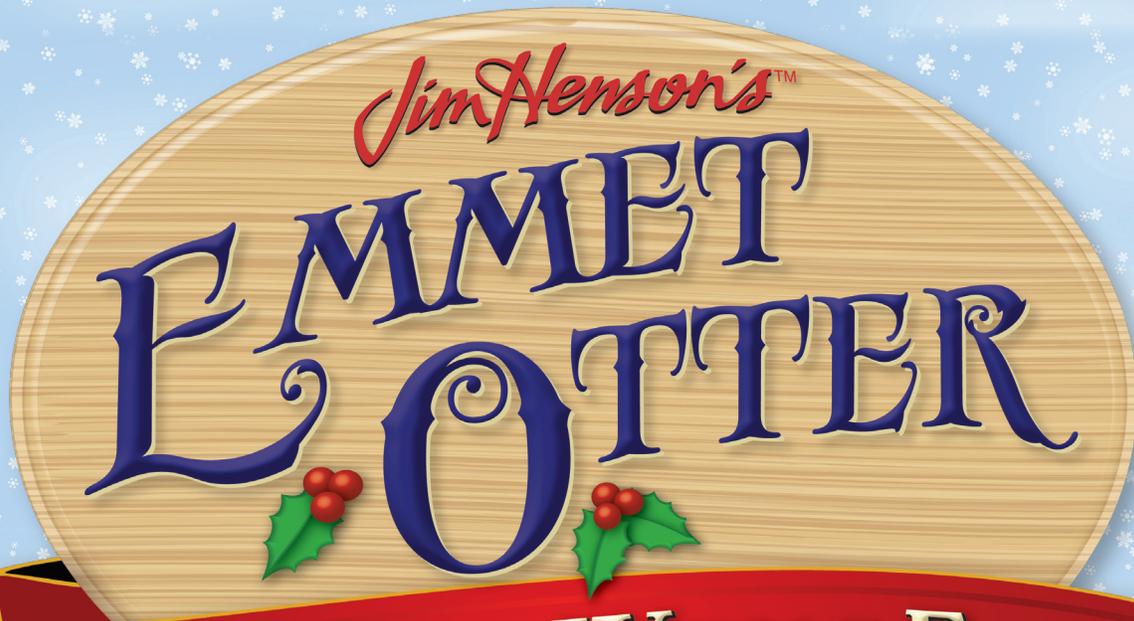


# GOODSPEED MUSICALS

## Teacher's Instructional Guide *for the Goodspeed Musicals production of*



A MUSICAL FOR THE **WHOLE FAMILY**

TM

December 5, 2009 - January 3, 2010  
Goodspeed Opera House  
East Haddam, Conn.



The Max Showalter Center for  
Education in the Musical Theater

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*The Teachers' Instructional Guide (TIG) is intended for use by teachers who will bring their school groups to attend performances at Goodspeed Musicals. The TIG provides background historical information, teaching ideas and prompts to facilitate students' knowledge and appreciation of the show's themes and characters. The TIG activities are influenced by state and national standards associated with the arts, language arts and social studies.*



presents



Produced in association with **THE JIM HENSON COMPANY**

Executive Producer, **BRIAN HENSON**

Book by **TIMOTHY A. McDONALD** and **CHRISTOPHER GATTELLI** Music and Lyrics by **PAUL WILLIAMS**

Based on the Book by **RUSSELL & LILLIAN HOBAN** From the Original Television Special Produced

and Directed by **JIM HENSON** and Written by **JERRY JUHL**

with

**JILL ABRAMOVITZ STANLEY BAHOREK SCOTT BARNHARDT JENNIFER BARNHART JENNA BERLONI  
STEPHEN BIENSKIE JUSTIN BOHON THOMAS CANNIZZARO LEO DAIGNAULT JESSICA ELOVSSON  
KATHY FITZGERALD CRAIG GLENN FOSTER MATTHEW FURTADO MEG GUZULESCU LISA HOWARD  
ANNEY OZAR JAMES SILSON DAVID STEPHENS**

Scenic Design by

**ANNA LOUIZOS**

Costume Design by

**GREGG BARNES**

Lighting Design by

**BRIAN MacDEVITT**

Orchestrations by

**DAN DeLANGE**

Arrangements by

**GREG BROWN**

Additional

Arrangements by

**LARRY**

**PRESSGROVE &**

**DAN DeLANGE**

Assistant Music

Director

**IAN SCHUGEL**

Assistant

Choreographer

**RAY DeMATTIS**

Sound by

**JAY HILTON**

Production Stage Manager

**BRADLEY G. SPACHMAN**

Casting by

**STUART HOWARD, AMY SCHECTER,  
& PAUL HARDT, CSA**

Music Direction by

**LARRY PRESSGROVE**

Directed and Choreographed by

**CHRISTOPHER GATTELLI**

---

First Performance: December 5, 2009

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Produced in association with **OSTAR PRODUCTIONS**

Made possible through the generosity of **TALE WAGGIN' PRODUCTIONS, HEATHER HENSON,** and **CHERYL HENSON**

Goodspeed Musicals

**MICHAEL P. PRICE**

Executive Director

**EDWARD BLASCHIK**

Theatre Manager

**DONNA LYNN COOPER HILTON**

Line Producer

**BOB ALWINE**

Associate Producer

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**R. GLEN GRUSMARK**

Production Manager

**DAN McMAHON**

Director of Marketing &  
Public Relations

**CAITLIN A. QUINN**

Director of Development

*Goodspeed Musicals is dedicated to the heritage of the musical and the development of new works to add to the repertoire.*

# Cast of Characters

(In order of appearance)

Jane **MEG GUZULESCU**  
Russ **STEPHEN BIENSKIE**  
Emmet Otter **JUSTIN BOHON**  
Mrs. Alice Otter **KATHY FITZGERALD**  
Wendell Porcupine **SCOTT BARNHARDT**  
Mrs. Gretchen Fox **LISA HOWARD**  
Mayor Harrison Fox **THOMAS CANNIZZARO**  
Yancy Woodchuck **DAVID STEPHENS**  
Madame Squirrel **JENNIFER BARNHART**  
Doc Bullfrog **LEO DAIGNAULT**  
Will Possum **STANLEY BAHOREK**  
Mrs. Mink **JILL ABRAMOVITZ**  
Chuck Stoat **LEO DAIGNAULT**  
Howard Snake **JAMES SILSON**  
Stan Weasel **STEPHEN BIENSKIE**  
Scatfish **JENNIFER BARNHART**  
Fred Lizard **DAVID STEPHENS**  
Hetty Muskrat **JILL ABRAMOVITZ**  
Old Lady Possum **ANNEY OZAR**  
Harvey Beaver **MATTHEW FURTADO**  
Charlie Muskrat **STANLEY BAHOREK**  
Pa Otter **DAVID STEPHENS**

## PUPPETEERS

**JENNIFER BARNHART**  
**LEO DAIGNAULT**  
**ANNEY OZAR**  
**JAMES SILSON**  
**DAVID STEPHENS**

## ENSEMBLE

**STANLEY BAHOREK**  
**SCOTT BARNHARDT**  
**JENNIFER BARNHART**  
**STEPHEN BIENSKIE**  
**MATTHEW FURTADO**

## SWINGS

**JESSICA ELOVSSON**  
**CRAIG GLENN FOSTER**

## DANCE CAPTAIN

**LISA HOWARD**

## PUPPET CAPTAIN

**DAVID STEPHENS**

## ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

**DEREK MICHAEL DIGREGORIO**

## UNDERSTUDIES

Jane **JENNA BERLONI**; Mrs. Alice Otter **LISA HOWARD**; Emmet Otter **SCOTT BARNHARDT**;  
Russ, Wendell Porcupine, Mayor Harrison Fox, Will Possum, Stan Weasel, Harvey Beaver,  
Charlie Muskrat **CRAIG GLEN FOSTER**; Mrs. Gretchen Fox, Mrs. Mink, Madame Squirrel, Scatfish,  
Hetty Muskrat **JESSICA ELOVSSON**; Yancy Woodchuck, Doc Bullfrog, Chuck Stoat, Howard Snake,  
Fred Lizard, Pa Otter **MATTHEW FURTADO**; Old Lady Possum **JENNIFER BARNHART**

## ORCHESTRA

Conductor/Keyboard: **LARRY PRESSGROVE**; Guitar I: **NICK DIFABBIO**; Guitar II: **TIM MINOUDIS**;  
Percussion: **SALVATORE RANNIELLO**; Violin: **KARIN FAGERBURG**

