



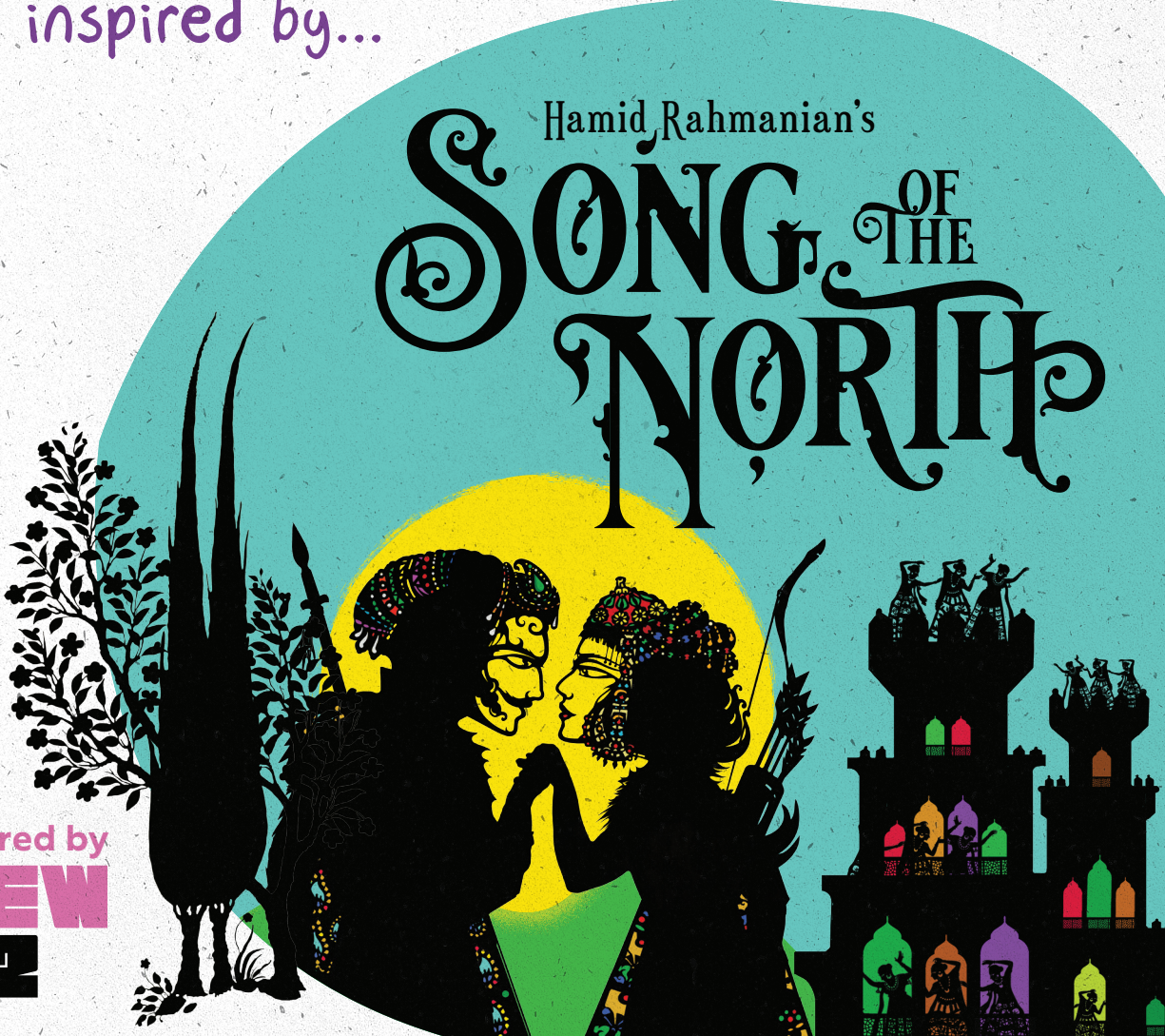
NEW VICTORY<sup>®</sup>

# SCHOOL TOOL<sup>®</sup>

RESOURCE GUIDE



inspired by...



Hamid Rahmanian's

# SONG OF THE NORTH





# 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 42<sup>SM</sup> 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.





# What's in the guide:

## ✓ Learn and Engage.....p. 4

- Art Forms
- The Company, the Show and Info to Know
- Context to Consider
- Characters to Know
- Synopsis
- Unit Plan Brainstorm

## ✓ Discover and Create.....p. 13

- Activity: Shadow Lab
- Handout: Shadow Puppetry
- Creativity Page: My Anthem of Awesomeness

## ✓ The Arts at Home.....p. 17

- Resources for Families
- NEW VICTORY Arts Education Resource Library

## ✓ About the New Victory.....p. 19

- Trip Guide
- Building Spaces of Belonging
- Accessibility Supports

## ✓ Respond and Connect.....p. 24

- Reflection
- Be a Critic
- Creativity Page: Crown Me
- Activity: Shadow Persona

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...

