

L'ARSENAL À MUSIQUE

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PLANET BAOBAB

Teacher's guide

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A Word from the Artistic Directors

We discovered Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's book, The Little Prince, when we were children. Upon the first reading, we were deeply touched by its intellectual richness and its sensitivity, and by this little boy from another planet. We read it over and over again, and each reading evoked new emotions and gave us new food for thought. Since then, we have become "grownups". In creating Planet Baobab, we wanted children to discover this classic tale that has moved us so and made us daydream.

It was a two and a half year journey from the onset of Planet Baobab's creation to its first stage presentation. Two and a half years of reflection and work-in-progress meetings. It became clear to us that the sentiments expressed in the book had to be conveyed through music. But how does one translate this brilliant work into a fifty-minute musical play? First, we decided to have the work adapted in order to bring out its substance while leaving space for the music. Michèle Marineau, a well-known author of children's books, welcomed this challenge.

For many years, we had been playing electronic instruments (digital sampler and MIDI percussions). We wanted to marry our electronic instruments to the orchestra's acoustic instruments. That is why we called upon two renowned Canadian composers: Denis Gougeon, who composed the orchestral score and Yves Daoust the electroacoustic music.

Planet Baobab is a lively, colourful and topical stage presentation. We opted for a multimedia presentation to translate its musical colours into visuals. We gave this mandate to visual effects designer Jacques Collin and to Bernard White, illustrator and lighting expert, who both practice their craft with Ex Machina, Robert Lepage's production company. For our part, to direct our movements on stage, we worked closely with Mazouz, a long-time collaborator. Everything being in place, the premiere was performed on April 30 2000 with the Orchestre symphonique de Québec. Today, Planet Baobab, in its versions, with orchestra or chamber ensemble and two soloists, or to recorded music with two soloists, continues to garner applause and praise from youth and family audiences.

The dream became reality, and it is with pride and emotion that we present our Planet Baobab.

We hope you enjoy the performance

***Lorena Corradi and Reggi Ettore
Artistic Directors***

The Composers and the Performers

The music for Planet Baobab was written by two Montreal-based Canadian composer, Denis Gougeon and Yves Daoust. Their music contemporary; as opposed to baroque music, for example, which was written between the 17th and 18th Century, and is still played today.

To compose the music for Planet Baobab, Denis Gougeon and Yves Daoust worked from the text adaptation of The Little Prince. They recreated musically what they “heard” and felt while reading the script.

Denis Gougeon composed the orchestral music. He depicted the emotions inspired by the text through the different families of orchestral instruments: string, wind, brass and percussion sections.

Yves Daoust composed the electroacoustic part. Just like a sculptor selects and works with raw material to create a work of art, the electroacoustic composer listens to environmental sounds. He records them, sculpts and organizes them, using recording and sound system devices. The electroacoustic purists dispense with the performer and record their work on tape and broadcast it through speakers. In this instance, Planet Baobab’s soloists, Lorena Corradi and Reggi Ettore play an important part in the show by performing the electroacoustic musical score on stage.

During the performance, Lorena Corradi plays the digital sampler, an instrument that faithfully reproduces samples of any sound. The sounds can be recorded in the sampler, either with a microphone or directly from a laser disc, a tape recorder or a synthesizer. These recorded sounds are saved onto computer discs and are then fed into the instrument. When the musician plays the keyboard, the samples are reproduced.

Reggi Ettore plays MIDI percussions. The percussion controller is a computerized percussion instrument which controls the sounds contained in the sampler via MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface). This instrument is made up of thirteen interfaces on which the musician uses batons to reproduce the required sounds.

In performance, Lorena and Reggi are called “soloists” due to the fact that they play “solo”, that is alone, with or without the orchestra’s accompaniment.

Planet Baobab

Planet Baobab is an original musical work for orchestra and two soloists, inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's book, *The Little Prince*. Since its publication in French as *Le Petit Prince* in 1943, the book has sold millions of copies and been translated into more than a hundred languages, including Wolof (Senegal), Tifinagh (Algeria), Sinhalese (Sri Lanka) and Breton (France).