## ALTERNATES

Conductor: **IAN SCHUGEL**; Percussion: **STEVE COLLINS**; Violin: **DIANE ORSON**

*Out of respect for our actors and your fellow theatergoers, we ask that you remain seated until the curtain calls are over and the house lights have come up. The use of cameras, cellular phones, or recording devices is not permitted in the theatre. Thank you.*

# Musical Numbers

## Act One

### Scene 1, Jane's Bedroom

### Scene 2, The River

*The One Bathing Suit*.....Emmet & Ma

### Scene 3, Main Street, Waterville

*Waterville*.....Mayor Fox, Residents of Waterville

### Scene 4, Mrs. Mink's Music Emporium

*At the Music Store* .....Mrs. Mink, Mrs. Fox, Will Possum, The River Bottom Boys

*At the Music Store (Reprise)*.....Emmet

### Scene 5, The River

*Ain't No Hole in the Washtub*.....Emmet & Ma

### Scene 6, The Otter Cabin & Old Lady Possum's Yard

### Scene 7, Jane's Bedroom

### Scene 8, The Otter Cabin

*When the River Meets the Sea*.....Ma & Emmet

*Trust* .....Emmet & the Squirrels

## Act Two

### Scene 1, The Treehouse & The Otter Cabin

*Bar-b-que* .....The Jug-Band

*Bar-b-que (Reprise)*.....Ma, Hetty, & the Jug-Band

### Scene 2, Outside Jane's House

*Trust (Reprise)*.....Jane & the Squirrels

### Scene 3, Outside the Opera House

*Alice Keep Dreaming*.....Pa Otter

### Scene 4, The Talent Show

*Squirrel-batics* .....Madame Squirrel & the Squirrels

*Der Field Mouse*.....Beverly Badger

*Bar-b-que* .....Yancy

*Born in a Trunk* .....Mrs. Mink

*Rabbit-tastic* .....George & Melissa Rabbit

*Brothers*.....The Jug-Band

*The Amazing John Deer*.....John Deer

*Our World*.....Ma

*River Bottom Nightmare Band*.....The Nightmare Band

### Scene 5, Along the River

*Brothers in Our World*.....Ma, Emmet & the Jug-Band

### Scene 6, Jane's Bedroom

*When the River Meets the Sea (Reprise)* .....The Company

*There will be a 15-minute intermission between acts.*

# Program Notes

by Joshua S. Ritter, Education Director

## Welcome back to Frogtown Hollow!

The holiday season has arrived and so have all the lovable folks of Frogtown Hollow and nearby Waterville. We had to coax them back to Goodspeed Musicals with offers of free snake oil, prize money, and season subscriptions. They drove a hard bargain, yet we are delighted that they agreed to visit us and we hope that you are equally enchanted by their arrival.

For those of you who did not see last season's production, you may be wondering what kind of musical would be worth such a generous offer. This heart-warming story recounts the tale of poor Emmet and his Ma, two otters who secretly enter into a talent show with the intention of using the prize money to purchase a special holiday gift for the other. But the merits of the production are best expressed by Goodspeed Musical's Executive Director Michael Price: "Emmet and Ma's story of giving is one we are excited to share once again with audiences. The wonderful music, charming characters, and a cast of exceptional performers make for a festive celebration for all ages."

The Jim Henson Company originally aired the *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* special in 1977 for HBO (penned by Jerry Juhl and produced and directed by Jim Henson). Then, it re-aired on CBS, ABC, and Nickelodeon in the 80s and 90s and had successful releases on video and DVD. Last year we presented



*Emmet and the Jug-Band members, from the original 1977 TV special*

the world premier of the musical stage production of *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Who could have guessed that our audience would fall in love with dancing otters playing down-home jug-band music? Director and Choreographer Christopher Gattelli helped explain why we should collaborate on this beautiful production.

Christopher was always of the firm belief that this classic holiday story would be ideal for combining the famous puppets from Jim Henson's Creature Shop with live actors and orchestra. Having worked here at Goodspeed on several projects in the past, Christopher also felt that our home here on the river would be the perfect place to work on the show. The musical is set in the woods, on a river, with an Opera House and a Riverside Rest. "Goodspeed audiences know this place," Christopher has said, "and they'll be surrounded by the atmosphere of Frogtown Hollow before they even walk in the doors of the theatre." We agreed with Christopher's vision and we were eager to begin collaborating on the production. Looking back on this decision, Michael Price shared the following: "Last year audiences experienced the joy and magic of Christmastime in this idyllic holiday setting. It truly is the perfect backdrop for such a timeless tale."

Co-book writer Timothy A. McDonald of iTheatrics and Paul Williams, who wrote the music and lyrics for the 1977 Henson TV special, worked with Christopher in this collaboration. Williams returned with all the original music as well as outstanding additions written just for our production. Director Gattelli also noted that Williams' score "ranges from Country, to Bluegrass, to Rock, to Vaudeville, even



*Daniel Torres, Jeff Hiller, Daniel Reichard, and Robb Sapp in the original Goodspeed production, 2008*

Gospel, and every song [will] stay with you long after the curtain has dropped." Williams previously wrote all the music for *The Muppet Movie* and *The Muppet Christmas Carol*.

The other essential partner in this theatrical endeavor was of course, the Jim Henson Company. Under the direction of the Company's chairman and Jim Henson's son Brian, The Jim Henson Company has been an integral part of the production process. Brian has gathered a team of extraordinary puppet creators and craftspeople to bring the Henson Company's well-known style of whimsy, warmth, and brilliance to the Goodspeed Opera House. Jim Henson's Creature Shop's puppets and costumes, created especially for this production, share the stage with talented performers as this heart-warming story unfolds once again.

The musical stage version of *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter* was adapted from Russell Hoban's classic children's book. Moreover, Hoban's tale was a twist on the famous short story "The Gift of the Magi." Despite the multiple variations on the narrative, in each version a timeless lesson rings true: through the characters' struggle, we witness the desperation of those who live in poverty. However, despite their meager existence, we quickly learn that the love they share is more valuable than any tangible treasure.

*Jim Henson's Emmet Otter* explores emotions that transcend rational thought. It touches our hearts to witness friendly otters sacrifice everything for each other because of their strong affection. The unassuming animals in *Emmet Otter* help communicate that self-sacrifice in the name of love is an enlightened gift indeed.

So sit back and enjoy Frogtown Hollow, where warm feelings, family, and the hope of the holiday season take the chill off a frozen river. It is a place where the exciting tune of a jug-band brings an infectious boost to the spirit, and where *Emmet Otter* and his friends will make a little bit of magic right before your eyes.

**Happy Holidays!**

# Show Synopsis

*Setting: Jane's bedroom, a park near Jane's house, Frogtown Hollow, and Waterville*

## Act One

The show begins inside the bedroom of a teenager named Jane. As she has gotten older and dealt with the sadness of losing a loved one, her once cheery view towards Christmas changed. Jane's father appears in her doorway. He asks her if she would like to read her favorite Christmas story, *Emmet Otter's Jug Band Christmas*, with him, as they have done each Christmas Eve. After a bit of convincing, Jane and her father begin to read.

The scene magically shifts to the river town of Frogtown Hollow. It is three days before Christmas. Emmet and Ma Otter are paddling along in their little rowboat; they are delivering the laundry that Ma cleaned for her clients before visiting Waterville. Waterville is quite different than Frogtown Hollow. In Frogtown Hollow, residents like Ma and Emmet Otter must pinch every penny they can just to make ends meet. But everything in Waterville is better.

*"It's a year round pleasure fair  
Decorated with a chill  
We're all about caring  
Here in Waterville."*

The mayor of Waterville announces that this year, they will be holding the first annual Christmas talent contest with a grand prize of fifty dollars. The news travels quickly throughout the town and has everyone extremely excited, including the River Bottom Gang, who intend on winning the competition with their rock band's electric sound.

While in Waterville, Emmet spots a guitar in the window of Mrs. Mink's music shop and he can barely control his excitement.

*"What I love about music  
And guitars most of all  
Is the way they put frets  
In a row so you'll know where to go  
You're not lost after all  
And the way you can keep your world in tune  
Just a twist you're good as new."*

Ma senses how badly he wants the guitar but also sees the price tag of forty dollars. She knows she will never be able to purchase it for him.