# SONG OF THE NORTH

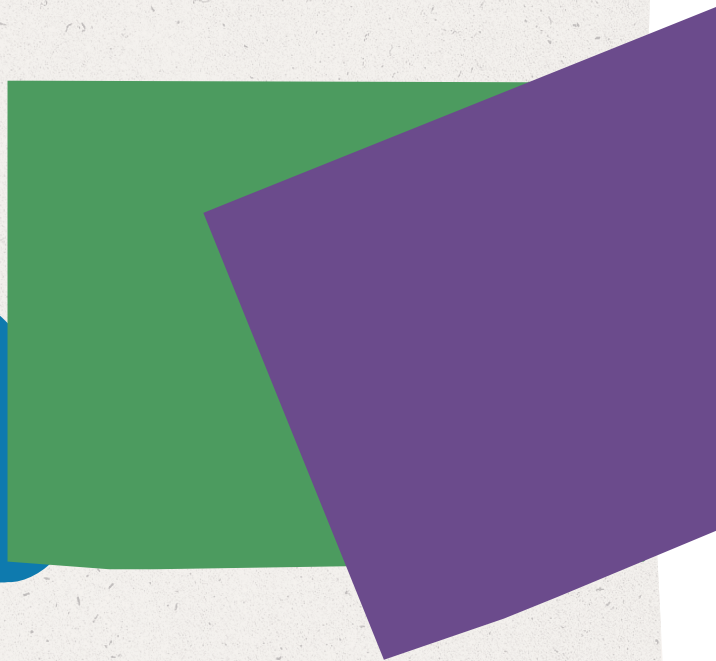
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# Learn and Engage

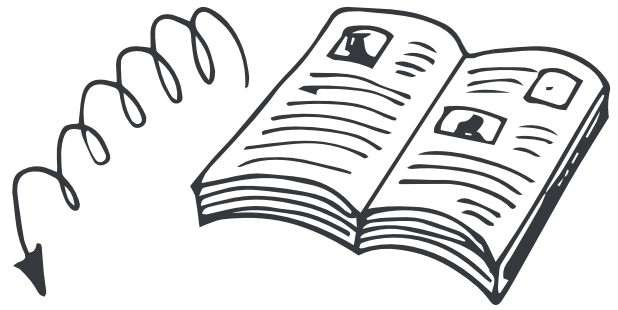
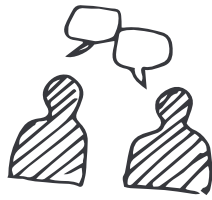
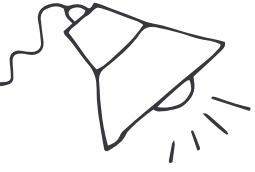


This section is an introduction to the artists, company, art forms and themes of this production. It also contains unit plan brainstorm, inspired by the production, that provide opportunities to begin thinking about the cultural, thematic and artistic elements of the show.





# ART FORMS



## Shadow Puppetry

Shadow puppets are created using shapes and a light source. By placing figures, cutouts or even body parts in front of a bright light, artists can create characters and tell stories using their silhouettes. These silhouettes are typically projected onto a translucent screen and presented to audiences like a movie. This art form has been around for over 2,000 years and historians date its origin to the Han Dynasty in China. *Song of the North* uses 483 puppets, over 2000 production cues, 9 performers and 208 animated backgrounds to create complex silhouettes and characters.

## Adaptation

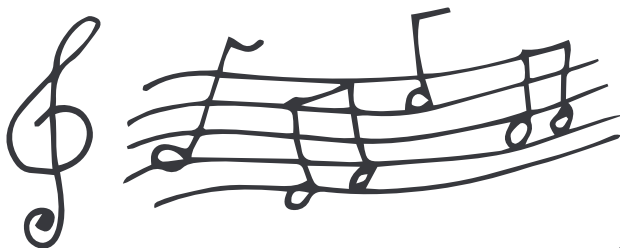
Stage productions are often inspired by other forms of media, like books, movies and folklore. Adapting a story is a form of art in and of itself as the creators decide which aspects should stay, what new perspectives should be added and how to interact with the context of the original work. Many iconic and culturally significant texts like Homer's *The Odyssey* or the *Mahabharata* from ancient India have been retold hundreds of times and adapted into books and movies. The *Shahnameh*, a centuries-old epic poem from Persian literature and the longest poem written by a single author, is the source text for *Song of the North*.

## Music

Music adds atmosphere and enhances the impact of the performer's movements. Many plays contain music or singing, though they are not considered musicals. The music used in the performance sets the tone and conveys a deeper level of emotion, allowing the characters to express themselves in exciting ways, beyond dialogue or monologue. Music also plays an important role in reflecting the setting and identity of the show. In *Song of the North*, Persian music provides the backdrop to transport the audience to Iran and Turan.

## Illustration

Visuals like costumes, colors and set work in tandem with one another to craft the identity of a show, build characters and tell the story. These visuals can be created in many ways, but in *Song of the North*, each puppet, mask and projection is designed and illustrated by hand. These visual elements were meticulously crafted based on Middle Eastern art and iconography to reflect Persian culture and history. Hamid Rahmanian, the creator of the show, specifically avoided using Western elements in these illustrations, letting the visuals enhance the world of the *Shahnameh*.