The Little Prince

A pilot with engine trouble lands his aircraft in the middle of the desert. The first night, he falls asleep in the sand, a thousand miles from any inhabited region. Yet, in the morning, he is awakened by a little voice asking: "If you please, draw me a sheep".

That is how the pilot became acquainted with the Little Prince, an enigmatic child who left his planet due to problems he was having with a flower.

Little by little, the pilot gets to know the Little Prince. The little boy regales him with stories about his planet and his flower, the people he met on his travels to different planets, the inhabitants of different planets, the geographer, the street lighter, a snake, a fox... Thanks to the fox, the Little Prince understood that his flower is unique in the world, and he has decided to return to her, up there, among the stars. "I am responsible for my rose", said he to the pilot who is saddened by his departure.

The Little Prince, a great story about friendship and loyalty.

... and its author

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was born in Lyon, France on June 29, 1900. When he was four years old, his father passed away and he went on to spend his childhood with his aunt. He studied in Switzerland, and in Paris where he applied to enter the naval academy. After failing the admission exam, he started studies in architecture.

In 1921, he began his military service in the air force, where he became a pilot. After leaving the military, he held several jobs. He started to write and, in 1925, he published his first book in which the action takes place in the world of aviation.

*In 1926, he was hired as a pilot for the Latécoère Society, an airline company specializing in the transportation of mail. It is during this period that he wrote *Courier South* (1929), and *Night Flight* (1931) which met with considerable success and won the Femina literary prize.*

*Soon afterward, the Latécoère Society went bankrupt and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry joined Air France. In 1938, he was seriously wounded while flying between New York and Tierra del Fuego. He then spent many months convalescing in New York, where he published *Tierra del Fuego*.*

*During World War II, he joined the Liberation Army and became a combat pilot. At the end of 1942, he got a commission from his American publisher to write a Christmas story. Saint-Exupéry spent an entire year finding the inspiration for the words and drawings published in *The Little Prince*, this marvelous classic that still today sells more than one million copies every year.*

*On July 31 1944, Saint-Exupéry flew out of Borgo in Corsica, never to return. He disappeared without ever knowing that *The Little Prince* would make him one of the most read authors of the 20th Century.*

Before the show

In the timeless story of The Little Prince rests a profound reflection on our world, as we know it. In order to help children understand its substance, we propose activities for discussion and reflection, based on passages they will hear during the performance.

The show is designed for audiences ranging in age from 6 to 12 years. We have not divided the activities by age group, because we believe that the activities and discussion subjects should be explored and discussed by everyone in order to capture the essence of the show. Teachers are encouraged to select and foster discussions according to the students' age group. The groups should reflect on the broad themes in the show, focusing on what they find moving and meaningful. These preliminary activities will ensure a better understanding and a greater appreciation of the show.

We shall first explore the musical universe of Planet Baobab by introducing ideas that are particular to the composition and to the orchestra.

To prepare the students, have them listen to the excerpts from the compact disc and allow them to discover the instrumental pieces in order to become familiar with the score.

Composers are musicians who invent music. Just as a painter selects colours for his canvas, the composer uses the sounds and colours of musical instruments to express his emotions. On their scores, they write down musical notes or signs for musicians to follow when they perform the work in question.

ACTIVITY : relative eras and notes

Have the children listen to three musical excerpts of your choice, in different styles: for example: baroque, jazz, or contemporary music.

- ***Divide the class into three teams;***
- ***After listening to the musical excerpts, ask each team to draw, as a group or individually, what they feel.***
- ***Invite the children to discuss the differences between each musical style.***
- ***Identify each style of music according to its era:***
- ***Baroque music: from 1600 to 1750; palaces, nobility, court, kings and queens.;***
- ***Jazz music: slavery, Southern United States, turn of the 20th Century, brass bands;***
- ***Contemporary music: technological progress, noise, speed, openness to the world.***
- ***Guide the discussion toward the composers. Make them aware that the composer's music is a reflection of the era in which he lives and from which he gets his inspiration.***
- ***Compare the sketches with themes of the times, and point out the differences and similarities.***

Meet the Orchestra

The word 'symphony' comes from the Greek; it means 'sounding together'. In this sense, the members of a volleyball team could be said to be in symphony when they are playing well together as a team. However, musically, the word is associated with a form of music that requires more than one instrument to play each part of a score (thus we usually see a group of violinists all playing the same part, while the other string, brass, wind and percussion instrumentalists play their own part of the same composition).

