



Presents
Crossing the Ocean

Devised by Michel Lefebvre, Martin Sirois, Jeremy Segal,
& Amelia May Scott

Study guide created by Sarah J Culkin



Conseil des arts
et des lettres du Québec
Québec



Canada Council
for the Arts
Conseil des arts
du Canada



Montréal

Table of Contents

Presentation	
Youtheatre	2
About this Guide	2
Production Team	3
Synopsis	3
Pre-Show Activities	
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: How do we tell stories? (Discussion + Activity)	4
What is memory? (Discussion)	
Post-show Activities	
DRAMA: Competency 3 - To appreciate dramatic works (Discussion)	5
SCIENCE: Underwater breathing (Research Activity)	6
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: Letters to your future self (Activity)	7
Annexes	
ANNEX I : Storytelling methods	9
ANNEX II : Student Handout	10

Now celebrating its 50th anniversary, Youtheatre is Quebec's oldest theatre for young audiences. Founded in 1968, Youtheatre's main goals and artistic objectives are stated in its current mandate:

Youtheatre's aim is to engage its audience through compelling theatre that provokes, questions, challenges and entertains. Our major area of focus is the creation, development and production of new works for young people by the finest Canadian playwrights.

More recently, work such as *Dreaming Now and Delete* reflect Artistic Director Michel Lefebvre's current preoccupation with new media. By integrating new technologies, he hopes to make theatre for young audiences relevant and contemporary.

Each year, the company produces work for local audiences and frequently tours nationally and internationally. Since 2000, Youtheatre has also been successfully producing work in French.

Youtheatre has performed at many important venues in Canada including the National Arts Centre, Young People's Theatre, Grand Theatre, Imperial Theatre, Manitoba Theatre for Young People, Théâtre la Catapulte and Théâtre du Nouvel Ontario in Sudbury.

On an international level, Youtheatre has performed at The Birmingham Rep, Unity Theatre, Sherman Theatre and The Grand Theatre in Swansea, Wales.

Youtheatre operates under the jurisdiction of both the (CAEA) Canadian Actors' Equity Association and (UDA) Union des artistes and is a member of (PACT) Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and (TUEJ) Théâtres Unis Enfance Jeunesse.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is meant to be used as a starting point for discussions and to encourage students to get the most out of their experience. We recommend that students be introduced to the show's themes before viewing the production. The discussion topics and post-show activities should follow the performance in order to enhance the students' complete understanding of the subjects involved. Feel free to adapt the activities to suit your students and your goals as a teacher. You may photocopy any of the material in this guide.

Crossing the Ocean **PRODUCTION TEAM**

Devised by	Michel Lefebvre, Jeremy Segal, Martin Sirois & Amelia May Scott
Directed by	Michel Lefebvre
Set and Lighting by	Martin Sirois
Sound by	Sara Magnan
Stage managed by	Camille Robillard
Featuring	Michel Lefebvre

SYNOPSIS

Just before The Man's father passed away, he left The Man a box with his name on it. For ten years, the box sat in The Man's basement, unopened. One summer, The Man takes the box to his cottage on an isolated island in the middle of a deep, dark lake. On his way there, a wave hits the boat he is in, and the box is thrown overboard. It sinks down to the very bottom of the deep, dark lake. The Man is determined to retrieve the box and bring it back to the surface. His three attempts to recover the box take him on a magical journey below the waves - but when he finally brings the box back to the surface, will he be ready to open it?

Crossing the Ocean is a multimedia storytelling journey in three parts that asks its audience; what will you remember when you grow up, and how?

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY I

English Language Arts

story (noun)

sto ry | \ ˈstɔː-ē \

plural stories

a: an account of incidents or events

b: a statement regarding the facts pertinent to a situation in question

c: ANECDOTE *especially* : an amusing one

(Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

DISCUSSION I

With your students, make a list of every form of storytelling they can think of (a non-exhaustive list is included as Annex 1). Here are some launching points to get them started:

- What IS a story?
- How do we use words to tell stories?
- How do we use pictures to tell stories?
- How do we use music to tell stories?
- What are some old ways of telling stories?
- What are some new ways of telling stories?
- Are there ways of telling stories that don't exist anymore, or didn't exist in the past?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Ask the students for an example of a well-known story (e.g. Little Red Riding Hood, the plot of *Frozen*, the Tortoise and the Hare) and recap the events of the plot as a class. Then have students either individually or in small groups retell the same story in a short series of pictures (10 max) with no words or limited words.

Once the pictures are complete, have a discussion as a class about what the students chose to highlight or leave out in their pictures, and what is lost or gained in translating the story into another medium (from movie/fairytale to pictures).

