

NEW VICTORY[®]

SCHOOL TOOL[®]

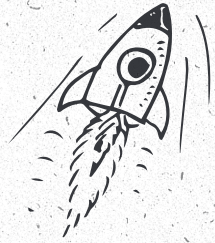
RESOURCE GUIDE

inspired by...

BABA YAGA

AND THE

FIREBIRD



NEW VICTORY EDUCATION

209 W 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036 • Education_Tickets@NewVictory.org • 646.223.3090



Bringing kids to the arts and the arts to kids since 1995, New Victory opens new worlds to young people and families through extraordinary performances, education and engagement programs both online and in its historic Times Square theater.

Powered by New 42, a cultural nonprofit dedicated to empowering artists, educators and families through the performing arts, New Victory served 139 Partner Schools and 20,000 NYC kids through performances, Classroom Workshops, teacher professional learning and resources in the 2023-24 school year.

Featuring artistic disciplines and traditions from a multitude of cultures, New Victory has become a standard-bearer of quality performing arts for young audiences in the United States with theatrical stories and experiences that spark the imagination and broaden our understanding of the world and our place in it.

NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guides

Filled with practical, engaging and ready-to-implement activities that allow any teacher to incorporate performing arts into their curricula, NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guides are designed to enrich students' arts skills and creative expression.

Jobs for Young People

Discover the NEW 42SM Youth Corps, a youth development program that pairs life skills training with jobs in the arts for high school and college students. Designed to meet students where they are, New 42 Youth Corps provides flexible paid employment through a mix of on the job experience as well as personal, academic and professional development through a series of workshops, speakers and networking opportunities.



Under the leadership of President & CEO Russell Granet, New 42 is a leading performing arts nonprofit whose mission is to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone's life from the earliest years onward.

Through our signature projects, New Victory and New 42 Studios, we serve young people, artists and educators with invaluable arts engagement and resources in and beyond the performing arts.



Support for New Victory Education has been provided by:

Con Edison, Muna & Basem Hishmeh Foundation, Kennedy Center VSA, The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, New York City Council, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Department of Education, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation, Inc.



Council on the Arts

NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guides are made possible by a generous gift in memory of Fr. John R. Scarangelo, OFM, whose lifelong passion for the theater was a powerful influence on all who were fortunate to know and love him.



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The content in this **NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL** Resource Guide aligns with:

NEXT GENERATION LEARNING STANDARDS

- Reading: 1; 2; 3
- Writing: 2; 3
- Speaking and Listening: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6
- Language: 1; 2; 3

NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS FOR THE ARTS

Creating, Performing, Responding, Connecting

BLUEPRINT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE ARTS

Theater: Theater Making, Developing Theater Literacy, Making Connections

Visual Arts: Art Making, Developing Art Literacy, Making Connections



inspired by...



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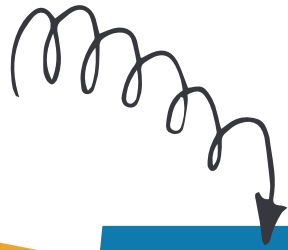
Learn and Engage



This section is an introduction to the artists, company, art forms and themes of this production. It also contains unit plan brainstorms, inspired by the production, that provide opportunities to begin thinking about the cultural, thematic and artistic elements of the show.



ART FORMS



Musical Theater

Musical theater melds acting, singing and dancing into one all-encompassing production. Singing often conveys a deeper level of emotion than speaking, allowing the characters to express themselves beyond dialogue, monologue or soliloquy. Moreover, music and movement helps establish the mood of the piece and the characters, enhancing the audience's understanding of the story. Other examples of musical theater include *Into the Woods*, *Hamilton* and *Matilda*.

Puppetry

When an object is animated and manipulated by a performer, giving the illusion of independent movement, this is known as puppetry! Examples of puppetry include *The Muppets*, the Broadway production of *The Lion King* and, most recently, Little Amal, the 11.5-foot tall, partly-animatronic, giant puppet which was used as the focal point of performance art project *The Walk* in 2021. There are many kinds of puppets, such as marionettes, hand puppets, rod puppets and shadow puppets. Often, puppets can be a means of representing multiple characters when there are only a few actors on stage.

Storytelling

Storytelling is the art of creating a story with words and movement while encouraging the audience to use their imagination. This relationship between audience and storyteller is an ancient tradition and what makes the art of theatrical storytelling so unique. Though typically associated with language and gesture, storytelling can utilize design elements like sets, music, sound effects and props to enhance the story, establishing the mood of the world the characters inhabit and igniting the audience's imagination.

In *Baba Yaga and the Firebird*, two actors play multiple characters, altering their voice and physicality to switch between roles and bring a vivid, original story to life.



THE COMPANY, THE SHOW AND INFO TO KNOW

What's the Show About?