An orchestra is any group of performers playing the instruments required for a particular work. Thus you can have a jazz orchestra, a gamelan or a string orchestra. The modern symphony orchestra, developed in the early 1800's when orchestras were centered on keyboard instruments, evolved into the instrument groupings we are familiar with today, the focus being on the sound of strings. Other less common instruments and sound makers might also be invited to join the orchestra.

On Stage

For evening concerts, the musicians usually wear formal dress : tails and white tie for men and a long back dress or skirt for women. For matinée concerts, they usually dress more casually or wear a business suit.

Seating arrangements

The musicians are seated in a semi-circle so that they can all see the conductor over their sheets of music which are placed on 'desks' that are called music stands. The two soloists take place at centre stage, in front of the conductor.

The Conductor

Conductors work in many ways. Some beat time regularly, others gesticulate the phrasing, tempo and dynamics with their entire bodies. Some use a baton or roll of paper, others simply use their hands and fingers. Teachers will find much in common with conductors; they can keep their ears and eyes on everyone in their charge at the same time.

In Planet Baobab, Denis Gougeon wrote the music for the following instruments :

Winds :

*2 flutes (the second one also plays the piccolo)
2 oboes
2 clarinets in B flat (the second one also plays bass clarinet)
2 bassoons*

Brass :

*4 French horns
2 trumpets in C
1 tenor trombone*

Strings:

*First violins
Second violins
Violas
Cellos
Double basses*

Percussion 1:

*Snare drum
Glockenspiel
Rain stick,
Mark-tree
Whistle
Percussion 2:
Vibraphone
Bass drum
Hi-hat cymbal
Maracas*

The Little Prince and His World

ACTIVITY : Matters of Consequence !

The pilot is busy repairing the engine of his aircraft. The following excerpt relates the conversation started by the Little Prince, to find out whether the sheep the pilot has drawn for him would eat the rose on his planet. This passage is very important because it reveals that the Little Prince loves his flower more than anything.

CD Track # 4

Little Prince - A sheep -- if it eats bushes, does it eat flowers too?

Pilot - A sheep eats anything it finds in its reach.

Little Prince - ... Even flowers that have thorns?

Pilot - Yes. Even flowers that have thorns.

Little Prince - Then the thorns -- what use are they? The thorns -- what use are they?

Pilot - Thorns are of no use at all. Flowers have thorns just for spite!

Little Prince - Oh! I don't believe you! Flowers are weak creatures. They are naïve. They reassure themselves as best they can. They believe that their thorns are terrible weapons.... And you actually believe that the flowers...

Pilot - Oh, no! No, no, no! I don't believe anything! I answered you with the first thing that came into my head. Don't you see -- I am very busy with matters of consequence!

Little Prince - Matters of consequence! You talk just like the grown-ups!. You confuse everything... you mix everything up together... . I know a planet where there's a certain red-faced gentle man. He has never smelled a flower! He never looked at a star! He has never loved any one! He has never done anything in his life but add up figures. And all day he says over and over, just like you: "I am busy with matters of consequence!" ...and that makes him swell up with pride. But he is not a man -- he is a mushroom!

ACTIVITY : Matters of Consequence !

Pilot - A what?

Little Prince - A mushroom! . Flowers have been growing thorns for millions of years.. For millions of years, the sheep have been eating flowers just the same. And is it not a matter of consequence to try and understand why the flowers go to so much trouble to grow thorns which are never of any use to them? Is the warfare between the sheep and the flowers not important? Is this not of more consequence than a fat red-faced gentleman's additions? And if I know -- I, myself -- one flower which is unique in the world, which grows nowhere but on my planet, but which one little sheep can destroy in a single bite some morning, without even noticing what he is doing...Oh! You think that is not important!...

The text illustrates the dichotomy between the Little Prince's universe and that of the pilot. The Little Prince's concerns and values differ from those of the pilot, and vice versa. In a way, it reveals the contrast between the world of children and adults.

You could invite the children to discuss their worries or concerns and their relationship with adults.