Later, when Emmet is out trying to gather firewood for Ma, he runs into his friend Wendell who tells him all about the talent contest and the fifty dollar prize. Meanwhile, Ma's friend Hetty Muskrat stops by and tells her about the talent contest as well. Emmet's friends want to form a jug-band and enter the contest, hoping to have Emmet play the washtub bass. Emmet has some reservations about joining the group. Although he wants to give Ma a memorable Christmas present, he would have to destroy her washtub in the process. Ma thinks about signing up for the contest in order to buy Emmet the guitar at the music shop. She is conflicted, knowing she will need to make a costume, but will have to pawn Pa's tool box in order to buy the necessary fabric.

Meanwhile, in Jane and her father's world, their reading is interrupted by the smell of burning cookies in the oven. While her father runs downstairs, Jane calls her friend and agrees to meet in the park later that night. She then continues to read a bit of the story, but soon falls asleep, having an interesting dream in the process.

Back in Frogtown Hollow, after Emmet has fallen asleep, Ma settles on entering the contest with the hopes of making this Christmas a special one for her son. As for Emmet, he is still conflicted. He wakes in the middle of the night, and runs into a group of very busy squirrels. They discuss Emmet's situation, and have a few words of wisdom to share.

*"You've got to trust the branch you land on  
Trust it to bend but not break  
Sometimes in life you gotta jump in  
That's the chance that you take"*

Emmet decides to make a hole in Ma's washtub in order to join the jug-band and compete in the talent contest.

## Act 2

The night of the talent contest has finally arrived. Just when Ma is about to register for the talent show, she is told by Mayor Fox that it is too late to sign up. She pleads with Mayor Fox to make an exception:

"Harrison, I've made great sacrifices here. You've got to let me--"

But Mayor Fox is steadfast in his decision. As the show progresses, one act must withdraw from the contest, and in the spirit of Christmas, Mayor Fox allows Ma to fill their spot. After all have performed, the winner is announced. Much to the disappointment of Emmet and Ma, the River Bottom Boys are the winners. After the talent show, Ma and Emmet both agree that even though they should feel disappointed about not winning, they choose to think positively about the experience. As they begin their journey home, the jug-band and Ma start singing together, combining their two songs to create one spectacular piece. Doc Bullfrog overhears their song and offers them a job singing at the Riverside Rest, making this Christmas a special one for Ma and Emmet.

Back in Jane's room, her father explains that she fell asleep mid story. To her father's surprise, Jane asks the question he has been hoping to hear all evening.

"Hey, Dad, you think we could ....finish the story?"

Her father happily obliges. After all, *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* is part of their family tradition. And although they may have faced some challenges since the last holiday season, they are together now, making this Christmas a memorable one for Jane and her father.

## Overview: The Jim Henson Company

The Jim Henson Company has remained a leader in family entertainment for over 50 years. They are highly regarded and recognized worldwide as an innovator in puppetry, animatronics and digital animation. Established by esteemed puppeteer, producer and director Jim Henson (1936-1990), the company was formed in 1955 and has become a leading innovator of puppetry in America, bringing a fresh look to an ancient art. The Company's expertise helped create some of the most memorable characters of all time, including Kermit the Frog, Elmo, and Miss Piggy.

In the case of Emmet Otter, Jim Henson and his creative team were able to bring a beloved literary character to life. The 1977 creative interpretation of *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* featured the development of new puppeteer techniques, using many different puppet forms and featuring radio control technology. Jim Henson said this about the production process:

"*Emmet Otter* was the first time we had gotten into those kinds of elaborate sets where we had floors in the interiors and we would take a wide-angle shot with characters coming up through holes in the floor. Or we'd cut into the set and remove the floor and have the characters moving through space in waist shots. That was the most elaborate production we had gotten into at that point. *Frog Prince* had been platformed-up and *The Muppet Show* was always platformed-up, but in *Emmet Otter*...we'd go right into a scene. We'd have the whole set in three dimensions... rigged so we could pop parts and come out through the openings, which is really time-consuming..."

By creating such an intricate piece of entertainment, Jim Henson and his company were able to grow as performers, and creators, receiving critical accolades for their one hour musical Christmas special.

Other than *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*, The Jim Henson Company is best known as the creators of the world famous Muppets. The company is the recipient of over 50 Emmy Awards and nine Grammy Awards. With additional locations in New York and London, The Jim Henson Company headquarters are located in Los Angeles on the historic Charlie Chaplin lot. Following the death of Jim Henson in 1990, the company is now managed by Jim Henson's five adult children. The company is also home to Jim Henson's Creature Shop, as well as Henson Recording Studios.

### Abbreviated list of Jim Henson Company Credits:

*Dinosaur Train* (2009), *Sid the Science Kid* (2008), *Unstable Fables* (2008-2009), *The Skrumps* (2007), *MirrorMask* (2005), *Farscape* (1999-2003), *Bear in the Big Blue House* (1997-2003), *Muppet Treasure Island* (1996), *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992), *Dinosaurs* (1991-1994), *The Storyteller* (1987), *Labyrinth* (1986), *Muppet Babies* (1984-1992), *Fraggle Rock* (1983-1987), *The Dark Crystal* (1982), *The Muppet Show* (1976-1981).



# History of Puppetry

Puppetry is an ancient art form with roots originating as far back as 30,000 years. It can be found in almost every culture and country across the globe. Puppetry plays an important role in Goodspeed Musical's production of Emmet Otter. Here is a history of puppetry and many of its creative manifestations.

## Puppetry in Asia

Asian puppetry began around 2500 B.C.E. Archeologists studying the Indus Valley Civilization uncovered ancient terracotta dolls that could be manipulated by a string, as well as terracotta animals that could be maneuvered up and down with a stick.

China's puppet history dates back 2000 years with the "Theater of the Lantern Shadow," or as it is known today, "Chinese shadow theater." While the puppets themselves played to every social class throughout China, the profession of puppeteering was considered a job for those of the lower class. Japan has a history of many intricate forms of puppetry, including the Bunraku, developed from the Shinto temple rites, requiring three puppeteers to man each puppet in full view of the audience.



*Vietnamese Water Puppets*

Vietnam's contribution to puppetry came in the form of "Mua Roi Nuoc," or water puppetry, which is where the puppets are built from wood and appear to glide across the waist high pool of water they perform above.

India has a rich history in puppetry, dating as far back as the Indian epic Mahabharata, which included references to puppets in the text. The Rajasthani puppet is the most notable example of Indian

puppetry, and is still in practice today.



*Traditional Indian Puppets*

## Middle-Eastern Puppetry

Explorers have discovered figures with movable parts dating as far back as 5,000 years in the Middle East. Egyptian hieroglyphs from 2000 B.C. portrayed 'walking statues' in religious dramas. Puppetry was sometimes viewed as a legitimate expression of poetic emotion in the Middle East as well. A form of shadow puppetry, called khayal al-zill or 'shadows of imagination,' serves as a superb example. Here, live music is played, along with the use of smoke, fire, thunder, rattles, and other sound effects simulating the elements that are designed to evoke strong reactions from the audience.

Some historians speculate that Turkish rulers were so enamored with puppet shows in Egypt that they brought the tradition back with them. The Turkish Shadow Theatre, called karagoz, is one of the most noteworthy puppet theatres in the Middle East.



*Turkish Shadow Puppets*

Iran also boasts a rich history of puppetry dating back earlier than 1000 C.E. While initially only glove and string puppets were used, the influence of more elaborate Turkish puppetry began to seep into Iranian culture during the Qajar era.

### Ancient Greece and Rome

While there aren't many physical examples of puppetry remaining from ancient Greece, evidence of its existence during the time period can be found in abundance within the texts of historical literature. Both Aristotle and Plato make references to puppets in their work, and the epic story of The Iliad and The Odyssey were presented using puppetry. In addition, puppet plays were shown at the Theatre of Dionysus at the Acropolis.

### European Puppetry

Puppetry emerged in Europe due to its strong cultural relevance in Ancient Rome and Greece, and, because of its success and popularity, it has thrived throughout the centuries. An example of early European puppetry is the Italian commedia dell'Arte tradition, where performers traveled from place to place, performing in half-masks, or with puppets. The puppets were used to portray larger than life characters and tell intricate stories. In 1310, the Church began to encourage puppetry, helping it flourish throughout Italy. Italian puppet shows, known as marionettes, created such notable pieces of theater as the tragedy 'Dr. Faust'. However, Italian puppeteers became divided into two groups—the privileged theatre artists and the street performers, with the latter continuing to be outcasts in society.



*Italian Marionettes in performance*

Over the years, innovations were made in the field of marionette production. The Sicilian "Opéra di Pupi,"

or "Opera of the Puppets," employed rod marionettes and performed the traditional "cantastori," or "sing stories," which can be traced to the Provençal troubadour tradition during the first half of the 13th century.