In this exuberant yet heartwarming original story based on Slavic folklore, two performers play over fifteen roles with the help of a host of puppets. The world of *Baba Yaga and the Firebird* bursts forth from the pages of a pop-up book and tells the story of a princess and a pauper who take a fantastical journey to beg the witch, Baba Yaga, for a firebird. Along the way, the wonders of the natural world and the enchanting people who inhabit it, including talking animals, singing skulls and a hut that walks on chicken legs, come alive through a musical form that is both unique and rooted in the oral tradition of storytelling.

Who are the Creators?

Baba Bird Theater Company was founded by NEW VICTORY LabWorks alumni Anton Dudley and Faye Chiao. Dudley is a playwright and librettist, and Chiao is a composer, both with careers working in opera and musical theater. Together, they blend contemporary storytelling with classical forms to build musical universes. Fascinated by fairy tales, they previously wrote the opera *Banding Together* based on *The Musicians of Bremen*.

In *Baba Yaga and the Firebird*, Dudley and Chiao play 15 different characters between the two of them! The playwrights chose this method of storytelling to encourage the audience to rely on their imagination and lean into the play of theater.



What do your students already know?

Ask your students questions to find out how much they already know about the art forms and themes of the show. Some questions to start with are:

Can you think of any folktales or stories you've been told verbally?

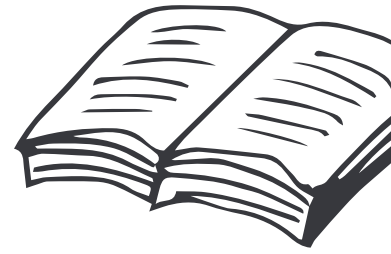
If you had magical powers, what would they be and how would you use them?

How is saying something through song different from speaking it?
How is it similar?



Baba Yaga and the Firebird

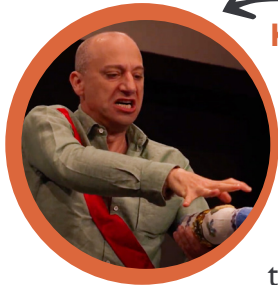
SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTER MAP



Two storytellers appear on stage, pick up a pop-up book and say, “Baba Yaga and the Firebird.” Out of that book, the story comes to life! It begins like this...

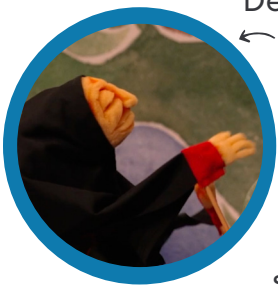


Princess Tashi is at her mother, the **Tzarina’s**, bedside. The Tzarina, who is dying, gives Tashi a **doll**, casts a spell on it and tells her that, no matter what, she will always be by her side. Right afterwards, her mother dies.



Koschei, their advisor, steps out from the shadows, takes the doll from Princess Tashi and, breaking it open, empties her mother’s love from the doll, devastating Tashi.

Back in the dungeon, Koschei talks to his servant, **Boris**, about his plans to take power, become Tzar and rule over the land forever, now that placing his heart in the doll has made him immortal. But first, the doll must be hidden. Koschei commands Boris to help him by placing the doll in a hare, the hare in a duck, the duck in a bear and, finally, a bear in a gloomy cave where the doll will never again be found. Time passes—ten years in fact, and Princess Tashi is nowhere to be found. Koschei takes her place on the throne as Tzar and outlaws magic so that it can’t be used against him.



Deep in the woods, in a small cottage, lives **Ivan**, whose dying **mother** tells him to walk into the future and avoid holding onto the past. She blows a kiss into a walnut shell, gives it to Ivan and tells him that she’ll always be near him. He wears the walnut shell around his neck and sets off on a long journey to find magic that can save his mother, meeting many obstacles along the way. That is, until he sees those obstacles in a different way and realizes they’re not obstacles, they are guides for his journey.



Baba Yaga and the Firebird

SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTER MAP (Continued)

Ivan happens upon **Baba Yaga's** hut, which stands on a pair of chicken legs and is surrounded by a tall wooden fence lined with skulls. Ivan enters and is confronted by the witch, Baba Yaga, who dares Ivan to dive into her cauldron to reach the Never-Summer Meadow so that he can protect her well-kept secret and be rewarded with a firebird to save his mother. He dives in. Once on the other side, he sees a flock of snow geese and follows them to the Never-Summer Meadow. Ivan spots the secret, reaches for it and is blown backward by a gust of wind created by the **Winter Witch**. Ivan begs the Winter Witch to let him melt the secret so he can save his mother, and the love he shows melts the Winter Witch.



Ivan happens upon Boris who takes him back to the hut of Baba Yaga. Once there, she tells Ivan that, before he gets a firebird, he must take a doll back to the palace without opening it. She then tells Boris to take Ivan to the Tzar, Koschei.