- What is a "matter of consequence" for the pilot?
- What is a "matter of consequence" for the Little Prince?
- Which, in your view, appears to be the most serious?
- For you, what are "serious matters, or matters of consequence"?
- What is the difference between your worries and those of your parents? Your friends? Your siblings?

In this excerpt, the Little Prince also speaks about the rose that he loves more than anything and that he wants to protect. The rose is the central element of the story, since it is because of her that the Little Prince left his planet and it is because of her that he wants to return to his planet.

- Do you think the Little Prince is in love with his rose?
- What does "being in love" mean to you? Can one be in love with a flower?
With a pet animal? With a person? With an object?
- Have you ever been in love? Did it make you happy? Or sad?

ACTIVITY :

The Taming

CD - Track # 11

Since his arrival on Earth, the Little Prince feels very much alone and he is searching for a friend. When the fox appeared, the Little Prince thought he was beautiful and asked him if they could play together. But, as the following excerpt demonstrates, the fox refused because he is not tamed.

The Fox - To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need of me. To you, I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world..

From this excerpt, what does “tame” mean?

- Ask the children to look up the definition of the word “tame” in the dictionary.*
- How do you choose your friends? According to their language, the colour of their skin, the sports they practice, or the music they listen to?*
- Do you tame your friends? Your cat? Your dog? Your bird?*
- In what way do you show others that you would like to be friends?*

CD track #13 Before the Little Prince’s departure, the Fox gave him a secret as a gift :

The Fox - It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye. It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important. You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.

Invite the children to discuss and to understand the meaning of this “secret”.

ACTIVITY : The Snake and His Riddles

After having visited several planets, the Little Prince arrived on Earth, in the desert of Africa. He heard a golden coil the colour of moonlight, hissing in the sand: it was the snake.

CD - Track # 9

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>Little Prince</i> | <i>- What planet is this on which I have come down?</i> |
| <i>The Snake</i> | <i>- This is the Earth; this is Africa.</i> |
| <i>Little Prince</i> | <i>- Ah!...Then there are no people on the Earth?</i> |
| <i>The Snake</i> | <i>- This is the desert. There are no people in the desert. The Earth is large.</i> |
| <i>Little Prince</i> | <i>- Look at my planet. It is right there above us...</i> |
| <i>The Snake</i> | <i>- It is beautiful. What has brought you here?</i> |
| <i>Little Prince</i> | <i>- I have been having some trouble with a flower.</i> |
| <i>Little Prince</i> | <i>- Where are the men? It is a little lonely in the desert...</i> |
| <i>The Snake</i> | <i>- It is also lonely among men.</i> |
| <i>Little Prince</i> | <i>- You are a funny animal. You are no thicker than a finger...</i> |
| <i>The Snake</i> | <i>- But I am more powerful than the finger of a king.</i> |
| <i>Little Prince</i> | <i>- You are not very powerful. You haven't even feet. You cannot even travel...</i> |
| <i>The Snake</i> | <i>- I can carry you further than any ship could take you. Whomever I touch, I send back to the earth from where he came. I can help you some day, if you grow too homesick for your own planet. I can...</i> |
| <i>Little Prince</i> | <i>- Oh! I understand you very well. But why do you always speak in riddles?</i> |
| <i>The Snake</i> | <i>- I solve them all</i> |

- Ask the children to look up the definition of the word "riddle" in the dictionary*
- Discuss with them the snake's riddles and their meaning :*
 - It is also lonely among men*
 - I am more powerful than the finger of a King*
 - What did the snake mean when he said : "Whomever I touch I send back to the earth from where he came".*

The following activity may take place before, or after, the performance

The Little Prince comes from a planet barely bigger than a house, where there are only three volcanoes, some baobab shrubs and a rose. In fact, his planet is an asteroid, more precisely, Asteroid B612.

We suggest that you explore the theme of the Universe with the children. In a question and answer format, you can ask the children what they know about :

A Star ?

Contrary to planets that do not have their own light, each star is a celestial body that shines by its own incandescence. That is why we can see them in the sky with the naked eye despite their distance. The Sun, which is of average size, is a star like any other. From our viewpoint, the Sun-star does not appear at all like the thousands of small points of light that sprinkle the sky, that are visible only in the darkness. That is because the Sun is almost 300,000 times nearer to us than the closest other stars in the sky.

