

Spotlight on Learning

a Pioneer Theatre Company
Classroom Companion

Book by Thomas Meehan
& Bob Martin

Music by Mathew Sklar
Lyrics by Chad Beguelin
Based upon the New Line
Cinema film written by
David Berenbaum



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Approx. running time:

2 hours and 10 minutes, which includes a 15-minute intermission.

Student Talk-Back:

There will be a Student Talk-Back directly after the performance.



The Musical

When I was asked to direct *Elf—The Musical* at Pioneer Theatre, I was skeptical. I had never seen the movie or either of the two Broadway outings of the show. I have never been a fan of taking a beloved movie and putting it up verbatim on the stage. I was also terribly worried that my cynicism would spoil any of the good cheer that is required of these holiday shows. How untrue! I discovered upon viewing the movie and reading the musical that this story hit home with me in a very profound way.

The show, to me, is about family - both the natural family and the adopted family that you make when you have to leave the nest. When I moved to New York some years ago, I left a very close family unit to make my way in the world, much like Buddy. I arrived in New York with very few friends and no family members in the city. I am happy to say that within a short time frame I made a plethora of friends that became what you would call my core family. These members remained close to me over the years and were a great support unit for me as I struggled through the ups and downs of life in the big city. The newfound family members were not replacing my old family, but working alongside it.

In the show, Buddy leaves the comfort of his adopted family, the only family he has ever known, to venture out in the world to find his natural family. The nice twist that screenwriters used in the movie was that the adopted

Elf - The Musical

Runs:

December 6 - December 24 , 2013

Directed by Dan Knechtges
Choreographed by Liza Gennaro
Musical Direction by Tom Griffin

A note from Director Dan Knechtges

family was the one that accepted Buddy unconditionally and that his natural family had many reservations, about who Buddy is and what he represents. Who in real life hasn't gone through such struggles upon meeting new people?

The show also drives home that experience and love are the things you will remember most about Christmas. I have long forgotten what toy I received as a kid or what sweater I bought my father. But I do remember the meals, the laughter and the love of almost every single great Christmas of my childhood. After spending much time working with the designers, casting directors and actors, I can safely say that we have created a production that will be something I will long remember for years to come as a great Christmas experience. Cynicism abated!

I hope *Elf—The Musical* at Pioneer Theatre Company becomes one of your fond holiday memories. Merry

Libby Servais (Jovie) and Quinn VanAntwerp (Buddy) follow the yellow brick road...of Macy's. Photo by Alex Weisman.



Your Study Buddy - The Elf!

Buddy wants you to succeed in all sorts of subjects! Here are some questions, activities and think-it-overs for kids from one to 92 from the best Study Buddy ever.

Anatomy of an Elf

1. It took Buddy a while, but one day he pieced together that he's just not like the other elves in Santa's Workshop. What are some differences (between himself and any other elf) that Buddy should have picked up on?