*What will happen when they reach the palace?
Will Ivan's mother be saved?
Whatever happened to Princess Tashi?*

All that and more will be revealed when you see *Baba Yaga and the Firebird!*



Baba Yaga and the Firebird

CHARACTERS AT A GLANCE



Princess Tashi



The Tzarina



Koschei



Boris



Baba Yaga

Ivan



Ivan's mother



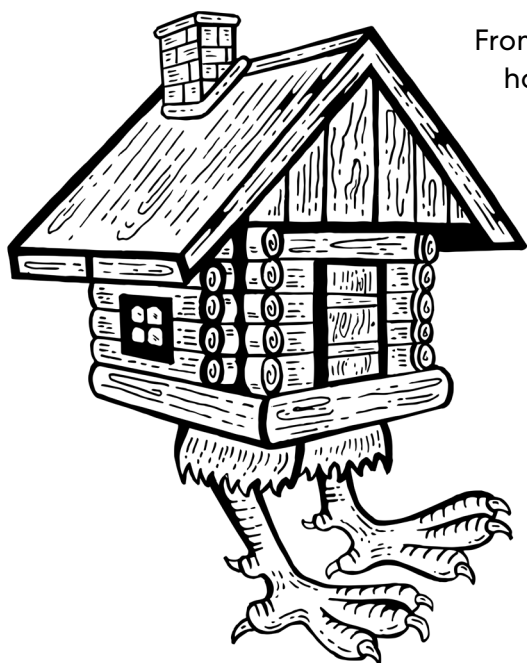
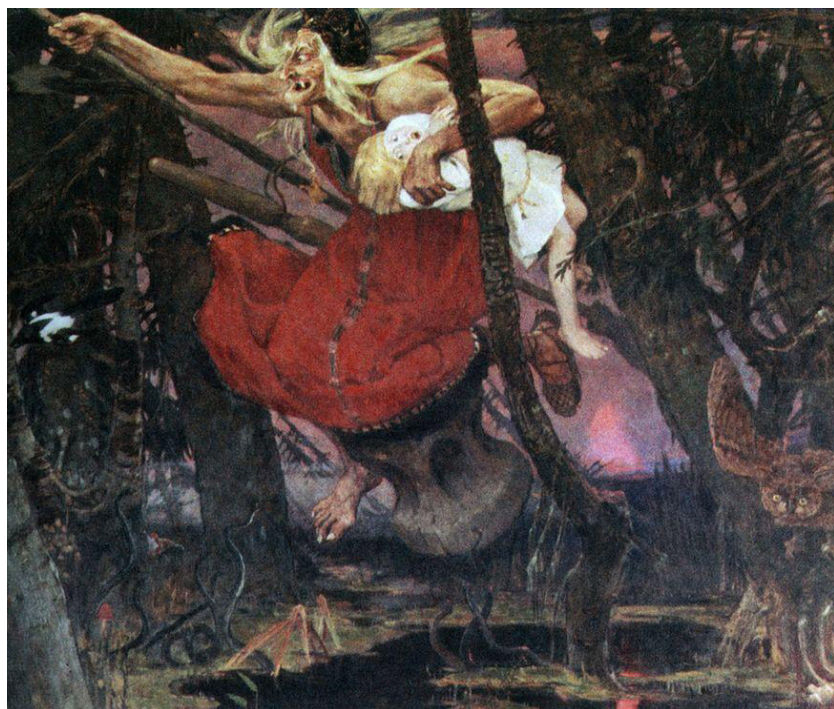
CONTEXT TO CONSIDER



Which Witch? Baba Yaga!

While many classic fairytale characters are dazzling princesses and courageous heroes, perhaps one of the most iconic and complex characters of Slavic (of an ethnicity originating from Eastern Europe and Northern Asia) folklore is not a hero at all but, rather, an ugly, enormous witch known as Baba Yaga. Though, despite her gruesome appearance, Baba Yaga's many interpretations prove that there is much more to her than meets the eye.

First recorded on paper in 1755, but existing in oral stories for hundreds of years, the name "Baba Yaga" derives from the Russian word for "grandmother" and "serpent," though "yaga" is also interpreted to mean "illness," "witch" or "evil." The most common depiction of Baba Yaga includes her eerie cottage in the woods that rests upon chicken legs, turning, moaning and migrating throughout the forest. Famously, Baba Yaga has been said to eat children, often displayed hunched over the stove, and adorns her home with a fence of children's bones. In lore, she also flies on a large mortar and pestle, carrying a broom to sweep behind her, erasing any trace of her.



From these descriptions, Baba Yaga's malice certainly shines through; however, the witch's wickedness is just one side of her. There have been over 400 adaptations of tales that involve Baba Yaga, and they don't always feature her as a horror villain. One of the most famous Russian fairytales, *Vasilisa the Beautiful*, portrays Baba Yaga as an aide, saving the protagonist from her abusive stepfamily.