Please note:

This discussion and/or activity are valuable to frame the progression of the play for the students, as after Part 1 of *Crossing the Ocean*, there is a video retelling of the story that the actor just told. Talking about how we tell stories might allow students make more meaningful connections between the media presented to them.

ACTIVITY 2

memory (noun)

mem o ri y | \ ˈmem-rē , ˈme-mə-\

plural memories

Definition of *memory*

1a: the power or process of reproducing or recalling what has been learned and retained especially through associative mechanisms.

b: the store of things learned and retained from an organism's activity or experience as evidenced by modification of structure or behavior or by recall and recognition.

(Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Have students close their eyes. Ask them to remember what they had for breakfast. Then ask them to remember what they did for their last birthday. Then ask them to remember their earliest memory.

With each memory, encourage them use their five senses: what can you see, hear, taste, smell, touch?

Have the students open their eyes. Now have an open discussion about these memories. Some starting points might be:

- Which memory was easiest to call up?
- What stood out in your memories (e.g. a vivid colour, a feeling, details)
- Are memories and story the same thing? When does one become the other? How do they interact?

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY I

Drama

Have a discussion as a class about the play using some of these questions as starting points:

- What was your favourite part of the play?
- What was your least favourite part?
- What images stand out? Why?
- What was the mood of the play - how did you feel watching it?
- ONE MORE Q

Specific questions about things that happen in the play:

- What do you think might have been in the box?
- Why might The Man not have wanted to open the box? Why did he finally decide to open it?
- What do you think the sound and video design added to the play?
- What do you think the deep sea diver/underwater children/sea snake symbolised?
- Why is it important to remember? What kinds of things help us remember significant moments?

Appendix II is a page for students to fill out after the discussion with their personal thoughts about the production. We'd be thrilled to know what they think!

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY 2

Science - Research Project

Crossing the Ocean uses magical realism to illustrate the scenes where The Man dives underwater, but humans can't actually hold their breath for that long! Have your students divide into smaller groups to do research projects, and divide up the subjects - their findings will result in presentations to the class about underwater breathing!

TOPIC ONE - How do mammals hold their breath underwater? (E.g. whales, penguins, otters)

Start here: Students make a list of five mammals that hold their breath underwater, and make predictions about which one can hold their breath the longest.

"What Marine Animal Holds its Breath the Longest?"

<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-marine-animal-holds-breath-longest-2291894>

TOPIC TWO - How long can people hold their breath underwater? Can humans train themselves to hold their breath longer? (Free diving)

Start here: Students time how long they each hold their breath, then arrange the data from shortest to longest.

"Longest distance swam underwater holding breath - Guinness World Records"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gl_Klr7HsyQ

TOPIC THREE - What sorts of inventions have humans made so that they can stay underwater longer? (e.g. scuba diving equipment, submarines, snorkels, diving bell)

Start here: Students should make a list of adaptations humans need to make in order to function underwater (e.g. get enough oxygen, move faster, keep their eyes open)

"Scuba Diving History 101" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMVdcf4-lzo>

TOPIC FOUR - What happens to the human body during deep sea diving? (e.g. the "bends", compression, etc)

Start here: Students should brainstorm how deep water is different from our normal environments (e.g. liquid vs. gas (air), walking vs. swimming)

"The effects of underwater pressure on the body - Neosha S Kashef"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cj8AtODiHc> (this video is a little science-heavy, but offers a good starting point!)

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY 3

English Language Arts

Ask the students to recall what they had written on the folded paper at the beginning of the show. If they didn't write anything down, they can imagine what they *would* have written down. Have the students write letters to themselves one year in the future. Here are some prompts:

- How are you feeling today?
- What was the best thing that happened this week/month/year?
- What do you hope to be doing this time next year?
- What is the thing that you hope to remember when you are old?

Have the students seal up the letters, and address them to themselves not to be opened until this time next year. Depending on personal investment, the educator could endeavour to mail them out next year, so that the students won't be tempted to open them before the date! If not, the students should take them home and put them in a special place as a kind of time capsule.

ANNEX I - Storytelling media

How your class defines what is or isn't a story is subjective, but here's a list to open the discussion with your students:

- Novels
- Picture books
- Comic books/graphic novels
- Fairy tales
- Folklore
- "Old Wives' Tales"
- Plays
- Musicals
- Songs - many variations
- Campfire stories
- Oral traditions
- Jokes
- Riddles
- Movies - many variations
- Paintings
- Photographs
- Cave drawings
- News articles
- Youtube videos
- Social media posts