# THE COMPANY, THE SHOW AND INFO TO KNOW

## What's the Show About?

*Song of the North* is a large-scale, cinematic performance adapted from the *Shahnameh*, or *The Book of Kings*, an epic poem from Persian literature. It combines the manual art of shadow puppetry with projected animation to tell the courageous tale of Manijeh, a heroine from ancient Persia, who must use all her strengths and talents to rescue her beloved, Bijan, from a perilous predicament of her own making and help prevent a war. This epic love story employs a cast of 483 handmade puppets, over 2,000 production cues and a talented ensemble of nine actors and puppeteers, all of which come together to create a spectacular experience that advances the themes of unity, collaboration and experimentation through performance and story. *Song of the North* challenges the Eurocentric worldview of art, myth and storytelling through a contemporary, multimedia experience of this classic Persian tale. To get a feel for the technical marvels of the show and the advanced puppetry, [go backstage with Hamid Rahmanian](#).

## Who Are the Creators?

Iranian-American artist Hamid Rahmanian founded Fictionville Studio in 1998 to produce both documentary and narrative films. In the decades since, he has merged his love of traditional Persian art forms like illustration and shadow puppetry with the technology of modern theater to breathe new life into the beloved tales of the *Shahnameh*. This extends beyond the stage as well, with a new English translation of the full epic poem, a theatrical audiobook and colorful pop-up books of individual stories.

## 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:

- What values are important to your family or your culture?  
How are you reminded of them?
- What makes a story "epic?" Do you know any epic stories from your culture?
- Why might someone tell a story through shadow puppetry?



Every visual element that was designed for the show (from the puppets to the masks to the backdrops) is inspired by Persian culture and contains zero Western elements. Hamid Rahmanian was very geographically specific in creating the art for this show, researching 600 years of visual culture, from North India to the Mediterranean.

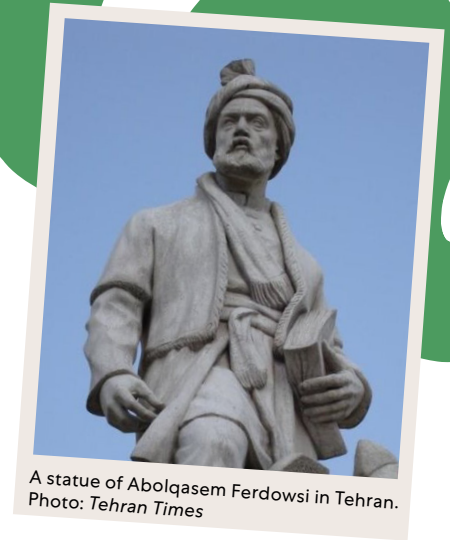


# CONTEXT TO CONSIDER

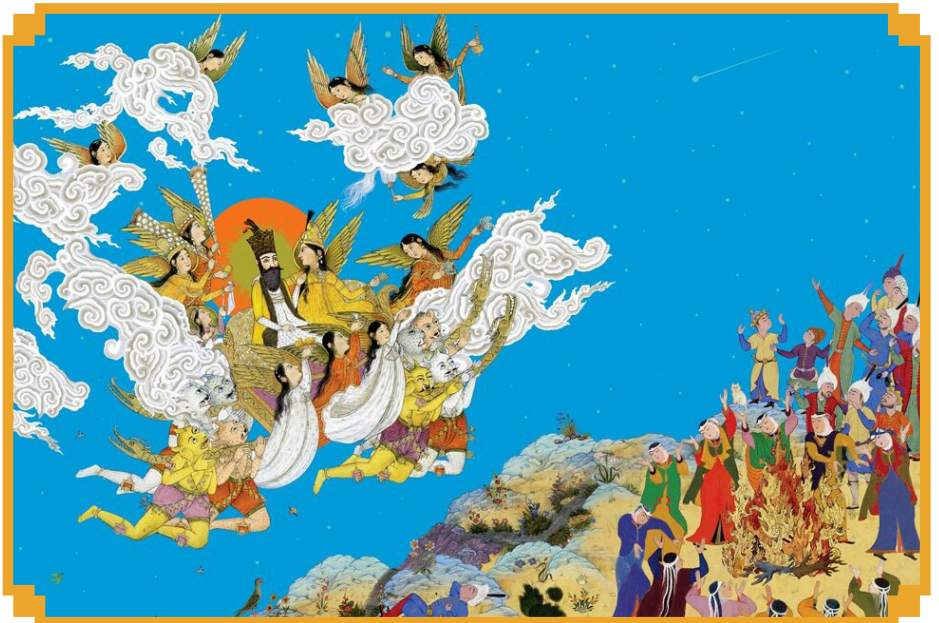


## The Shahnameh

*Song of the North* is an adaptation of the story *Bijan and Manijeh* from the *Shahnameh*, one of the most important texts in Persian literature and culture. Written in the 10th century by a poet named Abolqasem Ferdowsi, the *Shahnameh*, or *The Book of Kings* as it is also known, is the longest poem written by a single poet. With over 50,000 rhyming couplets, the *Shahnameh* took Ferdowsi around 33 years to complete. *Bijan and Manijeh* is just one of 62 stories in the epic told over 990 chapters. This seminal text traces the tale of the Persian empire, spanning centuries from its mythological creation and weaving history and lore together.



A statue of Abolqasem Ferdowsi in Tehran. Photo: Tehran Times



Rahmanian's original illustrations from his version of the *Shahnameh* are steeped in Persian iconography.