CONTEXT TO CONSIDER

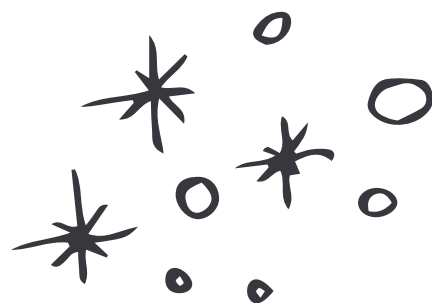
Which Witch? Baba Yaga!

(CONTINUED)

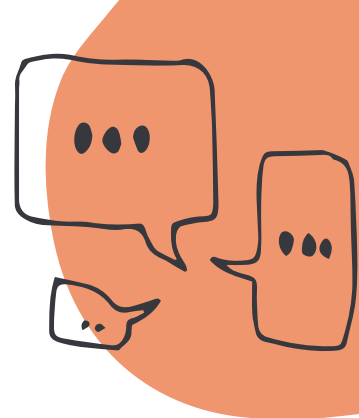
Many other stories feature Baba Yaga providing assistance to the main character, though often at a cost. In truth, Baba Yaga is more of a trickster than an enemy, unpredictably using her magic and intelligence for both good and evil. Her powers involve those of both life and death, provoking transformation. She has even been said to be a guardian between worlds, escorting souls into the afterlife.

In analyzing these layered characterizations of Baba Yaga, many scholars have compared her to Mother Earth or a personification of nature, cruel and destructive, but only in order to encourage growth and change. In these ways, Baba Yaga is also a type of goddess—in fact, some even compare her to the Greek goddess Persephone, queen of the underworld and the spring. Her legend has even influenced contemporary films from Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* to the action flick *John Wick*.

Despite the numerous conflicting accounts of Baba Yaga's personality, there is no denying that she represents untameable feminine power, wisdom and freedom. Living outside the norms of the society, abiding by her own rules and controlling the land around her, Baba Yaga is, in her own right, a feminist icon. Whether viewed as good or evil, Baba Yaga redefines what it means to be a witch.



UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM



Witchy Ways (English Language Arts, History, Theater)

Does your class know the legend of Baba Yaga? She's one of the most famous witches in the world, and her story has been adapted over 400 times! As a group, take some time to learn about this famous character and introduce your students to her iconic lore. First, read aloud a version of Baba Yaga to your class at storytime (if you can't find one, you can access the University of Cambridge's version of *Baba Yaga and Visilia the Brave*). While you read, ask your students to act out and embody the characters, including Baba Yaga! Explain that Baba Yaga has been portrayed many different ways in many different adaptations. Share some of the history of the Slavic character, explaining her Russian origins and where she—and characters inspired by her—shows up in contemporary culture. After you read one version of the tale, see if you can find another adaptation to explore. Finally, have students create their own versions of Baba Yaga! Ask them to take inspiration from the two versions of her story you've explored together and sketch out what their version of this famed witch looks like on a blank piece of paper. Then, have them physicalize her with their own mannerisms and magical powers. Finally, put on a Baba Yaga parade for another class, complete with costumes and music, bringing the folktale to life in your classroom!

To support this unit, use the [A Study in Character Exploration Activity](#) in the Discover and Create section.

Stories That Pop! (English Language Arts, Visual Arts)

Have you ever loved a story so much that you wish it could pop straight out of the page? Now it can! Work with your students to design their own pop-up books. For a visual example, check out this *Bringing a Pop-Up Book to Life* video on Youtube! First, have all of your students choose their favorite fairy tale or story, or choose one you've read aloud during storytime. Next, provide empty notebooks for each student or staple blank pages together to form booklets. On each page, invite students to write down a line or section from the story at the bottom of the page, making sure that their story has a beginning, middle and end. Next, draw scenes, characters and places to go along with this text on a separate piece of heavy construction paper. Feel free to utilize markers, stickers or printed-out photographs. Then, cut out these drawings carefully and fold them in half. Tape or glue the bottom half directly into their booklets, so the top half stands upright when the page is open. Carefully close the booklet, allowing the 3D illustrations to fold neatly in between the pages. *Voilà!* Each student now has their very own pop-up book! Take turns having each student read aloud from their pop-up book or facilitate a pop-up book swap, so everyone can see each others' art and learn some new stories!

To support this unit, use the [My Magical Mythical Map Creativity Page](#) in the Discover and Create section.

When I Grow Up (English Language Arts, Social Studies, Visual Arts)

A picture is worth a thousand words, and sometimes, so is an object! Focus on the grounding energy and personal storytelling that comes from objects in your students' lives. First, have your class think of an object in their life that means something special to them—a gift from a friend, a homemade toy or a charm that lives in their backpack. Ask them to bring their objects into class for a show-and-tell! At the show-and-tell, ask each student why they picked their object, what meaning it has to them and a memory that they associate with it. Afterwards, invite students to take time to draw a picture or write a story about their object—complete with vibrant color and whimsy. When they've finished, hang all of the class's drawings up together on the wall to create a mural that tells the stories of your classroom's most favorite things. Tell your students that their mural can be a source of inspiration for them throughout the year, reminding them of the things that bring them joy!