Puppetry's roots are also firmly planted in Great Britain. The traditional British Punch and Judy puppetry traces its roots to the 16th century to the Italian commedia dell'arte. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the familiar Punch and Judy puppet show was performed in an easily transportable booth, and has influenced numerous countries' own puppet variety programs. The British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild began a resurgence of puppetry in the country during the early twentieth century.

There is a long tradition of puppetry in the Czech Republic, Germany and Austria as well. In the eighteenth century, German and Austrian operas were specifically composed for marionette puppets. In 1855 the Munich Marionette Theatre was formed, and had a surplus of 40 plays that were created by its founder, solely for puppet performance. The Salzburg Marionette Theatre was founded in 1913 and still continues the tradition of presenting full-length marionette opera to this day.



*An example of a traditional European Puppet*

### African Puppets

It is commonly believed that Africa inherited the tradition of puppetry from Egypt. Spanning the centuries, the people of Africa have used puppets in ceremonies in secret societies, ethnic groups, healing and hunting ceremonies, ritual dramas, and for entertainment.

## American Puppets

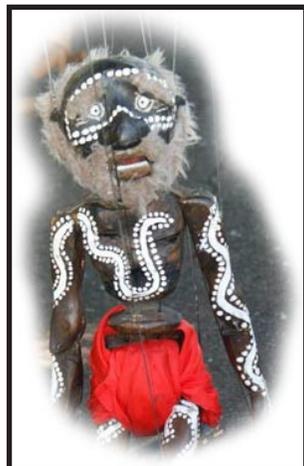
America's puppetry roots span as far back as the Teotihuacán culture of Central Mexico, about 600 B.C., where puppet-like statuettes were part of traditional funeral rites. Puppets were included in ceremonies among the indigenous people of North America as well. European puppeteers accompanied Mexicans to America, bringing their traditions to the land, but eventually America developed its own unique puppet styles. The United States has pioneered puppetry since the 1960s. Politics were portrayed in puppet shows through Peter Schumann's *Bread and Puppet Theatre*. Jim Henson revolutionized puppetry with his creation of the Muppets. Television popularized puppets with programs such as "Lamb Chop," "Sesame Street," and "The Muppet Show." There is also validity in the statement that puppets were the predecessors of animated characters.



*Jim Henson's Muppets*

## Oceania

The aboriginal people of Australia have a long tradition of oral storytelling, which dates back thousands of years. They used masks and other objects to convey themes about morality and nature. These masks were carved from wood and heavily decorated with paint and feathers.



*A traditional Aboriginal puppet*

With the arrival of European settlers, a different sort

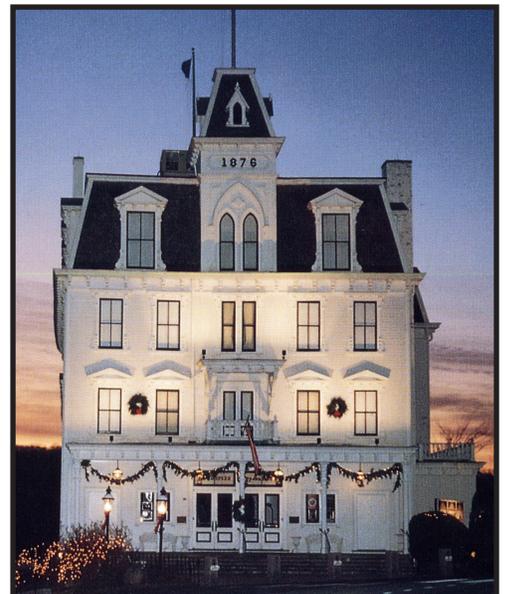
of puppetry took shape, and to this day, there are a great many thriving puppet companies in Australia. One of Australia's modern puppet theatre troupes is called "Snuff Puppets". Based in Melbourne, their work is full of inventive black humor, political satire and an interesting, "home sewn" visual aesthetic. Snuff Puppets have performed in over 15 countries, sharing their unique brand of puppetry across the globe.

Puppetry is an intricate part of so many of the worlds' most interesting cultures; cultures that still proudly embrace their own puppetry traditions while looking forward to the further evolution of such a fully realized and imaginative art form.

# Theater Etiquette

Seeing a musical at the Goodspeed Opera House is a unique and exciting experience. All the members of the production, both cast and crew, work hard to give you a great show. As an audience member, you also have an important job. You must help the performers give their best performance possible. You can do this by practicing these rules of theater etiquette:

1. Don't forget to turn off your cell phone. A ringing phone can be very distracting. It can also be embarrassing for you if it is your phone that is disrupting the show!
2. Make sure to visit the restroom before the production begins.
3. Don't speak or whisper during the performance...whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency should whispering occur.
4. Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in Musical Theater is part of the performance, so remain silent when the show begins.
5. Do not take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and it can result in an accident.
6. Do not put your feet up on the seats, or kick the seat in front of you.
7. Do remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, calmly walk toward the nearest exit.
8. Do laugh when the performance is funny.
9. Do applaud when the performance is over. Applause is how you say thank you to the performer. The actors will bow as you applaud. That is how they say thank you for coming.
10. Do stand and applaud if you thought the show was outstanding.



# Language Arts for Elementary School

## Before the Show

Goodspeed Musical's production of *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter* is based on Russell Hoban's popular children's story *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*. There are many stories that have been adapted into theatrical and film productions. Help students make personal connections by asking them if they can think of any stories that they have seen made into movies or shows. (Examples include *Eloise at the Plaza*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Little Princess*, *Shrek*, *Where the Wild Things Are*). Ask students to think of their favorite story. Perhaps it was the first book they learned to read. Or maybe it is a story that one of their family members read to them just before they went to sleep. Suggest that they make text to self connections by writing or orally retelling the story to a partner or small group. Encourage them to remember as much as they can from the story. Then, ask them to prepare an oral presentation, skit, or drawing recounting the story to share with their classmates, making sure to include the major plot points, details about the self to text connections, as well as why it is one of their favorite stories.

## Understanding Through Exploration

In every fictitious story, the writer typically sets out to create a completely imagined environment in which the characters thrive and the story unfolds. In *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*, there are two major settings that are imagined, and they couldn't be more different from each other. One setting is Frogtown Hollow, where the Otter family lives. In the story, Frogtown Hollow is depicted as, "...a little rundown place with no electricity." The other main setting is Waterville, which serves as the "big city" for Ma and Emmet. It is a town where "the houses huddled with their cozy windows shining in the winter dusk." Everyone in Frogtown Hollow looked forward to traveling to Waterville. After all, "Everything exciting that happened, happened in Waterville."

After some overview about settings and how they are used, ask students to produce a list with their classmates showing the differences and similarities between the two settings in *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*. Examples of differences between the two settings include indoor plumbing, electricity, small homes, rich areas, and poor areas. Similarities may include snowy hills, barns, nice citizens, and caring neighbors. Then, using this list, have students work in groups to create a mural of Waterville and Frogtown Hollow.

## After the Show

Jane changes dramatically throughout *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*. When the audience is first introduced to her, she is trying to avoid her father's enthusiasm and cheer about the Christmas holiday. However, by the middle of the story, when faced with an invitation by her friend to sneak out of her house, Jane decides to stay in, opting instead to spend Christmas Eve with her father. Jane learns many valuable lessons from her visit with the "Christmas miracle" squirrels in the park, and from the story of *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*. These lessons help shape her perspective on Christmas, and ultimately, herself. She realizes that although life may change around her, and she may be faced with challenges along the road, she will always have family and friends to love and look out for her. She also learns the importance of taking chances and helping others in need.

To make the connections to these themes, have your students write or dictate a letter in the voice of Jane to Ma and Emmet Otter. Students should describe how Ma and Emmet helped her learn many valuable lessons. Ask students to think about what Jane might ask about their life in Frogtown Hollow. What other questions might Jane have for Emmet and Ma?

## Extension Activities

### Activity 1

There are quite a few morals, or life lessons that run through *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*. Help students define a moral with examples. Ask them if they can find examples of some morals in the show. Examples include: caring for those you love; money does not always buy happiness, and taking chances is an important part of life. Ask students to discuss similarities to any other stories that they have read before. Have students gather in small groups to share

their findings. Provide students with books, stories, and films or videos that offer common morals and ask students to make connections and depict the morals in art, music, or movement activities to share with classmates.