Not only is the *Shahnameh* a feat of literature and storytelling, but the epic is a pillar of Persian cultural identity. Ferdowsi's poem helped keep the Persian language alive and is one of the few epic stories still in conversation with the people that it represents today. There is a rich tradition of recreating and illustrating the *Shahnameh* throughout history, and uprisings, posters and slogans that occur to this day in Iran still refer to the text.

Hamid Rahmanian, the creator of *Song of the North*, and Dr. Ahmad Sadri, an Iranian-American sociologist and author, spent over three years adapting and translating a version of the epic poem made for the 21st century. This new volume of work, containing over 500 original illustrations by Rahmanian, was researched meticulously and created the foundation for *Song of the North*. You can find this illustrated version at the New York Public Library or [the Kingorama website](#).



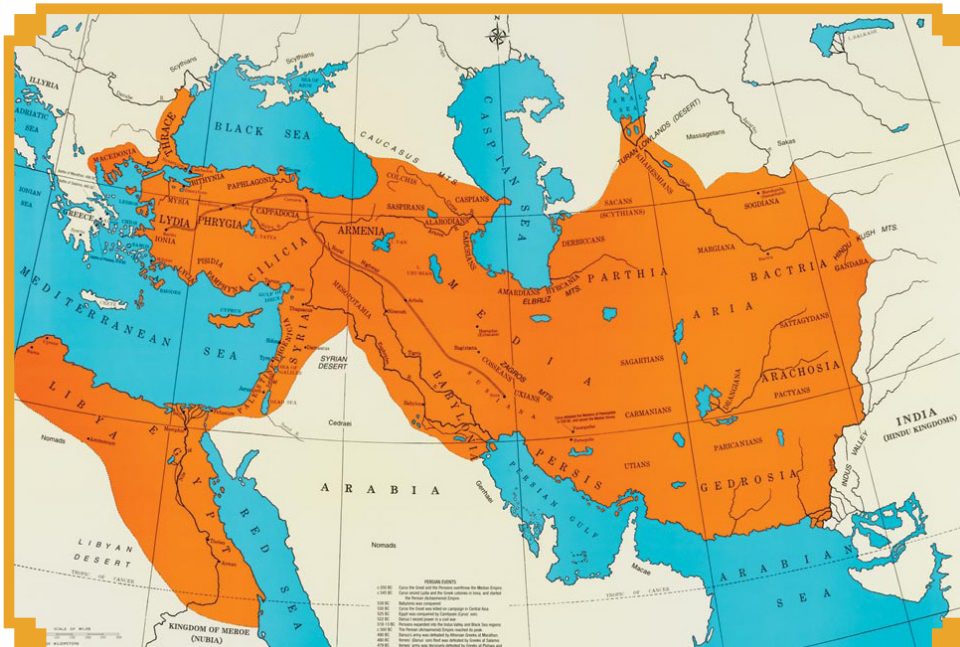
# CONTEXT TO CONSIDER

## Persia, Iran and Turan

Oftentimes, the words “Persian” and “Iranian” are used interchangeably, but what is the difference between these two words and these two places? The word “Persian” refers to an ethnicity, or a group of people united by culture, tradition and language. Farsi, Dari and Tajik are all variants of the Persian language that the *Shahnameh* helped preserve. On the other hand, “Iranian” refers to a nationality—everyone living in the country of Iran.



Flag of Iran. Image: Encyclopedia Britannica



While modern-day Iran is where the ancient Persian Empire was centered, the two are not synonymous. The Persian Empire spanned thousands of years, dating as far back as 550 BCE and, at times, stretched from India to the Balkan Peninsula. This means that Persian culture permeates throughout much of Asia and the Middle East, and while many Persians live in Iran, they also live in numerous other countries, such as Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Conversely, while many Iranians are Persians, there are many other ethnic groups represented in Iran, such as Baluchis, Kurds, Azeris and others.



Turan is an empire cited in *Song of the North*, the *Shahnameh* and several other Persian texts. In mythology, Turan was an enemy of Iran, located just to the northeast. No nation of Turan exists today; however, the Turan Plain is a desert basin that spans modern-day Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

Top: Map of the ancient Persian Empire, 500 BCE. Image: UCSB

Bottom: Map of the Turan Plain. Image: Encyclopedia Britannica



# Characters to Know



**Afrasiab**  
a-fruh-zi-æb



**Rostam**  
roh-stæm



**Zāl**  
zahl



**Manijeh**  
mæn-ih-jeh



**Bijan**  
bee-jahn



**Gorgin**  
gor-geen



**Akvan**  
ahk-vahn



**Simurgh**  
see-moorg



# SONG OF THE NORTH: A SYNOPSIS

In a delicate truce between warring nations Iran and Turan, a narrator introduces us to **Princess Manijeh**, a talented archer with an enchanted voice, who is also the daughter of **Afrasiab**, the King of Turan. We then travel to Iran, where the king has learned that farmlands to the north, close to the border of Turan, have become infested with horned demons. Concerned, the king calls upon his knights to volunteer to make the journey and conquer the beasts. Eagerly, the inexperienced yet confident **Bijan** steps forward at his chance to be a hero. As he is unfamiliar with the north, the king sends fellow knight **Gorgin**, who reluctantly accompanies Bijan.

Bijan and Gorgin make the arduous journey north. However, upon finding the demons, Gorgin backs out. Bijan courageously slays the demons while Gorgin does nothing. Worried that his reputation might be ruined once Bijan tells everyone of his cowardice, Gorgin tricks Bijan into crossing the border into Turan to compete in their Harvest Festival and win riches to bring home.