To support this unit, use the [The Hopeful Firebird Activity](#) in the Respond and Connect section.



Discover and Create



In this section are ready-to-facilitate activities and kid-centered creativity pages which provide opportunities to delve a bit deeper into the themes and artistry of the show!



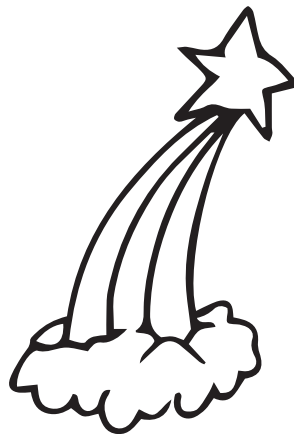
A Study in Character Exploration

Use the activity below to explore characters using one magical item and a lot of imagination.



Materials Needed: Chart paper, markers, one scarf (or other versatile object)

1. Invite students to sit together in a circle. Tell them you're going to bring their favorite story characters to life!
2. Ask students to offer names of characters from their favorite stories or fairy tales. As they call them out, jot them down on chart paper—think princesses, dragons, pirates, superheroes and talking animals!
3. Hold up a scarf (or your chosen object) and tell students that it's not an ordinary item—it's a magical scarf with the power to bring fairy tale characters to life! Pass the object around the circle, allowing each student to feel the magic.
4. As the object is passed to each student, ask them to pick a character from the list and imagine how their character would use the object. *Does the princess twirl it like a cape? Does the dragon turn it into its fiery breath?* Encourage students to let the object guide their movements as they embody their character.
5. After everyone has had a turn, keep the magic flowing by passing the object around the circle once more! This time, students can dive deeper into their characters' physicality—maybe a superhero realizes the scarf can help them fly, or a talking cat uses it as a stylish accessory.



Reflection Questions:

Which character was the most fun to embody, and why?

How did the magical object change the way you thought about your character?

If you could pick a new magical object for the next round, what would it be and what power would you give it?





My Magical Mythical Map

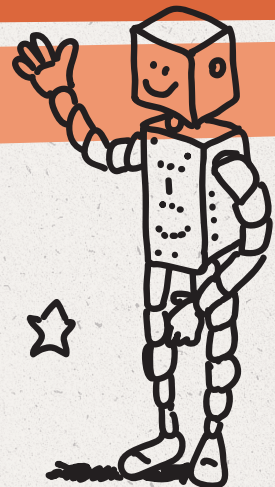
Think about a fairy tale or story you love—now imagine you're looking at its world from above, just like a map! Draw that world, filling it with all the amazing places where the story happens. Is there a grand castle on a hill, a deep dark forest or a sparkling river where adventures unfold? Where do the characters travel, and what secrets might be hidden in the corners of the map? Grab your markers and crayons, and let your imagination run wild as you create the map of this fantastical world in the space below!



Arts Break @ Home



To bring the arts home, share this section with families. Arts Break supports family engagement with exciting activities for the whole family!



Be a part of your kid's viewing experience!



Ask

Ask your kid **BEFORE** they see the show:

- ▶ *What is your favorite fairy tale and why?*

Ask your kid **AFTER** they see the show:

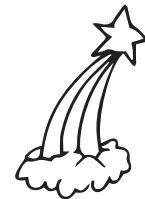
- ▶ *What did you learn from the story of Baba Yaga and the Firebird?*



Watch

Now, [watch the trailer for *Baba Yaga and the Firebird*.](#)

Engage

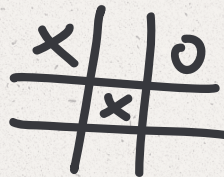


Bring exciting art-making experiences home with [NEW VICTORY ARTS BREAK](#) activities and videos.

About the New Victory



Provide this section, which has information about how to get to the theater and what to expect when attending a live performance, to any teachers, chaperones or other adults attending the show.



Trip Guide

Provide this resource to the School Trip Leader and all teachers/chaperones attending the performance.

Baba Yaga and the Firebird will be performed
at the New Victory Theater,
209 West 42nd Street, New York, NY

Before you leave school

Bags will be collected by NEW VICTORY staff and stored during the performance when you arrive. We advise you to **leave all bags and lunches at school** if possible.

Plan to arrive at the venue at least 45 minutes before curtain time. The building opens one hour prior to curtain (i.e. 10am for an 11am performance). If you realize that your group is running late, please contact the theater DIRECTLY at **646.223.3020**. If you are arriving by bus, ensure your driver drops your group off on the **north side of 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues**.

Arrival

When you reach the venue, a member of the NEW VICTORY Front of House (FOH) staff wearing a green vest will check in with the School Trip Leader. Upon arrival, please have ready the exact number of students and chaperones count. One chaperone in your group should act as the transport point of contact who has the bus driver's contact information and bus number.