### *Activity 2*

Pa Otter is a very important character in *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*. Even though he is not physically present in the lives of Ma and Emmet any longer, his memory and spirit thrives. Ask students to think of someone in their life that may not physically be around anymore, (whether it is someone who has moved away or passed on) yet they still think about. What is it about that person that they remember, perhaps a distinct personality trait, a life lesson that they taught, a funny joke they would tell, an exciting memory of an event they shared? Ask students to write down, depict through art, or orally share their memories. Encourage them to be as detailed as possible. Then have them break into groups and share their accounts with classmates.

# Social Studies for Elementary School

## Before The Show

Emmet and his Ma live among the lower class in Frogtown Hollow, while the Mayor of the town and his wife, along with many of the other citizens of Waterville, belong to the middle and upper middle classes. Ask students to define the characteristics that differ in each of these settings. Ask them specifically to discuss the obvious differences between the two classes in Emmet Otter, and to compare and contrast their own social environment to that of Frogtown Hollow and Waterville.

Ask them to define a class system and describe what they see in their own environment. Provide groups or teams of students with materials, videos, and technology related resources that depict differences in how people live around the world based on social class. Then have them make comparisons about social class structures across societies in other countries such as in India, Africa, and Spain. Have them depict differences and similarities, comparing and contrasting aspects of social class differences they view from their own community in the U.S. with those of other countries. Then, working from this information, as well as additional materials found in the library or online, have them choose one of the foreign environments that is of interest to them personally and create an oral or written report to share with the class. Make sure to include a description of the physical landscape, pros and cons of being affiliated with a particular social class, major achievements of those in a particular class, and how the society handles social class structure. You may also have them explore any connections between social class and cultural backgrounds in particular societies.

## Understanding through Exploration

In order to be able to afford the second hand piano for Ma, Emmet decides to join his friends to form a jug-band and compete in Waterville's Christmas talent contest. Ask students to define a jug-band. Have them use the library/internet to research the history of jug-bands in the U.S. Then, in groups, have them create their own jug-bands out of everyday materials, just like Emmet and his friends! Encourage them to be creative when designing their jug-band. They can use notebooks and a pencil to create an instrument, as well as a trash basket and a baton, two erasers, chairs, articles of clothing, and even the zippers on their backpacks! Just like historical jug-bands, the importance is on the music, and the feeling that creating music brings, not the material aspect of the instruments.

## After the Show

Puppets are a major component of Goodspeed's production of *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*. After researching a bit about puppetry, and its place in the history of theater, have students make their own puppets. They can create puppets by using a sock, or paper bag as the base, along with other decorative materials to add character. Encourage them to try to base the design of the puppet on their favorite character in the play. This can mean that they design the puppet to mimic the appearance of a character, or take aspects of favorite character's personality and transfer them into their own creation. For instance, if they were to choose the Mayor's wife, they could color the puppet green because she is so envious of the contestants in the talent competition. After they finish the design, they can create a short monologue for the character to share with classmates. Encourage them to answer questions such as: Who are they? Where are they from? What are their likes and dislikes? What are their goals? What are their hopes and dreams?

## Extension Activity

Emmet and his Ma do not have much money. However, despite their financial struggles, they never become overly discouraged. Have students discuss which qualities of their personalities and worldview allow them to be positive about their way of life. Have them think about their own family and friends. Ask: "Do you and the people close to you share any of these qualities and beliefs?" Have them work in small groups or independently to make a list of Emmet and Ma's qualities, as well as those of their own family, friends, and themselves. Ask them to depict overlapping qualities in Venn diagrams or other schematic representations. Have them come to some conclusions about the ways people deal with their particular life circumstances.

# Language Arts for Middle School

## Before The Show

The writers of Goodspeed Musical's production of *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter* worked from a previously existing text to bring the characters alive on stage. One of the writers, Timothy A. McDonald, intently studied the original story by Russell Hoban and the Jim Henson *Muppet Christmas* special to create the piece of theater that is on stage today. Have students imagine they are playwrights. Ask them to choose a favorite childhood story and create a theatrical version. Use this information, provided by Timothy McDonald as a guide in your creative process:

"Creating a musical is a lot of fun. Sometimes musicals have a story that is completely made up, or original, and many times the story of the musical is based on something else, like a book or movie."

"*Jim Henson's Emmet Otter* is unique because the stage version is based on a television special, which was based on a book! When I started adapting the show for the stage I spent a great deal of time reviewing both the television special's script (by Jerry Juhl) and the book *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* (by Russell Hoban with illustrations by Lillian Hoban) before I wrote a single word."

"To get a better understanding of what it is like to create a musical from an existing story, try it yourself. It's pretty easy and who knows, you might decide you too want to create musicals!"

## Here's what to do:

**Pick a story you really like a lot.** It can be a book, movie, television show, a fairy tale, or a story you make up yourself.

**Review the story** and pick one part of it that you think would make a great scene and song for your musical. Generally in a musical characters break into song because they feel so strongly about something that mere words are not enough—they must break into song! So make sure you pick a part of the story that demands to be sung.

Next, **find a quiet place and just think** about your scene and song. Imagine what the characters might say to each other. If the characters started singing, what would they sing about? Keep imagining the entire scene and song in your mind and don't limit your imagination! Repeat this exercise several times, until you can clearly imagine the scene and song.

Now **write out a rough sketch** of your scene and song on paper. Don't worry about being specific; just write down what happens (the action) and any key dialogue or lyrics. If you don't feel comfortable making up a song, consider using a song you already know and changing the lyrics to fit your scene.

Once you've got your rough scene written down, make it more specific. **Write a script**, giving characters lines to speak and lyrics to sing! Once you're done, gather a bunch of your friends and have them read and sing the song for you. You can **add staging and even dance** if you'd like. Once everyone's comfortable with their parts, **perform your scene and song** for your parents and friends!

"That's all there is to it! Congratulations on creating your very own mini musical!"

-Timothy A. McDonald, co-author of *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*

Examples of great children's stories that could be adapted include *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *Strega Nona*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and the American Girl series.

## Understanding Through Exploration

The two predominant settings in *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter* are described thoroughly within the original children's

story and are beautifully brought to life in the stage show here at Goodspeed Musicals. Explain to students that creating a descriptive setting can help the reader, or audience, truly feel like they are a part of the story themselves. Establishing a clear environment can help the actors fully realize their characters.

Have students visualize a special place they have visited before. Examples of possible places include a favorite family vacation spot, a secret hiding place in their home, a tree house they built with their friends, etc. Have them write a few paragraphs describing this special place in full detail. They could imagine themselves as an explorer stumbling across this place for the very first time. What do they see? Who, if anyone, is in this special place? What does it sound like? Smell like? Have them make sure to describe the special place in great detail. Then, have them create a new place, straight from their own imagination making sure it is just as detailed and life-like as their special place. When they are finished, share both accounts with classmates, and see if everyone can tell which was based on an actual memory, and which was strictly conceived from one's imagination.

### **After the Show**

For Jane, the story of *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* represents much more than just a holiday tradition. It is the story her mother used to read to her as a young girl, building lasting memories for Jane to keep within her, even after her mother passed away. During her most recent experience with the story, it is possible that she may have realized that she has much more in common with Emmet now than she had before.

Ask students to write a letter to Emmet in Jane's voice, recalling how things have changed since her mother died, and how these changes made her feel. Some questions that the students may explore in their letter include: Does Emmet share some of the feelings that Jane is experiencing? How does Jane feel connected to Emmet? What has it been like this year, especially around holiday times, for Jane and her father? How has Jane's holiday traditions changed this year? Are there questions Jane might have for Emmet? If so, what would she ask?

### **Extension Activities**

#### *Activity 1*

There are a quite a few morals, or life lessons, that run through Emmet Otter. Examples include caring for those you love; money does not always buy happiness; taking chances is an important part of life; believing in yourself is important for achievement; and the importance of family.

Present students with a list of morals or life lesson prompts and then have them think about which morals or life lessons have impacted their own life. Questions to facilitate the creative progression of this exercise include: Do you see any other themes that are present in the play? Which morals are the most important to follow in order to have a meaningful life? What are some consequences of ignoring important morals and life lessons that are presented to you? Now, have the students write down their findings, and then in small groups, share their discoveries.

#### *Activity 2*

Both Emmet and Ma make monumental sacrifices for each other in Emmet Otter. And, while neither of them win the prize they were hoping, they walk away knowing that they made the right decision for each other. They realize their love for each other is paramount over all other material needs or desires.