At the festival, Bijan wins every competition and quickly catches the eye of Princess Manijeh. After he reveals to her that he is an Iranian knight, the two spend the day together, sparring, riding and dancing, quickly falling in love. Distressed that their star-crossed nature may prevent them from being together, Manijeh lures Bijan to sleep with her voice and brings him back to her palace. There, she hopes that they can safely live and even unite their two warring nations. However, guards recognize Bijan and seize him, bringing him to Afrasiab. The king is offended, sentencing Bijan to banishment in the Pit of Despair and stripping Manijeh of her title. Cast out from her home, Manijeh visits Bijan every day in the desert to bring him food and keep him company, as they both live hungry and disgraced from society.

# SONG OF THE NORTH: A SYNOPSIS



Back in Iran, Gorgin returns home, though the absence of Bijan alarms the king. The king calls upon his old friend **Zāl** to look for answers since Gorgin will not reveal where Bijan has gone. Zāl calls upon the clairvoyant bird spirit **Simurgh** to help, and she reveals that Bijan is shackled in the Pit of Despair. She foretells that **Rostam**, Zāl's son, will be the one to free him. Following this prophecy, Rostam disguises himself as a merchant and takes Gorgin into Turan to look for clues.

In Turan, Manijeh meets Rostam and tells him the location of the Pit of Despair. Rostam rushes to save Bijan while Manijeh and Gorgin go to intercept the Turanian army, which has heard news of the Iranian presence behind their borders. With Gorgin's help, Manijeh sings out a beautiful melody to the entire army, putting them all to sleep. At the Pit of Despair, Rostam frees Bijan, but only on one condition: to forgive Gorgin for his trickery. With Rostam, Bijan, Gorgin and Manijeh all united, they must race back to Iran before Afrasiab captures them.

As the heroes escape, they must cross the stormy river with the demon **Akvan**. Even worse, Afrasiab's army has woken up and is right on their tails. While Gorgin fights the army, Bijan and Manijeh are tasked with battling Akvan, lassoing him with a golden lariat and capturing him. With everyone safe, the heroes are welcomed back to Iran.





# UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM



## Celebrating Iran (Social Studies, History)

Embark on a research project centered on Persian and Iranian art! First, have a conversation with your class about the history of Iran. With your students, identify Iran on a map and take time to learn about their food, language and culture. Then, conduct some research about places in your community where your class can see Persian art. For those that live in New York City, this may be the Iranian Film Festival at IFC Center or the large collection of Iranian Art at NYU's Grey Art Museum. Task your students with going to one of these places (or go together on a class field trip) and picking one piece of art that resonates with them. Afterwards, have each student present on the piece of art they experienced and ask them to draw connections between the artwork and Persian culture. Throughout the year, keep track of any events in your city or community celebrating Iranian culture and heritage so your class can support them!

To support this unit, use the Context to Consider page in the Learn and Engage section.

## All in the Family (Theater, English Language Arts, Social Studies)

Every family has a story to tell. Prompt your students to create a theatrical retelling inspired by a famous family, like the Jacksons from American pop culture, the Medicis from Italian history or the Soong family from Chinese politics. To begin, ask your students to research a famous historical family and draw out their family tree on a piece of paper. Students may also choose to draw a tree based on their biological or chosen family. Next, task them with choosing a relationship on their tree between two people that they want to explore more. Ask them to consider how these two people might interact with questions like: *How did they meet? What did they think of each other?* and *How did they spend time together?* Based on learned historical context, and using their imagination to build on that information, invite each student to write a scene between their two familial characters. This may be an explosive family drama, a romantic tragedy or a comedic adventure. Introduce theatrical elements like stage directions, character voices and monologue as tools for the class to utilize in their writing. To culminate, put on a mini play festival where each student stages a reading of their work and brings their own history to life.

To support this unit, use the My Anthem of Awesomeness Creativity Page in the Discover and Create section.

## Turn Off the Dark (Theater, English Language Arts, Visual Arts)

Hit the lights because it's time to create an adaptation of a story by playing with shadows! To get started, choose a story that you and your class would like to adapt. This could be a book, a fable or short story, or a well-known legend. Put your students in small groups. Task one group with creating the shadow puppets for all the characters in the story. They can do this by creating cutouts with paper, using their hands or body, experimenting with found objects in the classroom or a combination of all the above! Other breakout groups can create the music for the show, design projections or backdrops, write the script or create the voices for all the puppets. When each team is done, invite groups to come together and combine every element to create a show. Finish the unit by presenting your unique shadow show to another class or taking a video of it to post online.

To support this unit, use the Shadow Lab Activity in the Discover and Create section.



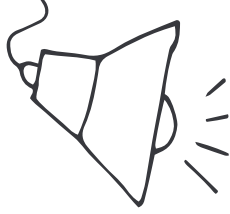
# Discover and Create



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!