If you arrive by bus, they will direct your bus to a location on the street where it is safest to unload the students. It is important to wait until our staff checks with the School Trip Leader and bus driver before unloading the students. They will record the bus number and give the School Trip Leader and the bus driver correlating tags. If you are unable to be dropped off near the theater, please record the bus number for our FOH staff. Please remember to have the School Trip Leader and the bus driver exchange cell numbers. Upon arrival, one of our staff members will give you a lanyard that corresponds with a school bus tag. If you are arriving by subway or other public transportation, please form a line outside the theater when you arrive, and wait to check in with a FOH staff member before entering the theater.

The question of lunch

The New Victory Theater is not equipped to host lunch/snacks. No food or drink is allowed in the building at anytime.

Seating

In order to make your experience at the theater as efficient and safe as possible, you will not be issued tickets ahead of time. NEW VICTORY Education staff carefully assign seats in advance of each performance, factoring in grade, group size and special circumstances. We are not able to honor specific seating requests with the exception of requests required for accessibility. For safety and group traffic flow, we ask that your group remain seated after the show. As soon as we are able to escort you to your bus or the subway, a NEW VICTORY Usher will come to you. If you have any questions, please contact the Education Department at Education_Tickets@NewVictory.org.

Accessibility AD

Wheelchair accessibility: Wheelchair seating must be requested in advance, at the time of the ticket reservation, and is subject to availability.

Assistive listening devices: Assistive listening devices are available for patrons who are d/Deaf, hard of hearing or experience hearing loss. We suggest you request this service in advance.

Sign interpretation and audio description: Designated performance dates are available with American Sign Language and audio description. If you plan to utilize these services, please let us know in advance by contacting Education_Tickets@NewVictory.org.

Sensory-Friendly: NEW VICTORY Education offers Sensory-Friendly performances for certain shows. There are additional staff members on site to support audience members. The sound will be adjusted to lower levels and the house lights will be left at half. Fidgets are available as needed at every NEW VICTORY performance; please ask a staff member if you need one during your next visit.



Trip Guide

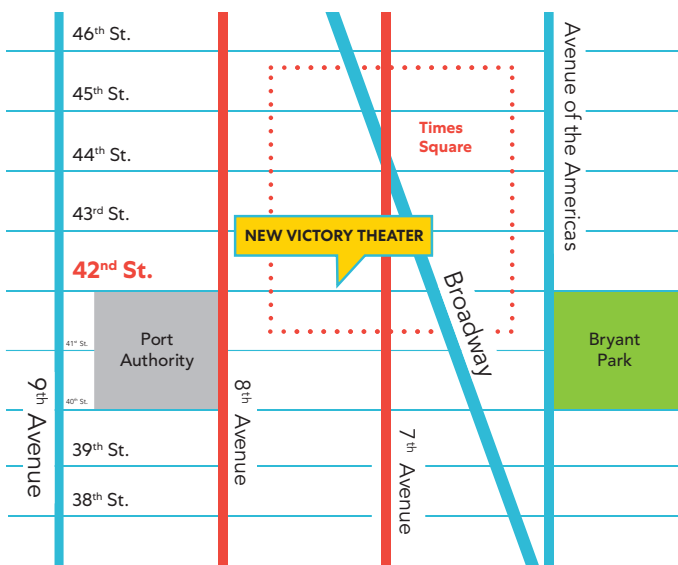
If you are traveling by bus, please also share this important information with the bus driver.

Directions

THE NEW VICTORY THEATER 209 West 42nd Street

BY SCHOOL BUS

It is safest to drop off and pick up your school group on the **north side of the street** in front of the venue. Turn onto 42nd Street from 7th Avenue so students can unload in front.



BY MTA, SUBWAY OR BUS

1/2/3 N/R/Q/W/7 to Times Square—42nd Street

Exit the station at 42nd Street/7th Avenue. When you come out of the turnstile, take the stairs to your right. The performance venue is west of the subway station.

A/C/E to Port Authority

Exit at 42nd Street/8th Avenue. Walk to 42nd Street, turn east, and continue walking until you arrive at the performance venue.

B/D/F/M to 42nd Street—Bryant Park

Exit at 42nd Street/6th Avenue. Walk west on 42nd Street until you come to 7th Avenue. The venue is on the north side of the street at 7th Avenue, west of the subway station.

The **M10, M16, M27, M42 and M104 buses** all stop within one block of the venue.

During the show

42nd Street is extremely congested and has a high volume of traffic. **According to the New York City Department of Transportation, vehicles are not allowed to sit idle or park on the street without special permission.** NEW VICTORY staff will direct buses to line up on 42nd Street where they will be permitted to stay parked for the duration of the performance. After the performance, NEW VICTORY staff will escort groups to their bus.