Ask students if they have ever made sacrifices for the people they love, and if they can think of a time in the past that someone may have made a sacrifice for them. Have the students write down or orally share their memory. Then, after some thought, have them write an account of what would have happened if the circumstances in their memory had been different. Make sure to have them touch upon issues such as if the sacrifices made by themselves or their loved one had not been made, as well as how the situation could have been different, and how everyone involved might have been affected.

# Social Studies for Middle School

## Before the Show

*Jim Henson's Emmet Otter* is based on the story called *The Gift of the Magi*, written in 1906 by O. Henry. Have students read the story, asking them to take notes based on specific prompts you provide them as they read. They will discover that the main characters in *The Gift of the Magi* are struggling to make ends meet. This is true for both the Otters in their made up world of Frogtown Hollow, as well as for many individuals and families in current times. Instruct students to work as a group to compare and contrast aspects of hardship that they observe in today's society to that of the hardships seen in *The Gift of the Magi* and *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*. Then, pick a character from either story, and write an account of what a normal day might consist of for them. Be specific, making sure to include details about schooling, what their meals would consist of, any playtime they may be allotted, or work or chores they would have to complete.

## Understanding Through Exploration

In *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*, the jug-band itself plays quite a large role. But what is a jug-band? Have students research and create written and oral presentations of the jug-band's musical history, including a detailed look at what instruments comprise a traditional jug-band. Some questions to have the students make sure they cover in their presentations include: How does its history correspond with Emmet and his friends? What is the closest association to jug-bands in today's music industry? What time period does the jug-band most represent? Are any present day events similar to those of that time period?

## After the Show

While Russell Hoban's original story did not include puppets, the Jim Henson Company, along with Jerry Juhl, Timothy A. McDonald, and Christopher Gattelli, added them to their interpretations of the story. The addition of puppetry transforms the story from a beautifully written and heart-warming tale, to a fully realized, unique story-telling experience. Using technology and text resources have students create an account of the history of puppetry in theater. They can work individually or in pairs or groups to research a puppetry piece, a puppetry pioneer (someone like Jim Henson), a specific country's puppet history (England, Czech Republic, India, Japan, etc.) or how puppetry has been used in the theater. Examples of theater pieces include *The Lion King* on Broadway, Aboriginal puppetry shows, Jim Henson's *The Muppet Show*, Vietnamese water puppetry, Japanese shadow puppets, etc.

## Extension Activity

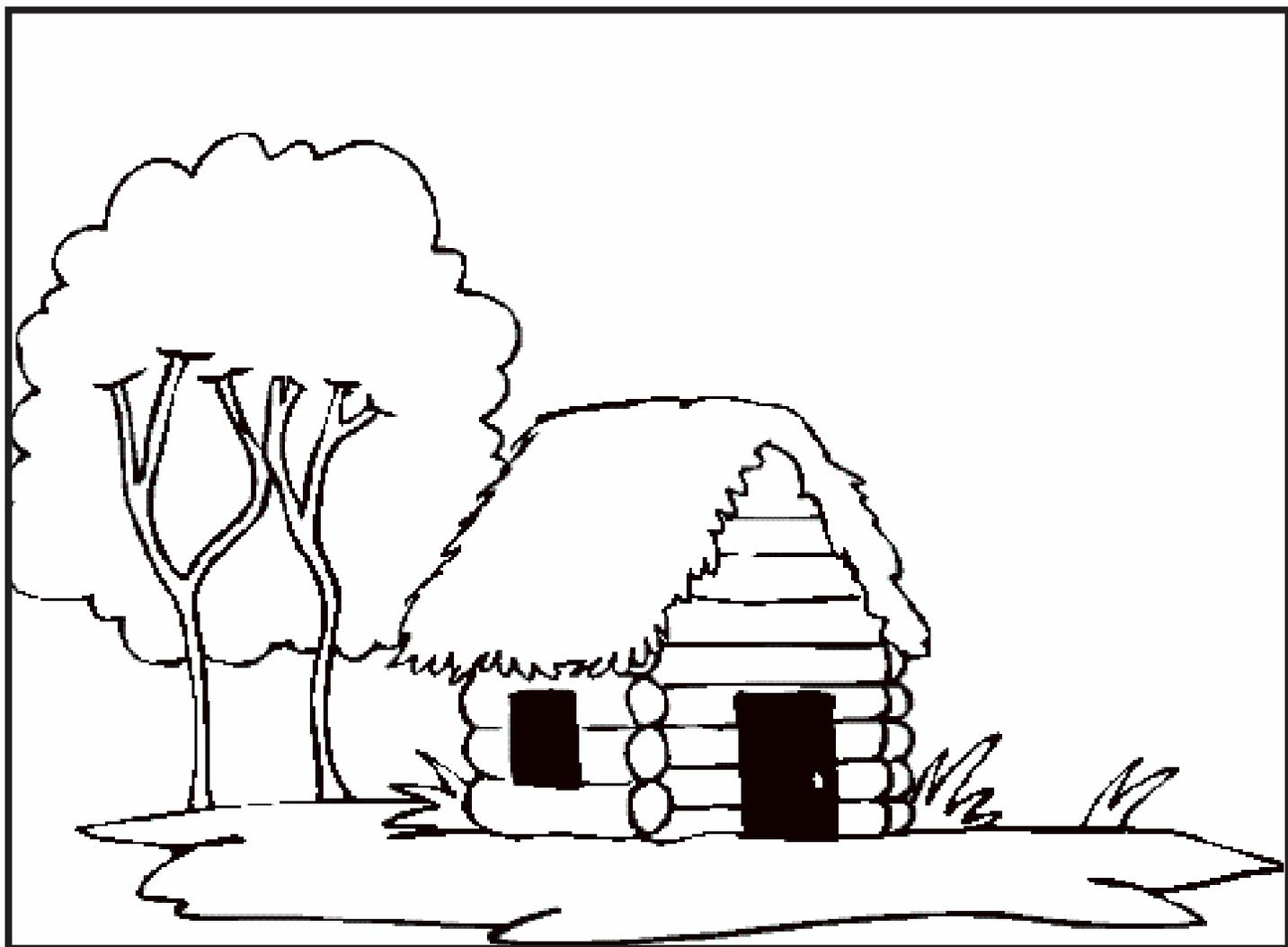
Emmet and his Ma have a rather positive outlook on life, regardless of their financial hardships. Even when they seem to be discouraged by their economic situation, they always try to find a silver lining, or ways of bettering themselves and each other. Have your students discuss their own family, prompting the following questions: Have you noticed any changes in your family interactions because of our country's recent economic downturn? Have you and your family made any sacrifices in order to maintain your lifestyle? How has that affected your family's morale?

Now, have the students make a list of the things that could have been difficult over the last year. Then, as Ma and Emmet would do, have them prepare a list of aspects of their family's current situation that can be looked at in a positive manner, finding a silver lining that may have developed out of these difficult times.

## Creative Exercises

### Activity 1

Emmet Otter and his Ma live in Frogtown Hollow- a small village down river from the "big city" of Waterville. Although Emmet and Ma's home may be quaint, they try to make it look and feel as special as they can. Have students use the model below to decorate their own version of the Otter's cabin. Ask your students to think about the following: How would you decorate the outside of their house? What would be in the yard for Emmet to play with? Do Emmet and Ma have any pets? How do you see Ma and Emmet's house in your mind?