Holiday Anthropology

2. How many different holidays can you think of to be included in the phrase "Happy Holidays?"

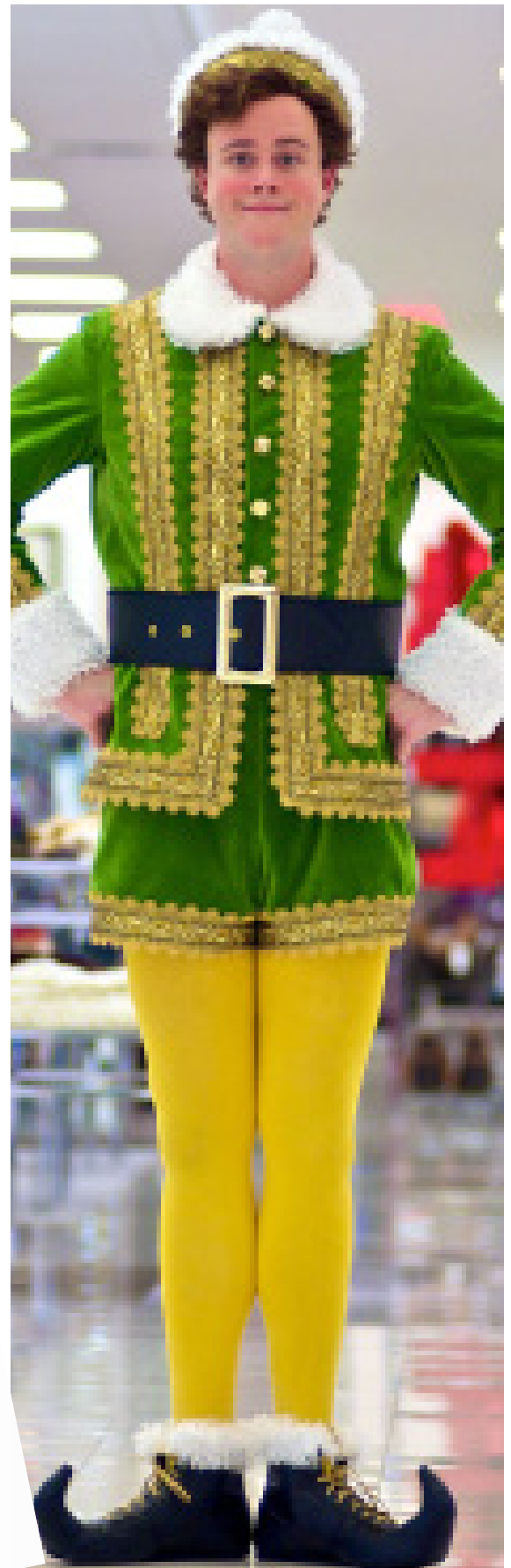
Long-itude

3a. Buddy's journey to find his dad takes him from the North Pole to New York City. Using an atlas or Google Maps, find out how far Buddy's trip was. How long do you think it took him? What kinds of terrain, animals, and other obstacles did he encounter along the way?

3b. There are actually different "types" of North Pole, including the Geographic (where Santa lives) and the Magnetic. What are the differences between them? Are there any other types of poles?

Elfish

4. On the next page is a description of a storytelling tool called "The Hero's Journey." How does Buddy's story in the show fit this literary pattern?



*Quinn VanAntwerp as Buddy the Elf.
Photo by Alexander Weisman.*

The Hero's Journey

Buddy's story follows a pattern of storytelling identified by the early 20th century writer Joseph Campbell (a friend and contemporary to John Steinbeck) as "The Hero's Journey."

"The Hero's Journey" appears in stories we have heard and have told many times—and across many cultures—for thousands of years. The circumstances change to make a familiar story new and exciting, and so we return to the story again and again, still able to enjoy it.

Some examples include *Alice in Wonderland*, *King Arthur*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Narnia*, *The Lion King*, *Spiderman*, *Superman* and *Harry Potter*.

The story of Buddy the Elf is very much the story of a hero on a journey.

Here's a synopsis of Campbell's literary theory:

Ordinary World – the circumstances in which the main character (the protagonist, or hero) has lived up to the start of the story are established. The hero is uncomfortable, uneasy, or suspects that something isn't quite right or complete in this world.

Call to Adventure – Something in the hero's world changes, and s/he must make a decision about

that change.

Refusal of the Call – The hero is afraid and the change, or skeptical of it, and resists the call to do something about the new situation.

Meeting with the Mentor – The hero meets with, or is introduced to, a seasoned traveler of the world who helps in some way – either with equipment, training, advice, or all three.

Crossing the Threshold – The hero takes up the call, and leaves her or his ordinary world for a new one with unfamiliar rules.

Tests, Allies and Enemies – The hero is tested in the new world, and with each new character s/he meets must decide which people to trust, fear or help.

Approach – The hero and his or her new

allies prepare for the most difficult part of the journey.

Ordeal – The hero confronts her or his greatest fear.

Reward – The hero is rewarded for going through the ordeal.

The Road Back – The hero is compelled to return home with the reward.

Resurrection – At the climax of the story, the hero completes her or his final test. S/he resolves the conflicting circumstances that have plagued her or him since the beginning.

Return with the "Elixir" – The hero returns to her or his old, familiar world with something from the journey that has the power to change that world in the same way it changed the hero.

Source: http://www.thewritersjourney.com/hero%27s_journey.htm

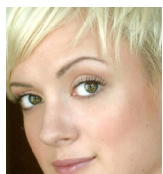


OUR EQUITY CAST

* Member of Actors' Equity Association



Paul Aguirre (Ensemble, Macy's Manager)



Laura Lee Anderson (Ensemble)



Eric Lee Brotherson (Ensemble)



Allyson Kaye Daniel (Ensemble, Deb)



Mary Fanning Driggs (Ensemble)



Tanesha Gary (Emily)



Rhett Guter (Ensemble)

DAN KNECHTGES (Director) is a Tony-nominated choreographer and director working in theater, opera, concert dance, television, film and music videos. Broadway credits include *Lysistrata Jones* (Direction and Choreography), *Xanadu* (directed by Chris Ashley, Tony nomination, Drama Desk nomination), Sondheim on Sondheim (directed by James Lapine), *110 in The Shade* (starring Audra McDonald) and *The 25th Annual Putnum County Spelling Bee* (directed by James Lapine). He's assembled a talented cast for this production.

