as well as topically diverse professional development workshops for teachers and administrators.

BAM Education also serves family audiences with BAMfamily concerts, the BAMfamily Book Brunch, and the annual BAMkids Film Festival. In addition, BAM Education collaborates with the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation to provide an arts and humanities curriculum to students who perform on stage in BAM’s DanceAfrica program.

Humanities at BAM

BAM presents a variety of programs to promote creative thinking and ongoing learning. The Artist Talk series, in conjunction with mainstage programming, enriches audiences’ experience during the Next Wave Festival and the Winter/Spring Season. The Iconic Artist Talk series, launched as part of BAM’s 150th anniversary celebrations, features iconic artists and companies examining the evolution of their work at BAM over the years through on-screen projections of original footage and images from the BAM Hamm Archives.

In September 2012, BAM launched On Truth (and Lies), a series hosted by philosopher Simon Critchley that explores the ambiguity of reality with prominent artists and thinkers, as a co-presentation with the Onassis Cultural Center NY.

Humanities at BAM also include year-round literary programs: Unbound, a fall series presented in partnership with Greenlight Bookstore that celebrates contemporary books and authors from across the literary spectrum, and the ongoing Eat, Drink & Be Literary series in partnership with the National Book Awards, in the spring.

The department also hosts master classes, including the Backstage Seminar, a series of workshops on the process of theater-making with BAM’s production staff and guest artists.

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Nicole Kempskie is a playwright, lyricist and theatre and media educator. She currently manages the School & Family Programs at the Paley Center for Media, is a teaching artist for BAM, a lead facilitator for the Broadway Teacher’s Lab, and is an Adjunct professor in CCNY’s Education Theatre program. She has worked as a consultant and teaching artist for NYC DOE, Arts Connection, TADA, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Step-Up Drama, the McCarter Theatre, North Shore Music Theatre, Music Theatre International, Tams-Witmark, Disney, TheatreworksUSA, Broadway Classroom, and is the co-founder of Brooklyn Children’s Theatre. Her most recent full-length musical, Helen on 86th St., premiered Off-Broadway in the spring of 2010. She holds an MA in Theatre and Sociology from the Gallatin School at NYU, was a contributing writer and professional development leader for the DOE’s Moving Image Blueprint and served as a juror for the children’s division of the International Emmy Awards.

Images Courtesy of Compagnia TPO

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