*Activity 2*

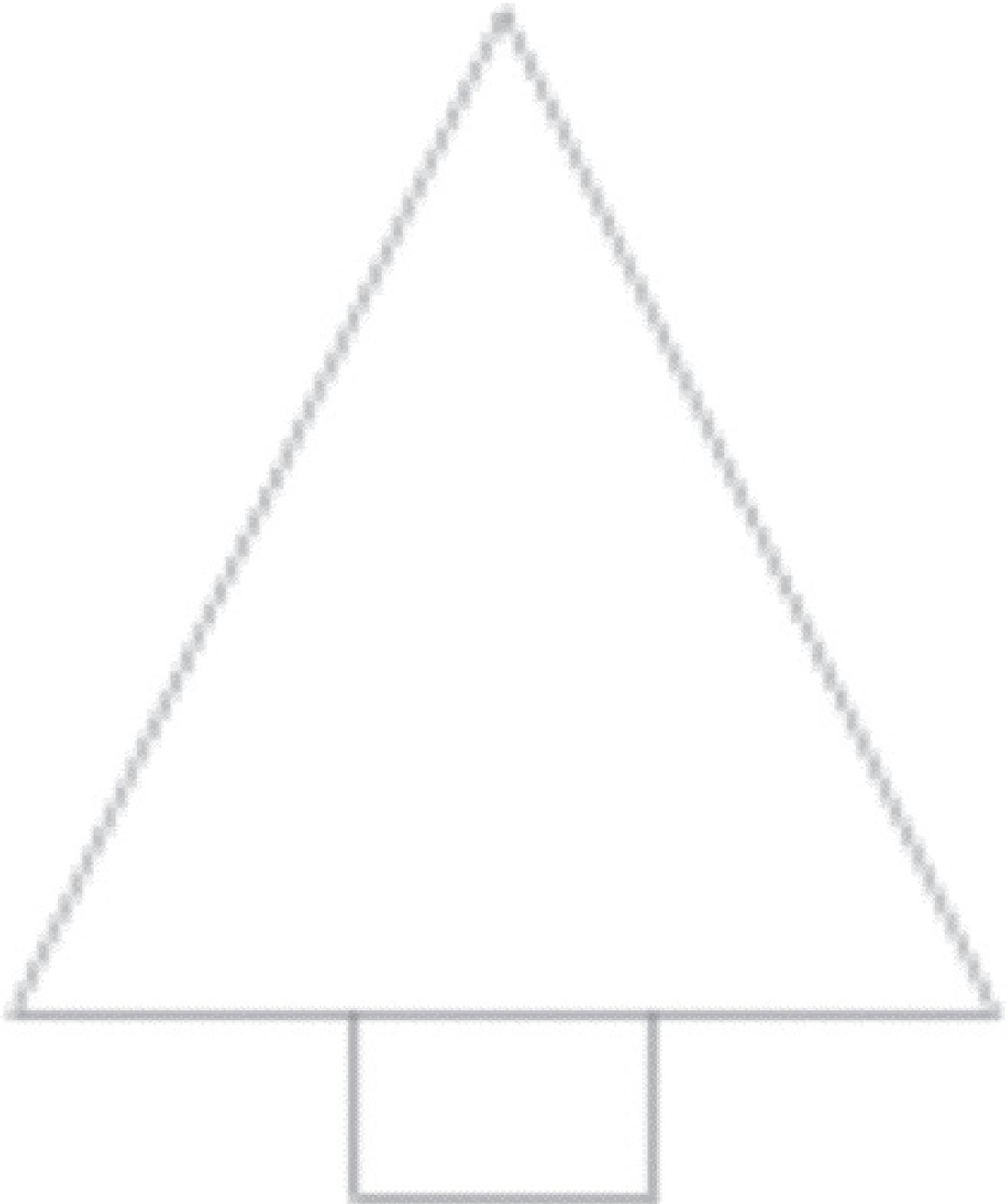
Pa Otter has left the Otter family with many memories and traditions. One of these traditions is bringing home, and decorating a Christmas branch instead of a whole Christmas tree.

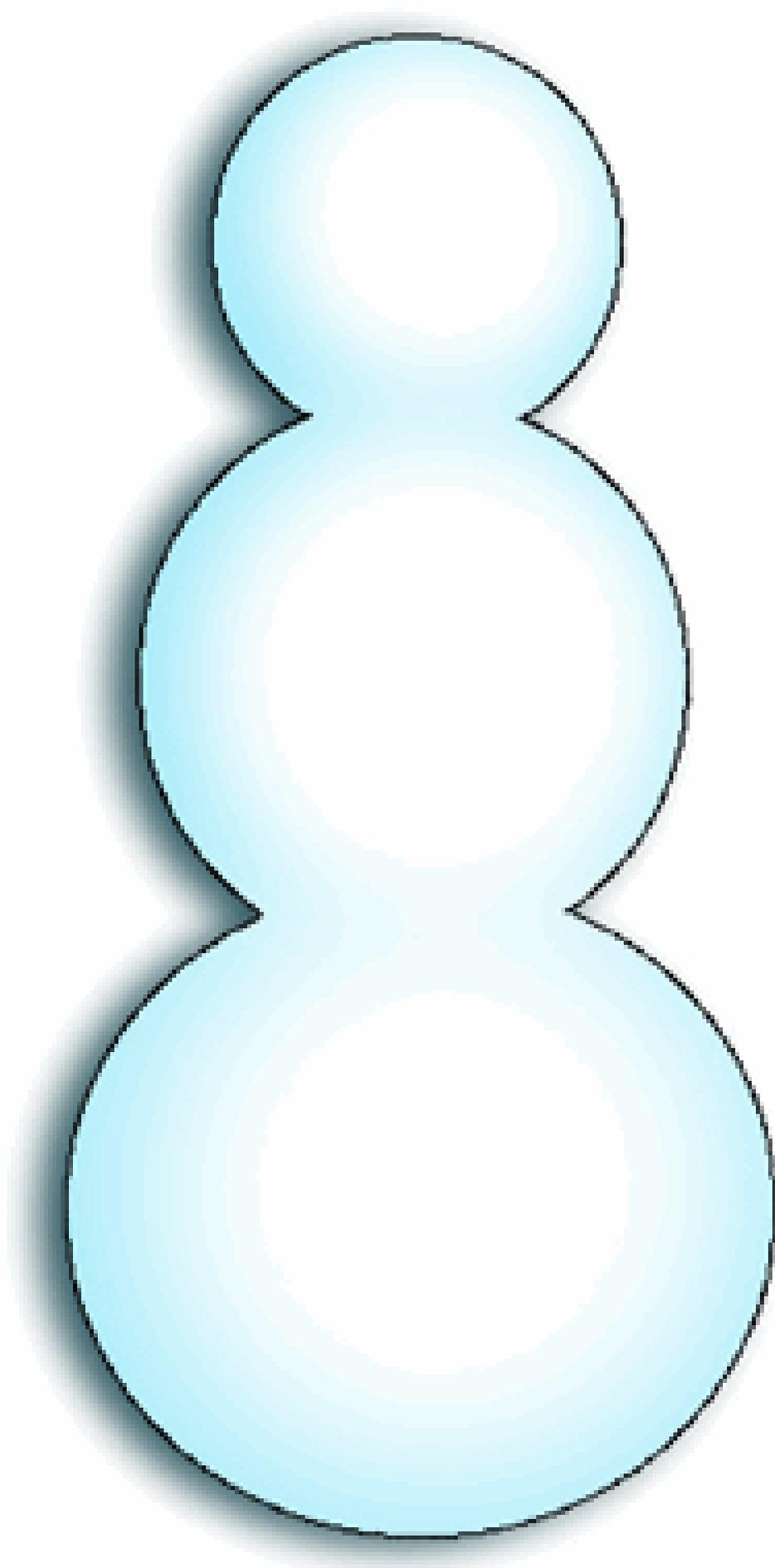
“Every year he’d go out vowing he was going to bring home a real, whole Christmas tree. But he never had the heart to do it. And every year he’d say, ‘Because I didn’t cut it down, the rest of the tree will still be alive in a hundred years’”.

Ask your students what they think about Pa Otter’s statement, and how the Otter family traditions correlate with the holiday traditions of their own family. Then have them decorate their own version of Emmet and Ma’s Christmas branch, incorporating what the holidays represent to them. The branch should be used to creatively represent their feelings towards any holiday, and holiday traditions they share with their family.



