A Very Electric Christmas brings to life an enchanting holiday story through puppetry, theater, dance, festive songs and a dazzling light show. Produced by Lightwire Theater, the show’s innovative approach to lighting makes use of brilliant electroluminescent wire to make characters magically appear out of the darkness.

The story introduces a young bird named Max and his family as they begin their journey south for the winter. When Max gets blown off course and ends up at the North Pole, he meets dancing toy soldiers, caroling worms and performing poinsettias that light up the stage in this delightful tale of family and friendship.

Lightwire Theater is internationally recognized for its signature brand of electroluminescent artistry and poignant storytelling. Based in New Orleans, the company continues to create and deliver innovative theatrical experiences to audiences worldwide.

About the performance

About NJPAC On the Mic

NJPAC On the Mic is an audio resource that takes SchoolTime performances to the next level. This podcast series features three exclusive, curriculum-aligned episodes for all of NJPAC’s 2022-2023 SchoolTime performances. On the Mic offers students the opportunity to engage their listening skills, deepen their understanding of the performance and learn about the process of bringing a live or recorded production to life. This immersive audio experience features a theme song by students in the NJPAC arts education program.

How to listen to this episode of NJPAC On the Mic

Scan the QR code above or visit: njpac.org/education-program to access the podcast and the following show notes:

Part 1: About | Pre-show audio, 6 minutes
Includes: An introduction to the performance, artists & venue, welcome message
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos
Additional writing by the team behind A Very Electric Christmas
Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino
Music from Epidemic Sound
Voiceover by Michael Aquino
Welcome message voiced by Ian Carney

Part 2: Connect | Post-show audio, 8 minutes
Includes: Reflection questions, history of light in holiday celebrations, a selection of vocabulary words
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos
Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino
Music from Epidemic Sound
Share-out prompt voiced by Ian Carney

Part 3: Spotlight | Post-show audio, 12 minutes
Includes: An exclusive interview with the artistic director of Lightwire Theatre, discussion starters
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos
Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino
Music from Epidemic Sound
Interview guest Ian Carney
## Inspired Ideas in the Classroom

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<th>Teacher Focus</th>
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<th>NJ Student Learning Standards</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare for the performance</strong></td>
<td>Watch the trailer for <em>A Very Electric Christmas</em> twice with your class. The first time, watch the trailer without sound and ask students to make observations about what they see. The second time, watch the trailer with sound and ask students to make observations about the vocals only. Ask students how the combination of both visuals and sound adds to their understanding of the show. Give an overview of the performance and have students solve the maze and physical activity in Activity Sheet 1.</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLA.R7, NJSLA.SL.1, Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7</td>
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<td><strong>Experience the performance</strong></td>
<td>After watching the trailer and learning more about the performance, complete the maze and physical activity in Activity Sheet 1.</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLA.R7, NJSLA.SL.1, Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7 Anchor Standard 8</td>
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<td><strong>Reflect, respond and read</strong></td>
<td>Have you ever seen a performance where the actors don’t speak? When you experience the show, listen and talk about how the story is brought to life using movement, light and sound. To practice understanding a story without dialogue, watch this cartoon.</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLA.SL.1, NJSLA.SL.2, Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1</td>
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<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Partner up with another classmate and discuss what parts of the performance you remember most. 1. What was your favorite part of the performance? 2. How would the story be different if you could see the actors and puppets? 3. How would the story be different if there was no music? 4. How do you think the puppets were being operated? 5. Can you demonstrate by using your own body?</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1 Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills 9.4.2.CL1 9.4.2.CL2</td>
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<td><strong>Originate</strong></td>
<td>Lightwire Theater uses recycled objects and turns them into something completely different. Challenge your students’ creativity by playing the game “This is Not a Pencil.” Start by holding a pencil and saying “This is not a pencil, this is a microphone!” Then pretend to turn the pencil into a microphone by passing it to the person sitting beside you. Then everyone goes around (or everyone uses their own) and each person comes up with something else the pencil could be and how it could be used. Any object can be used to play this game.</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1 Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills 9.4.2.CI1 9.4.2.CI2</td>
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<td><strong>Rehearse</strong></td>
<td>Have a class discussion about what the students remember from the performance. Create an anchor chart to record their observations, including any of the music that was used, specific scenes and characters.</td>
<td>Student Learning Standards - Science K-2-ETS1-2 Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1 Anchor Standard 2 Anchor Standard 3 Anchor Standard 4 Anchor Standard 5 Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills 9.4.2.CL1 9.4.2.CL2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Make magic</strong></td>
<td>Using recycled materials, found materials and art supplies provided by your teacher, create your own puppets! Your puppet could look like an animal, plant, food or something new that has never been seen before. Later you will be asked to have your puppet perform — so make sure it has a face and that you can move it around.</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLA.SL.1, NJSLA.SL.2, Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1 Anchor Standard 6 Anchor Standard 10 SEL: Self Awareness Sub-competency 01, 04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Activity Sheets

- **Activity Sheet 1**: Students will create puppet charades with their creations, either individually or in groups and using Activity Sheet 2 as a guide. As the students rehearse, remind them that the audience needs to see the puppets, not necessarily the puppeteers. You can encourage students to sit on chairs or the floor, and have the puppets on a desk or table to make it easier for the audience to see the puppets.