## Shadow Lab

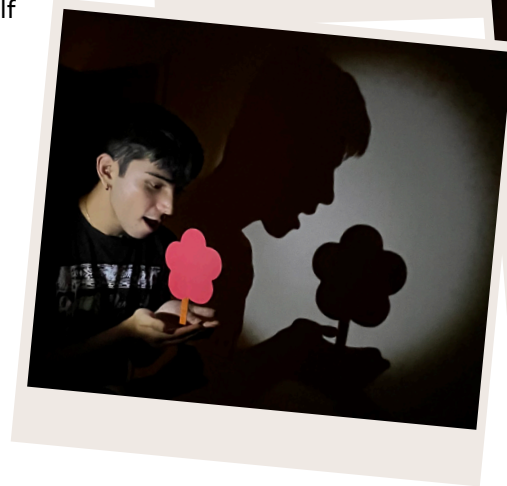
Use the activity below to explore shadow puppetry, experimenting with light, movement and storytelling to create a collaborative shadow performance.

**Materials Needed:** flashlights (one per group), open-ended materials, a white sheet or blank wall, (optional: scissors, tape, colorful gels)

1. Begin by introducing shadow puppetry by using the images on the following page. Ask your students what they notice about the shadows and how they think the effects were created. Let them know they'll be experimenting with light and shadows to make their own stories.
2. Divide the class into small groups of four or five students, giving each group a flashlight, a few objects (like paper cutouts, sticks or fabric) and access to a white sheet or blank wall to use as their "shadow screen." Tell them they are now part of a "shadow team" and will work together to experiment with shadow and light to create a shadow performance piece of their own.
3. Encourage the groups to start by playing with the basics of light and shadow. Have them explore how projected shadows change in scale when objects are placed closer or farther from the light or when the light source itself is moved. Invite them to experiment with using their own bodies alongside objects to see what unique shapes and effects they can create.
4. Once they've explored the basics, ask the teams to think about how movement can bring their shadows to life. Can they make a shadow grow, shrink or appear to jump? Prompt them to layer their objects and bodies to tell small visual stories, reminding them that even simple movements can create dramatic effects.
5. Challenge each group to create a short shadow performance, about one to two minutes long, based on a theme like "A Tragic Journey," "A Magical Transformation" or "A Wondrous Surprise." Encourage them to divide responsibilities, such as who holds the light, moves the objects or directs the action. Give them time to rehearse and refine their stories.
6. Invite each team to perform their shadow story for the class. After each performance, ask the audience to share what they noticed about the techniques used and how the team brought their story to life.



For shadow puppetry inspiration, watch the video [Shadow Play](#) on the [NEW VICTORY Arts Education Resource Library](#)!



### Reflection Questions:



*What choices did your team make to create interesting or surprising effects in your shadow performance?*

*What is one thing you learned about shadows or storytelling that you didn't know before this activity?*



# SHADOW PUPPETRY

Below are a few images from *Song of the North*. Use them as inspiration for the **Shadow Lab Activity** (p. 14).





## MY ANTHEM OF AWESOMENESS

Channel your inner champion by creating a battle song that's all about you. Use the Mad Libs-style template below and fill in the blanks to craft bold lyrics that showcase your strength, spirit and pride. Once your lyrics are ready, add your own rhythm, melody or beat to bring your anthem to life. Sing it, rap it or shout it loud—then share your masterpiece with a friend and let them cheer you on!



I am \_\_\_\_\_ like a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(adjective) (animal)

Standing tall in \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(place)

My \_\_\_\_\_ voice \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(adjective) (action verb)

And I'll never \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(verb)

Through \_\_\_\_\_ , I \_\_\_\_\_ strong,  
(challenge or obstacle) (action verb)

With \_\_\_\_\_ to guide my way.  
(symbol or object)

I will always \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_  
(action verb) (noun)

And let my \_\_\_\_\_ light the day.  
(noun)

This is the sound of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(feeling)

It echoes \_\_\_\_\_ , loud and true.  
(adverb)

With \_\_\_\_\_ in my soul,  
(noun)

I am \_\_\_\_\_ —and I'll always break through!  
(descriptive phrase)



**Helpful Tip:** Add claps, stomps or beats for extra punch, and keep your song handy for when you need inspiration!

# The Arts at Home



To bring the arts home, share this section with families. The NEW VICTORY Arts Education Resource Library supports family engagement with video and print activities for the whole family!





# Be a part of your kid's viewing experience!



## Ask

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

- ▶ Have you ever seen a shadow puppet performance?

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

- ▶ What was it like to see a story told through shadow puppetry? How did it make you feel?



## Watch

Now, watch the trailer for *Song of the North*.

## Engage

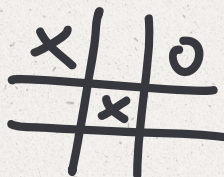
Visit the NEW VICTORY Arts Education Resource Library to bring exciting art-making experiences into your home!



# About the New Victory



Provide this section, which has information about how to get to the theater, what to expect when attending a live performance and accessibility supports, 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.

*Song of the North* 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 any time.