Possible parking locations

8th Avenue (both sides)
between 38th and 39th Streets

11th Avenue (both sides)
between 39th and 40th Streets

Pick up

Taking Midtown traffic into consideration, bus drivers should leave their waiting location approximately 15 minutes prior to the return time given by the Front of House (FOH) staff. FOH staff will also help find a spot on 42nd Street to safely load your student group after the show has ended. For safety purposes, once FOH staff have verified that your bus is in a secure location for pick up, your school group will be escorted to load up.



What to Expect at the Theater



NO HUSH ZONE: OOHS, AAHS AND APPLAUSE

Thank you for being our Partner and making the performing arts a priority for your students! New Victory prides itself on presenting performing arts that make kids (and adults) exclaim, dance, scream, laugh and giggle! We love when kids vocally and physically respond to what they're seeing on stage. In fact, many of the visiting artists tell us that their favorite part of performing at the New Victory is the real-time, honest reactions from the kids in the audience. Therefore, we ask you and your fellow teachers to help us by making the New Victory a "no-hush zone."

Of course, we ask for your help in managing respectful behavior to avoid distractions that are not directly related to the action on stage. Additionally, please ensure that you, your colleagues and students follow the directions of the NEW VICTORY Ushers and other theater guidelines such as no electronic devices or eating and drinking in the theater.



ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

New Victory is committed to making our programs, shows and spaces accessible for everyone. If you have questions, need assistance or need an accommodation not mentioned, please contact Asha John, Senior Education Programs Manager at **646.223.3090** or **AJohn@New42.org**.

Speak to a House Manager when you arrive to borrow any support item needed:

Sensory fidgets

Foam earplugs

Ear defenders

Light-sensitivity sunglasses

Assistive listening devices

Induction neckloops

Bariatric or standard wheelchairs

Some support items may require an exchange of a government-issued identification to borrow; it will be given back when the item is returned.



LOVE



Respond and Connect



The activities and creativity pages invite young people to reflect on the experience of seeing a live show and provide opportunities to make connections to themselves, each other and the world around them.



Reflection

Engage in a conversation with your students to help them process their thoughts and feelings about the show. On a large piece of chart paper, draw the outline of a person. On the outside of the outline, have students write or draw their favorite moments from the show. On the inside of the outline, have students write or draw their own feelings about the show and what emotions they felt during the show. Then, use some of the questions below to lead students in a discussion:

What was the story about?

Who were the characters?

What were your favorite parts of the show?

How did the show make you feel?



Teacher Tip

Engaging in dialogue, asking questions and recalling observations are skills that we believe should be fostered and encouraged. When leading a performance reflection discussion, try the following model of critical response:

Describe (I noticed...)

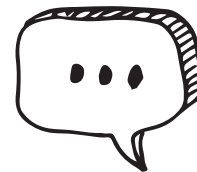


Analyze (I wonder...)

Interpret (I think/feel...)



Evaluate (I believe...)



The Critical Thinker



Answer the questions below, using words or drawings, to help you think critically about the show.



The part of the show that grabbed my attention the most was...

One thing I saw on stage during this show that I've never seen before was...

The show made me think about...

A question I have about the show is...

Before seeing this show, I didn't know that...



If I were the director, one thing I would change about the show is...

Overall, the show made me feel...



