

Grumbling Gryphons Traveling Childrens Theater Repertoire

The Ghost Net: An Environmental Musical of the Sea (K-8)



Ghost Net premiered in 1990 as part of an environmental expo – “The Visit of the Mimi” held at Captain’s Cove Seaport in Bridgeport, CT, which thousands of school children attended. With the invaluable input by marine biologist Barbara Whitman and other environmental educators, Leslie Elias created a play that has served as a powerful vehicle for promoting awareness of our planet’s rapidly depleting oceans and endangered marine life. Since 1990 the show has toured the United States, receiving rave reviews for its beautiful artistry and timely message. Sixty of the ocean costumes were featured in

New York City’s 25th Anniversary of Earth Day. In Florida, The Grumbling Gryphons were instrumental in helping to get Amendment Three passed, which enforced the banning of net fishing. The Ghost Net was chosen to be the kickoff event for New England’s Coast Weeks as part of National Beach Cleanup Campaign. Says David Brown of Miami, “As an environmental educator for the past sixteen years and a marine science instructor for the past nine, I have not been able to find a program of comparable quality.”

The Myth of Persephone (Grades K-8)



The Myth of Persephone is a spellbinding dramatization of the ancient Greek myth, which tells the story of how the seasons came to be, and exposes children to the classical Greek myth in a highly entertaining and engaging way. Lord Pluto takes Persephone away from the earth and her mother, Goddess Demeter, and holds her captive in Hades, guarded by Cerberus, the Three-Headed Dog. The children in the audience become the Greek chorus, chanting, singing and helping the gods and goddesses rescue Persephone from the underworld. With their aid, Persephone returns from Hades and we all learn how the seasons came to be. Robert Flannagan who designed the

masks, also designs for the Muppets. This show opened in 1980 in New York City’s Central Park and has toured internationally delighting audiences ever since.

Native American Trickster Tales: Animal Legends (Grades K-6)



Native American Trickster Tales: Animal Legends developed with the cooperation of The Institute for American Indian Studies in Washington, CT. where it premiered for founders’ day on July 31, 1982. Says Trudy Richmond, former chief of the Schaghticoke Indians – “Your sensitivity to Native American life ways and culture is appreciated...thanks for the wonderful performance!” In 1989, this show was performed at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts for close to a thousand people. Children are spellbound by three humorous tales, which

tell how the brave and ingenious trickster animals–Raven, Skunk and Coyote–come to the rescue of the Indians. The sets, costumes and masks, songs and instrumental music, are all authentic representations of Plains Indian, Fox Indian, and Northwest Coast Native American cultures.

Anansi The Trickster Spider (Grades K-6)



A West African Folktale was featured at The American Museum of Natural History in New York as part of a celebration of Black History Month. Anansi retrieves stolen stories from Nyame the Sky God by tricking animals of the jungle and enlisting the help of the audience. Through pre-performance workshops, children become village dancers, monkeys, elephants, hippos, bees, crocodiles, spiders and more learning songs, chants and movement to perform in the show.

Hold Fast to Dreams: A Musical & Dramatic Celebration of Poetry! (Grades 4-8)

Performance and poetry collide in this creative collaboration of classic poems combined with students original work. Poems will be explored and expressed through movement, music, dance, and drama. Grumbling Gryphons actors will work with individual classes in a pre-performance poetry and drama workshops. Each actor will work with classroom students to generate ideas and come up with a short performance piece to share in the performance with Grumbling Gryphons. Well-known poetry that span the ages may include Shakespeare, Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, E.E. Cummings, Shel Silverstein, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Ogden Nash, Lewis Carroll and others) as well as modern day poetry (such as rap and new genres) in the performance, depending on time and age level. We will incorporate original work of the students into the performance.

The Magic of Poetry: A Dramatic Celebration and Grumbling Gryphons Performance! (PK-3rd grades)

Children will participate as actors in Grumbling Gryphons fantastical performance of poetry. From Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky, to Edward Lear's-The Owl and the Pussycat this unique theatrical production includes limericks, haiku and poems of many genres. This participatory performance will play with words, images, music, and movement and celebrate together the power of words and the imagination.

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About the Director



Leslie Elias, winner of Connecticut Office of The Arts 2018 Arts Hero Award and The Northwest CT Arts Council's 2018 CultureMAX Award for Arts Educator, is a playwright, actress, storyteller and theater director who has been teaching drama in schools, theaters and public venues for over 40 years. She is the artistic director of Grumbling Gryphons Theater established in 1980 and recipient of the 2003 Connecticut Governor's Arts Award. In 2011 she was recognized as a Teaching Artist and Solo Performer in the Directory of Connecticut Office for the Arts. Ms. Elias directs an annual theater arts summer camp in Cornwall, CT and has been an Artist-in-Residence in many schools throughout the United States.



Winner of Connecticut Governor's Art Award /

Leslie Elias, Artistic Director, 2018 Connecticut Arts Hero, 2018 CultureMAX Award for Arts Educator