## 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](mailto:Education_Tickets@NewVictory.org).

## Accessibility **AD** **SF**

**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](mailto: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

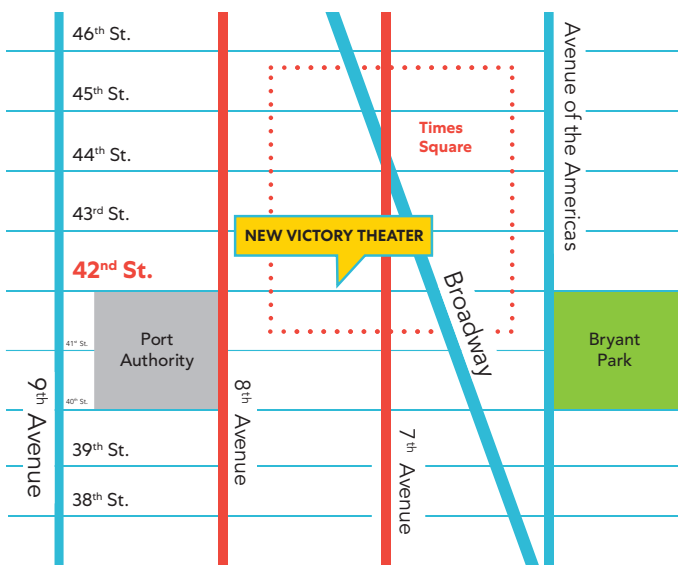
If you are traveling by bus, please also share this important information with the bus driver.

## 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.





# Building Spaces of Belonging



## COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS



Thank you for being our Partner and making the performing arts a priority for your students! We're excited to spend time together at the New Victory Theater, a place where everyone belongs. Let's take care of each other by following these shared agreements:

**Belonging and Access:** Help us cultivate a space in which everyone is valued, ensuring an inclusive environment where everyone can participate without limitation, barriers or judgment.

**Respect:** We invite you to respectfully interact with NEW VICTORY staff and ushers, who are committed to helping you feel welcome, safe and supported while you're here.

**Empathy:** Please extend kindness and patience to all NEW VICTORY staff and fellow audience members, recognizing that each person brings their own experiences and emotions to this shared space.

**Community:** We encourage thoughtful conversations and reflections about the performance, fostering community and perspective-sharing with fellow audience members.



## NO HUSH ZONE: OOHS, AAHS AND APPLAUSE

**Everyone is welcome to show appreciation for the performers.** New Victory prides itself on presenting performing arts that make young people (and adults) exclaim, dance, scream, laugh and giggle! We love when audiences 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 young people in the audience. 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, unless they're being used for access, as well as no eating and drinking in the theater. Remember that NEW VICTORY Ushers—New York City students gaining professional experience—are present to help audiences and help keep everyone safe.

# 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](mailto:AJohn@New42.org).

Speak to a House Manager when you arrive to borrow any support items 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.



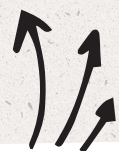




# Respond and Connect



Use this section to engage in reflection on the show's art forms and themes. The activities and creativity pages invite young people to reflect on the experience of seeing a live show (if applicable) 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 were your favorite parts of the show?*

*What did you think of the puppets, masks and music?*

*What emotions did the show make you feel?*

*What questions do you still have about the story?*



## 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...)**

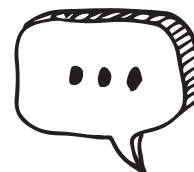


**Analyze (I wonder...)**

**Interpret (I think/feel...)**



**Evaluate (I believe...)**





# Be a Critic



Headline: \_\_\_\_\_

What I noticed and what surprised me:

How the show made me feel:

What mood were you in after the show? What about the show made you feel that way?

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My opinion:

Consider the puppetry, masks, music and lighting:

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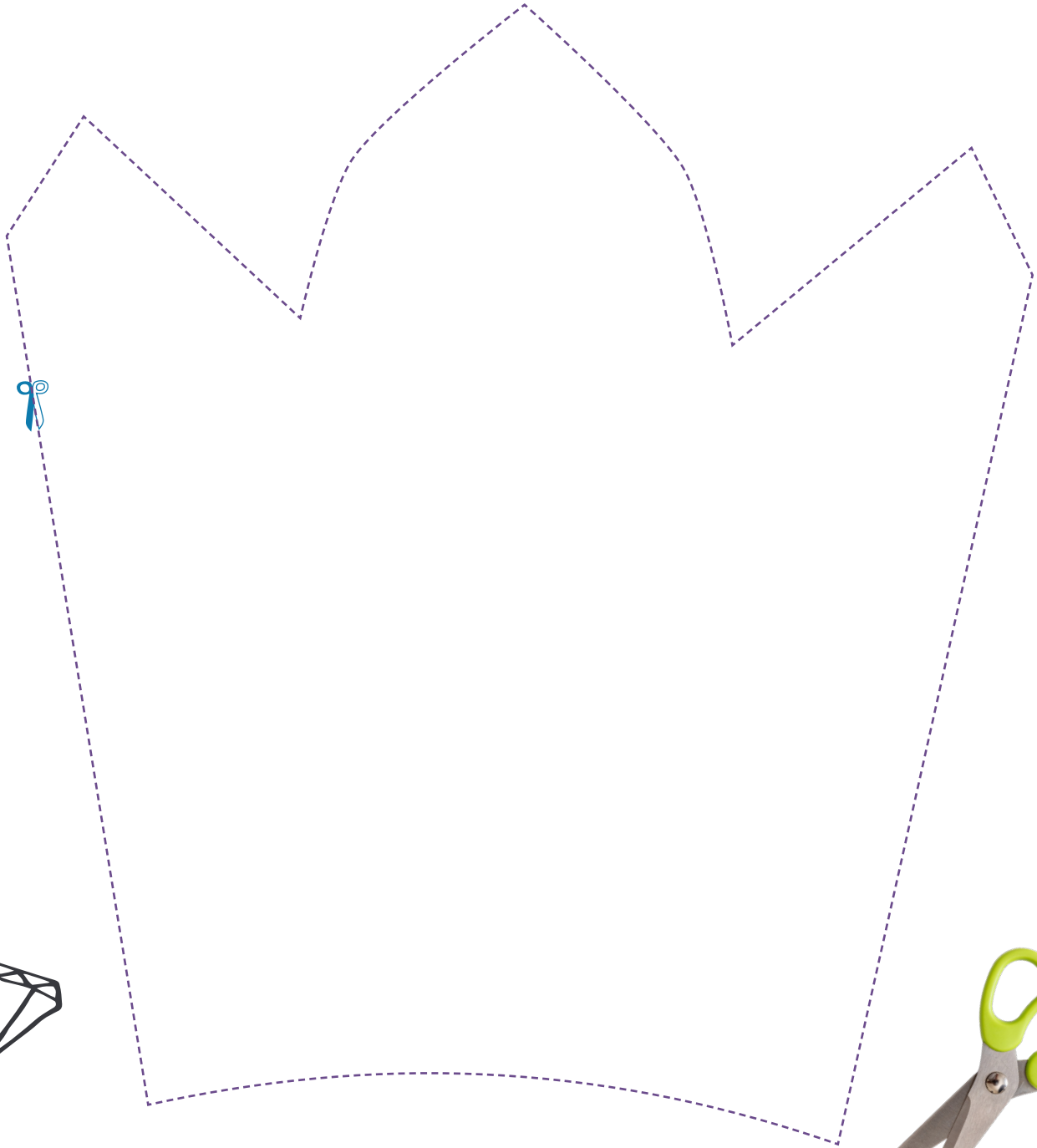
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## Crown Me