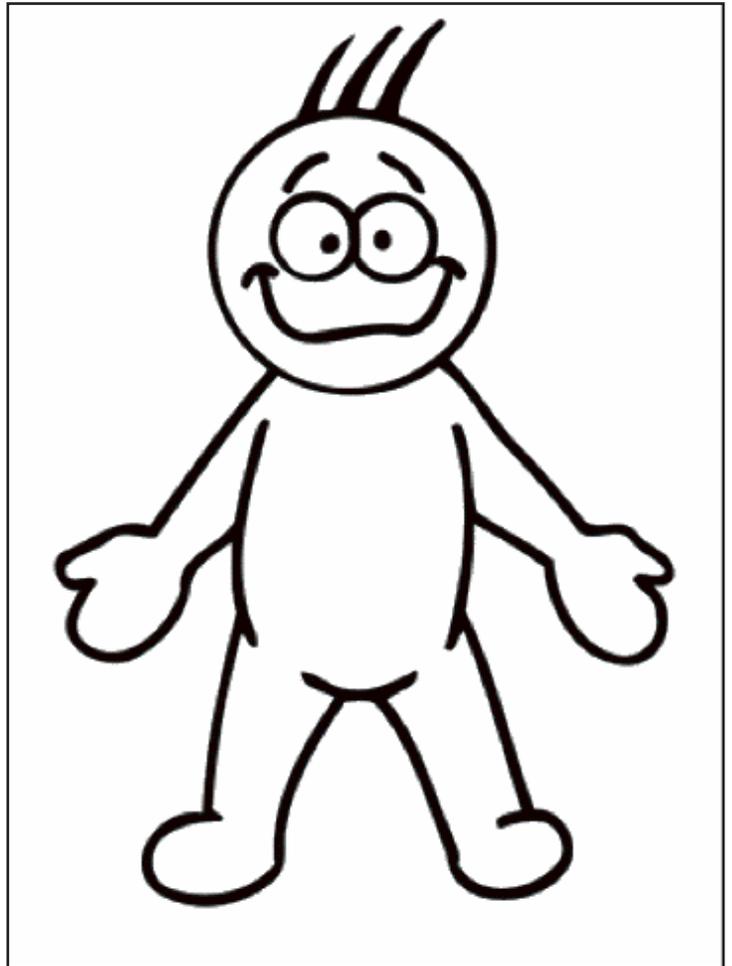
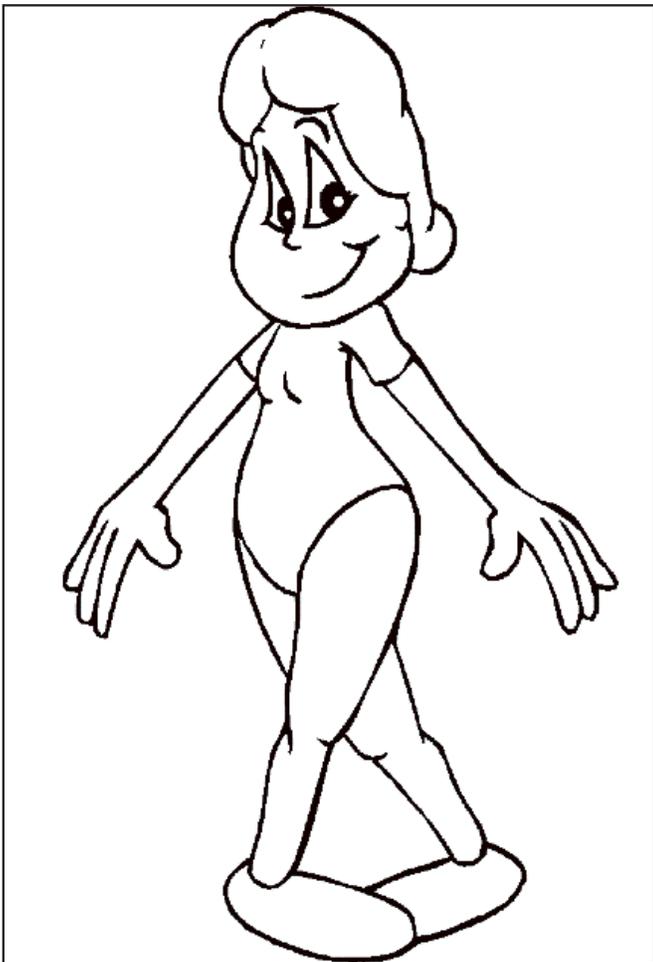
Your students may feel that they need more space than just one small branch to express what the holidays mean to them. Allow them to use the model of a Christmas tree below to express all of the things that the holidays represent for themselves and their family. If their family's holiday traditions do not include the decoration of a Christmas tree, or they would prefer to design a different image, have them use the model of a snowman below to show their holiday spirit with just as much detail and creativity!





*Activity 3*

The Waterville Christmas Talent Contest brings all sorts of different acts to the stage. Two of these acts are music bands. Have the students choose either the Frogtown Hollow Jubilee Jug-Band, or the River Bottom Nightmare Band, and use the models below to design their costumes! If the students would prefer, they may also design Ma Otter's special costume for her solo performance!



## About the Authors

**CHRISTOPHER GATTELLI** (Director/Choreographer, Book) most recently directed *Chance and Chemistry: A Tribute to Frank Loesser* at The Minskoff Theater starring Sir Paul McCartney, Jo Sullivan Loesser, and Audra McDonald. His award winning *Silence! The Musical* will premiere in London in January. He also directed *Departure Lounge* at The Public for SPF. Broadway: *South Pacific* (Tony and Outer Critics Circle nominations), *Sunday in the Park with George* (also West End), *The Ritz*, *Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me*, *13*, *High Fidelity*. Off Broadway: *Altar Boyz* (Lortel, Callaway, Helen Hayes Awards) *Bat Boy: The Musical* (Lortel Award), *tick, tick...BOOM*.

**TIMOTHY A. McDONALD** (Book) Director, playwright, CEO of iTheatrics.com. Tim got his start by finagling neighborhood kids to perform home made musicals written and directed by Tim, and featuring songs from his collection of K-Tel albums. Tim's company (iTheatrics) provides educational consulting to clients such as Music Theatre International, Disney Theatrical Productions and MacMillan-McGraw Hill as well as Broadway, Off-Broadway and touring productions (current roster: *Memphis*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Finian's Rainbow*, and *101 Dalmatians*.) Credits Tim's mom cares about: Playwriting: *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*, Roald Dahl's *Willy Wonka*, *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*, *The Ant and the Elephant*, and *Frankly Ben*. Directing: *Dear Edwina* (Daryl Roth Productions) and *The Phantom Tollbooth* (Kennedy Center). For Music Theatre International (MTIshows.com) Tim developed the Broadway Junior, KIDS Collection, and School Edition musicals. With Disney Theatrical Productions, Tim helped develop twelve (and counting) animation titles from screen to stage. Future projects: *James and the Giant Peach* musical with Pasek and Paul.

**PAUL WILLIAMS** (Music and Lyrics) is an Oscar, Grammy and Golden Globe winning Hall of Fame songwriter. His songs have been recorded by such diverse musical icons as Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Willie Nelson, Ella Fitzgerald, David Bowie, Ray Charles, R.E.M., Tony Bennett, Sarah Vaughn, Johnny Mathis, Luther Vandross, and Kermit the Frog. *Bugsy Malone* and cult favorite *Phantom of the Paradise* are among his song scores. "The Rainbow Connection", from the children's classic *The Muppet Movie*, and "Evergreen" from *A Star is Born* are two of his songs that grace the American Film Institute's list of the top 100 movie songs of all times. This Christmas, NBC will once again present "A Muppet Christmas: Letters To Santa," an original Christmas special with both story and songs by Mr. Williams, for which he received an Emmy nomination. He has been working on several theatrical works after completing the music and lyrics for the Garry Marshall musical *Happy Days*. An actor, performer, and public speaker, Paul predicts he'll be remembered for his stellar performance in the *Smokey and the Bandit* trilogy and for his lyrics to "The Love Boat" theme. In addition to his work as a songwriter, actor, performer and humanitarian, Paul is Chairman and President of ASCAP, the first and leading U.S. Performing Rights Organization (PRO) representing the world's largest repertory totaling over 8.5 million copyrighted musical works of every style and genre from more than 360,000 songwriter, composer and music publisher members.



(left to right) Timothy A. McDonald, Paul Williams, and Christopher Gattelli during the first read-through of *Emmet Otter* in 2008 at Goodspeed's McMillian Rehearsal Studios.

# Production View

Set design by Anna Louizos





River Scene



Talent Show

## Interesting Facts

- Russell Hoban, the author of the storybook *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*, is also an accomplished writer of adult novels and dramatic plays.
- *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* is loosely based on the short story *The Gift of the Magi*, written by O. Henry in 1906.
- Jim Henson's film version of *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* premiered as a Christmas special on HBO in 1977.
- In the film version of *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*, Kermit the Frog serves as the narrator of the story.
- For the stage version of *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*, five additional songs were added to the script, including one song that was supposed to be in the film version but wasn't finished before the film's release.
- John Denver performed with the Muppets in two Christmas specials and lent his voice to "Where the River Meets the Sea."
- The characters of Russ and Jane were not in the original children's story, nor the film version. They were added as a device to facilitate the progression of the story on stage.
- Tyler Bunch, the puppeteer and voice of Doc Bullfrog in the original Goodspeed 2008 production has been working as a Muppet performer since joining the *Sesame Street* cast in 1993.
- Paul Williams, the composer of *Jim Henson's Emmet Otter*, is also a popular songwriter ("Just an Old Fashioned Love Song," "Evergreen") and actor (**Smokey and the Bandit**, *The Doors*, *Georgia Rule*).

## Resources

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