PAUL AGUIRRE* (Ensemble, Macy's Manager, u/s Santa) *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (Papa Who) at Madison Square Garden. National tours: *Billy Elliot*, *Seussical*, *How to Succeed...and The Who's Tommy*. Potlatch in *Twist: The Musical* directed and choreographed by Debbie Allen. PTC: *In the Heights*.

LAURA LEE ANDERSON* (Ensemble) National Tour: *Will Rogers Follies* (u/s Z's Favorite). Regional: *Boys from Syracuse*, *Sweet Charity*, *Cabaret* and *My One and Only*.

ERIC LEE BROTHERSON* (Ensemble) has performed in 25 countries, 45 states, and over 100 cities worldwide. Tugger in the NW Premiere of *Cats*, Mike in PTC's production of *A Chorus Line*, and the Seattle production of *The Who's Tommy* (directed by Brian Yorkey).

ALLYSON KAYE DANIEL* (Ensemble, Deb) Favorite roles include: Church Lady Darlene in *The Color Purple*, Sister Margaretta in *The Sound of Music*, BJ in *Smokey Joe's Café*, and Penelope Pennywise in *Urinetown*. PTC debut.

MARY FANNING DRIGGS* (Ensemble, u/s Emily) Favorite credits include Annie Oakley in *Annie Get Your Gun*, The Narrator in *Joseph...*, Winnifred in *Once Upon a Mattress*, Charity in *Sweet Charity*, Lizzie in *Baby*, and Alonso in *The Tempest* (directed by Tony Kushner). This is her 17th PTC production.

TANESHA GARY* (Emily) Broadway: *Caroline or Change*. Film and television: *Bamboozled*, *Mr. Wonderful* and *One Life to Live*. Off-Broadway and regional: *Sheila's Day* at Lincoln Center, *The Piano Lesson*, *Clybourne Park*, and more. PTC debut.

RHETT GUTER* (Ensemble) Seven seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. PTC: *White Christmas*. Other credits: *West Side Story* (International Tour); *A Chorus Line* and *The Music Man* at The Paramount Theatre; *Les Misérables*, and others, at PCPA.

DANIEL MARCUS* (Santa Claus) Broadway: *1776*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Woman in White*, *Pal Joey* and *Urinetown* (original Officer Barrel). Off-Broadway: *The Fantasticks*. Other PTC: *Guys and Dolls*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Man of La Mancha*.

LANCE ROBERTS* (Ensemble, Greenway) Broadway: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* starring Scarlett Johansson, original casts of *Ghost*, *Sister Act* and *Peewee Herman on Broadway* (and HBO) as the King of Cartoons. TV: *Law & Order: SVU*, *Nurse Jackie*, *NYC 22*, *White Collar* and three movies with Jason Bateman, Tina Fey, Jane Fonda, Eliza Dushku and Mr. Al Pacino! n PTC debut.

ROBBIE ROBY* (Ensemble, Dance Captain) Favorite credits: *Dreamgirls* (with Jennifer Holliday). Tours: *The Little Mermaid*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *Fiddler on the Roof* (with Topol), *Joseph...*, *Starlight Express*, and as dance captain for the Broadway companies of *Hairspray* and *Billy Elliot*. PTC debut.

LIBBY SERVAIS* (Jovie) Broadway: *Wicked* (Glinda u/s) and *Lysistrata Jones* (Lysistrata/female standby). National Tours: *Wicked* (Glinda standby in San Francisco and original Munchkinland tour). Regional: *Legally Blonde* (Elle Woods), *1776* (Martha), *Hairspray* (Amber), *Pride and Prejudice* (Georgiana), *Hair* (Jeanie), *SideShow* (Violet) and *Company* (Susan). This is her PTC debut.

QUINN VANANTWERP* (Buddy) Broadway: Bob Gaudio in *Jersey Boys*, as well as in 1st National Tour and the Original Toronto cast. Film/TV: *Four Christmases*.

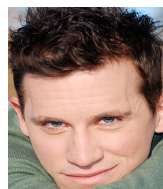
MARTIN VIDNOVIC* (Walter) Broadway: Tommy in *Brigadoon* (Tony Nomination), Nick in *Baby* (Drama Desk Award), Jud in *Oklahoma!* (L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award), A *Grand Night for Singing* (Backstage Bistro Award), Lun Tha in *The King and I* and Antinous in *Home Sweet Homer*, both starring Yul Brynner, and others. PTC: *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Light in the Piazza*.



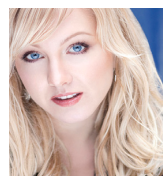
Daniel Marcus (Santa Claus)



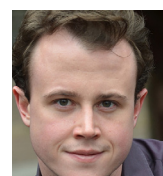
Lance Roberts (Ensemble)



Robbie Roby (Ensemble)



Libby Servais (Jovie)



Quinn VanAntwerp (Buddy)



Martin Vidnovic (Walter)