Decorate the crown below by drawing shapes inside it that represent you! You will eventually cut out these designs. When light shines through them, they will create a bejeweled, one-of-a-kind crown that projects your uniqueness. Once you've finished drawing, carefully cut along the outer edges of the crown to separate it from the page. Then, use scissors to cut out the shapes you designed inside the crown. Be sure to leave enough structure so your crown stays sturdy while allowing plenty of light to pass through your cutouts.



Your crown will play a special role in the **Shadow Persona Activity** (p. 28). To “wear” your crown, simply hold it atop your head with one hand while you shine with royal opulence!





## SHADOW PERSONA



Use this activity to help students explore their imaginations and step into the shoes of a creative alter ego, or “shadow persona,” inspired by their own visual art.

**Materials Needed:** copies of the **Crown Me Creativity Page**, markers, scissors, flashlights, blank wall, whiteboard or light-colored sheet, speaker or music device

1. Begin by asking students to complete the **Crown Me Creativity Page** (p. 27). Once done, let them know that, in this activity, they’re going to wear their unique crowns proudly and imagine the character or persona it represents.
2. Invite students to close their eyes and imagine the “shadow persona” their crown might belong to. Ask questions like: *What’s your persona’s name? Where do they come from? What is their special power or strength? What makes them unique or royal in their own way?*
3. Guide students to explore how their shadow persona might move by asking: *Do they walk tall and proud, or are their movements soft and mysterious? How does their persona sit, gesture or greet others?* Encourage students to experiment with different movements, gestures and postures.
4. Have students hold their crowns to their heads with their hands, or they can choose to attach them to pencils or dowel rods. Grab some flashlights and invite students to project their crown’s opulence—literally! Now that they’ve found their persona’s identity and way(s) of moving, encourage students to practice their movements, this time using shadow and light! Shine your flashlight onto a wall or sheet and, one by one, invite each student to stand in front of it so that their shadow, and their crown’s shadow, is projected. Invite students to play with the ways their shadow persona reacts to and with the light. **Hint:** See the images on page 15 for inspiration!
5. Ask students to explore their persona’s voice with questions like: *Is it loud and commanding? Soft and whispery? Do they have an accent or a unique way of speaking?* Have students practice introducing their persona to a partner using their voice and movement.
6. Create a runway in the classroom by using tape, chairs or other materials to define a pathway leading to the shadow projection wall or screen. Position the light source at the end of the runway so students’ shadows are projected clearly as they walk. Invite students to rehearse how their persona would move confidently down the runway, incorporating everything they’ve discovered about their character.
7. One by one, students take their turn on the shadow runway, showing off their persona’s unique movements, gestures and voice. Encourage the rest of the class to cheer each participant on, celebrating their creativity and individuality.



### Reflection Questions:

- What inspired your shadow persona?
- How did it feel to embody a character? What did you discover about expressing yourself through movement and voice?
- If you could bring one trait or quality of your shadow persona into your everyday life, what would it be and why?



# Sources

## COMPANIES

Fictionville Studio

Two Chairs

## CONTENT & THEMES

Ferdowsi | Britannica

Persian | Britannica

Persian Empire | History.com

The Epic of Shahnameh | Library of Congress

The Shahnameh: A Literary Masterpiece | University of Cambridge

Shahnameh | Kingorama

Shahnameh: The Epic Of The Persian Kings | BBC Select

## PRODUCTION PHOTOS

Richard Termine





# 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