- **Activity Sheet 2**: Students will create puppet charades with their creations, either individually or in groups and using Activity Sheet 2 as a guide. As the students rehearse, remind them that the audience needs to see the puppets, not necessarily the puppeteers. You can encourage students to sit on chairs or the floor, and have the puppets on a desk or table to make it easier for the audience to see the puppets.

- **Activity Sheet 3**: Activity Sheet 3 helps students understand the importance of audience reflection and decision making.

- **Activity Sheet 4**: Activity Sheet 4 helps students understand the importance of audience reflection and decision making.

### Rubrics

- **Rubric 1**: Rubric 1 helps students understand the importance of audience reflection and decision making.

- **Rubric 2**: Rubric 2 helps students understand the importance of audience reflection and decision making.

### Additional Resources

- **Video**: Watch this video to make observations about what they see. The second time, watch the trailer with sound and ask students to make observations about the vocals only. Ask students how the combination of both visuals and sound adds to their understanding of the show.

- **Website**: Visit this website for more information about recycled arts.

### Instructions and Guidance

- **Activity Instructions**: Provide students with additional art materials like paper, markers, stickers, pipe cleaners and popsicle sticks to design and build their puppets.

- **Collect Recycled Materials**: Collect recycled and found materials that the class can use to create their own puppets. Send home a notice/post on Google Classroom to encourage creative collecting of unlikely art materials. Have a class discussion about where these objects came from and ways they might be reused instead of just being thrown out. Each student should have one base item to be the main body of their puppet (milk container, egg carton, socks, plastic utensil, cereal box, etc.) Provide students with additional art materials like paper, markers, stickers, pipe cleaners and popsicle sticks to design and build their puppets.

- **Discuss Recycled Materials**: Discuss how the actors, costumes and puppets look different up close than they did from the stage. Encourage students to guess what materials might have been used in the creation of the costumes and puppets.

- **Observation Chart**: Have a class discussion about what the students remember from the performance. Create an anchor chart to record their observations, including any of the music that was used, specific scenes and characters.

- **Audience Observation**: The audience should watch each presentation quietly and applaud at the end. Depending on the age of your class, you may have a brief audience reflection after each charade to find out what the kids saw and what they think the puppets might have been doing and feeling. With younger students you might want to tell them what the charade is before they share and ask them to notice what the puppets and puppeteers are doing to show the activity and emotion.

- **Classroom Reflection**: A brief audience reflection after each charade to find out what the kids saw and what they think the puppets might have been doing and feeling. With younger students you might want to tell them what the charade is before they share and ask them to notice what the puppets and puppeteers are doing to show the activity and emotion.

- **Prepare for Performance**: Students will create puppet charades with their creations, either individually or in groups and using Activity Sheet 2 as a guide. As the students rehearse, remind them that the audience needs to see the puppets, not necessarily the puppeteers. You can encourage students to sit on chairs or the floor, and have the puppets on a desk or table to make it easier for the audience to see the puppets.

- **Enhance Performance**: Provide students with additional art materials like paper, markers, stickers, pipe cleaners and popsicle sticks to design and build their puppets.

- **Practice Performance**: Practice a few times to solidify your performance. Using Activity Sheet 2 as a guide, create a charade using your puppet. You can choose to perform a holiday, an activity, a feeling, etc. Think about the different ways that you can move your puppet to portray the words you choose. Practice a few times to solidify your performance.
**Conveying meaning through art.**

**Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.**

**Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work.**

**Demonstrate openness to new ideas and perspectives.**

**Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.**

**Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.**

**Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.**

**Refine and complete work.**

**SEL: Self Awareness Sub-competency**

01: Recognize one’s feelings and thoughts

04: Recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges

**SEL: Social Awareness Sub-competency**

08: Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others

04: Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ

**Character**

People, animals, items or creatures in a story that can think, feel or move.

**Dance**

A person who moves their body in rhythm or time, usually to music.

**Migration**

A long journey to a new home. Many animals move seasonally from one area or region to another. Often, they are moving for certain food or weather conditions.

**North Pole**

Northern most point on earth. It is very cold.

**Actors**

A person who portrays a character in a performance.

**Electroluminescent Wire**

Usually called El Wire, is a thin copper wire coated in a phosphor, which glows when an electric current (battery) is applied to it. The wire is extremely thin and flexible and produces a solid line of light.

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**Puppet**

A movable model of a person or animal. They are typically moved either by strings controlled from above or by a hand inside it.

**Puppeteer**

A person who moves an inanimate object (a puppet) to create the illusion that the puppet is alive. Puppeteers are often not seen by an audience.

**Recycled Objects**

Items that are made from materials that would have otherwise been discarded or thrown away.

**Seasons**

The four parts of the year that are distinguished by their weather conditions and the lengths of the day. They are winter, spring, summer and fall.

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In-School Residencies: NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs, and you’ll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It’s the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development: Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC’s forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school, and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something... you’ll also have fun and be inspired.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our education sales team at artseducation@njpac.org. Or visit njpac.org/education

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