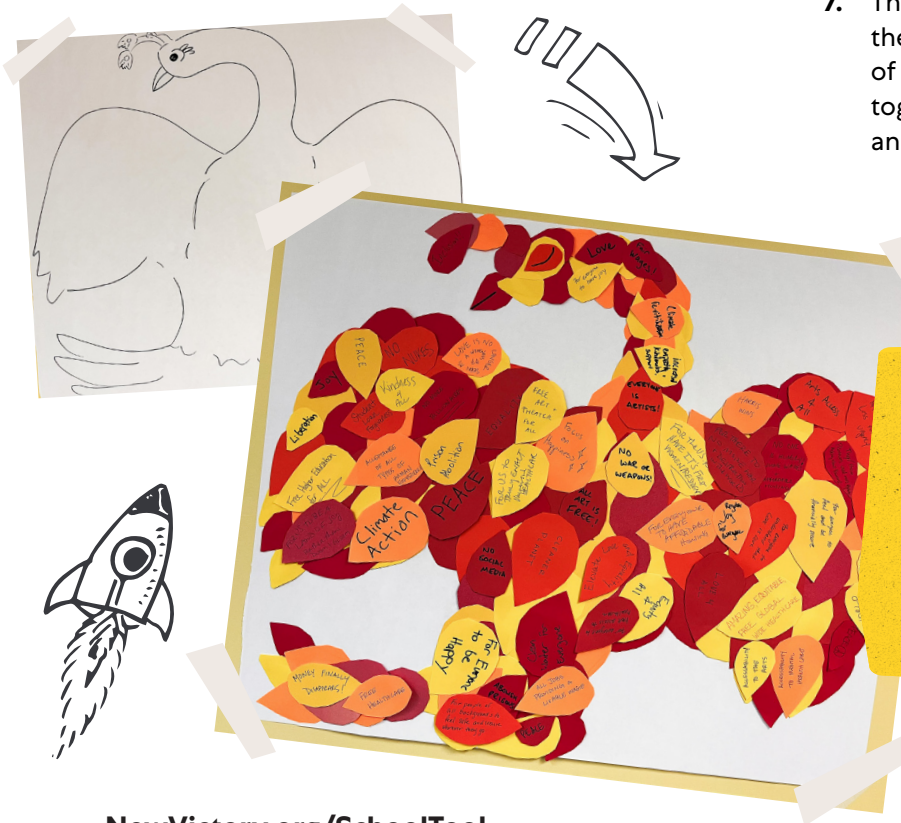
THE HOPEFUL FIREBIRD



Use the activity below to foster a sense of community, creativity and hope in the classroom by exploring the mythology and folklore of the firebird. For inspiration, use the visual examples on this page.

Materials Needed: Chart paper, crayons, markers, construction paper in various warm colors (reds, oranges, yellows), scissors, glue or tape

1. Gather students in a circle and explain the concept of a firebird—a mythical creature often associated with hope, rebirth and renewal. Have a group discussion about the importance of hope in their lives and in the world.
2. Roll out a large sheet of chart paper on the classroom floor or a large table. Work with students to draw a large firebird on the chart paper. They can decide on the shape and the details of the firebird.
3. Give each student a piece of construction paper and ask them to cut out ember shapes. Once they have their embers, ask them to either draw a picture, or write on them a word or phrase that represents their hopes for the world. These could be hopes for their community, the environment or even personal aspirations.
4. After everyone has finished with their embers, gather the students around the firebird drawing. Have each student take turns sharing their hope and then attaching their ember to the firebird, creating a vibrant fiery tail.
5. Once all the embers have been attached, ask students to share what they feel when they look at the firebird and how it represents their collective hopes. Reflect on how working together made the firebird stronger and more beautiful, just as sharing hopes and dreams can strengthen a community.
6. Hang the completed firebird in a prominent place in the classroom where it can serve as a beacon of hope for everyone. This can be a reminder of the positive energy and the shared dreams within the classroom.
7. Throughout the school year, you can refer back to the firebird when discussing challenges or moments of hope in the classroom, reinforcing the idea that together, the class can create and inspire hope and change.



Reflection Questions:

What was your favorite part of this activity?

What was it like to think about and share your hopes and dreams?

What does the firebird represent to you?



Imagining a Better World

Is there something in the world that you think isn't helping people or the planet right now? Maybe it's something that causes harm, or it just isn't working the way it should. Now, imagine a way to change that thing so it does make the world a better place—something that could help others, protect nature or simply bring joy to others. In the first blank space below, draw or write about the thing that needs to change. In the second space, draw or write about how you think it should be—so it makes a positive difference in the world!

What needs to change?

How would you change it?



Sources

COMPANY

Baba Bird Theater Company

CONTENT & THEMES

BBC: Baba Yaga: the greatest “wicked witch” of them all?

Britannica: Baba Yaga

World History Encyclopedia: Baba Yaga

PRODUCTION PHOTOS

Alexis Buatti-Ramos



Our Guiding Pillars



The Guiding Pillars on this page are the foundation of the ways in which NEW VICTORY Education strives to cultivate collaboration and creativity for everyone. As we continue to grow and evolve, so do our pillars, and we continue to rethink their meaning and overall impact. We hope these values offer inspiration as you engage in creative art-making through the unit plan brainstorms, activities and creativity pages in this NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guide!

Arts for All

Invite everyone to create art in ways that are accessible to and inclusive of everyone.

Art Form

Honor and explore the technique of the art forms represented in the works we present.

Community

Encourage ensemble and collaboration within the communities with which we engage.

Create

Activate art-making and creativity to explore the art form in each production and beyond.

Discovery

Employ methods and ask questions that encourage opportunities for curiosity, risk-taking, inquiry, meaning-making, deepening understanding, and learning about oneself, one's peers and the world around us.

Play

Spark imagination, encourage joy in learning and evoke laughter.

A Land Acknowledgement

The New Victory Theater is on the island known as Mannahatta, now called Manhattan, in Lenapehoking, the homeland of the Lenape people. These lands are intertribal trade lands under the stewardship of many Nations, and New Victory acknowledges the systematic erasure of their true history.

The land of the five boroughs that make up New York City was and still is inhabited by the Lenape, Merrick, Canarsie, Rockaway and Matinecock Nations. We celebrate and pay deep respect to the Peoples of these Nations, their cultures, their communities, their elders past and present, those with us today and all their future generations.

We recognize that seized lands are historically inhabited by people who are racialized, marginalized and displaced by those in power, and we offer this land acknowledgement as a step in reexamining our relationship to that history. We offer our gratitude to the Indigenous peoples of the many Nations who continue to act as stewards of the land, and we encourage you to learn more about these vibrant communities.



Photo: Mark LaRosa