The Solar System ?

The Sun-star and everything that gravitates around it: the 9 major planets, including Earth, and the satellites that gravitate around each of these planets (except for Mercury and Venus which have no "moon"), the asteroids, comets, meteorites, dust grains, gases, and all sorts of particles

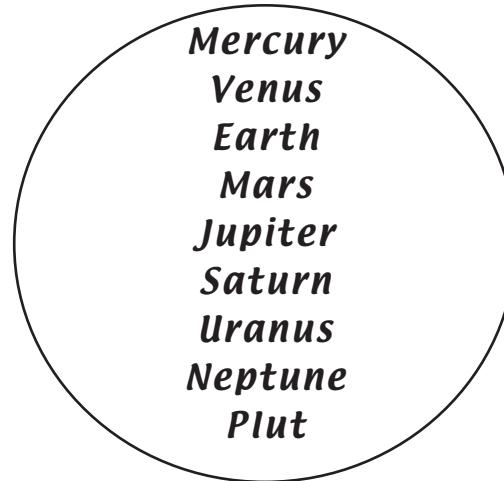
An Asteroid ?

A small planet invisible to the naked eye: that is why they are also called planetoids. These stars form an immense belt of approximately 500 million kilometres wide, located between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. Astronomers have identified a total of almost 3,000 asteroids, but it is estimated that there are extremely small asteroids that number in the billions.

A Comet ?

A comet is a star with a shiny nucleus and long streamers of gas. It is estimated there are 10 billion comets that roam in the solar system, a small number of which approach the Sun at specific times. The best known is Halley's comet, named after the astronomer who had predicted its cycle of passage near the Sun every 76 years; its last appearance was in 1986. In Canada, the 1990's were exceptional for those interested in the observation of comets: in 1996, we were able to observe the Hyakutake comet and the following year, the Hale-Bopp comet, the latter named after the two American astronomers who discovered it, and which reappears only every 3 or 4 thousand years

Can you name the 9 planets of the solar system in the order of their proximity to the Sun ?



To help your students memorize the names of planets in this order, you can use the following sentence :

My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas

The first letter of each word corresponds to the first letter of the planet's name :

My (Mercury), very (Venus), educated (Earth), mother (Mars), etc.

***** Ask the children to make a drawing of the solar system as they imagine it, including the Little Prince's planet. *****

Before his departure, the Little Prince said to the Pilot :

“At night, you look up at the stars. Where I live everything is so small that I cannot show you where my star is to be found. It is better like that. My star will be just one of the stars, for you. And so, you will love to watch all the stars in the sky... They will all be your friends.”

Have you ever looked at the sky at night, in the city or in the country ?

How did you feel?

Have you tried to count the stars?

To your knowledge, how many are there?

Do you believe the stars are close to Earth?

CD - Track # 16

AFTER THE SHOW

After the performance, students will surely have comments to make on what they have seen and heard. We propose themes to reflect upon with the students. These are only guidelines. The children will undoubtedly have other comments and emotions about other passages.

You could also review the points in the pre-performance activities.

Matters of Consequence: Was the Little Prince happy with his Rose? Why did he want to return to his planet?

The Taming : Did the Little Prince tame the Fox? The Pilot? His Rose? Why? How?

The Snake's Riddles : Do you think the Little Prince died? Do you believe the Snake helped the Little Prince to die? Why did the Little Prince want to die?

Stars in your Eyes : When you look up at the stars in the sky from now on, will you be seeing the same thing as before? Has the show changed your perception of the universe? How?

Suggest that the children draw the different planets visited by the Little Prince during his interplanetary journey.

It would also be interesting to ask them to make a drawing or sketch of the Little Prince and his planet, as they imagine them.

Send us their drawings

ACTIVITY : A sequel to the story

Invite the children to talk about or to write a short text about the Little Prince's return on his planet after his stay on Earth.

Has he found his Rose again?

What did he do with the sheep in the box?

Is he happy to be back on his planet?

Send us their stories

Just as we like to listen to our favourite music over and over again, we suggest that the music from Planet Baobab be played for the students throughout the school year.