



Study Buddy

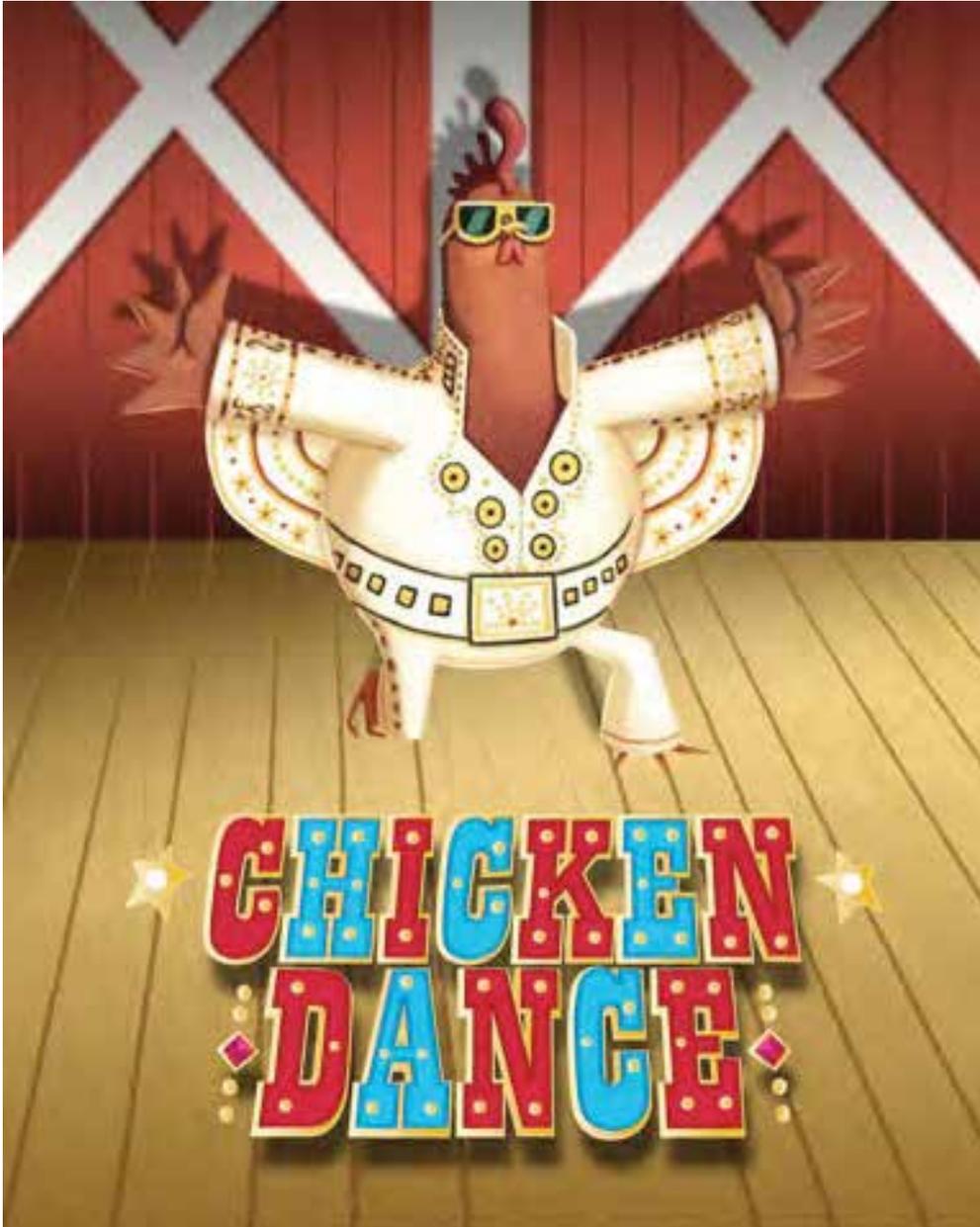


Table of Contents

Teacher Information	Page 2
ArtsPower National Touring Theatre	Page 3
Creating Theatre	Page 4
Lines, Lyrics, and Music	Page 5
All About Elvis Poultry	Page 6
Some Fun Stuff	Page 7
Let Us Know What You Think!	Page 8

ArtsPower National Touring Theatre

Gary W. Blackman
Mark A. Blackman

Executive Producers

Chicken Dance

Based on the book

Chicken Dance

By Tammi Sauer & Dan Santat

Published 2009 by

Sterling Publishers, New York, NY

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Script by Greg Gunning

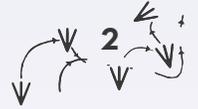
Music and Lyrics by John Forster
Costume Design and Construction by
Fred Sorrentino

Set Illustrations by
Dan Helzer/Blitz Designs

Based on the book by Tammi Sauer and illustrated by Dan Santat



Study Buddy



Teacher Information

This study guide is designed to help you and your students prepare for, enjoy, and discuss ArtsPower’s musical play, *Chicken Dance* before and after the performance. You may reproduce and distribute this Study Buddy to your students. **Please read this page about ArtsPower’s musical to your students before attending the performance.** The main characters appear in boldface type.

What Happens in Chicken Dance?

ArtsPower’s *Chicken Dance* is a musical based on the book written by Tammi Sauer and illustrated by Dan Santat. It was published by Sterling Publishers in 2009.

Marge and Lola are two friendly chickens who live in the barnyard. One day, they see a poster on the barn door announcing the Barnyard Talent Show where the first prize is two tickets to see **Elvis Poultry**, the “top bird” of a singer, in “The Final Doodle Doo” concert. So, Marge and Lola make it their mission to win the contest. However, they are unable to figure out exactly what their talent is.

Mac the Duck is the barnyard bully who continues to remind the two determined chickens that they will never win the contest. “Ducks win every year,” Mac tells them.

Elsie the Cow tells Marge and Lola she is not going to enter the contest. She is sure she will lose, so why bother? But the chickens convince Elsie to enter. **Gertie the Goat** and **Penelope the Pig** also sign up for the contest.

Marge and Lola need to come up with an act. They try flying, but chickens can’t fly. They try juggling. They try to do some magic. They even try a high wire act but fail at that, too. Just before the contest starts, they decide they are going to “wing in” and do their own Chicken Dance.

The Barnyard Talent Show is an exciting competition that ends with a wonderful surprise!



How to Be a Good Audience

In order to be a good audience member, remember to:

- ★ Listen quietly.
- ★ Pay attention to the things the actors say and do – some things might make you happy, and some might be funny. Feel free to laugh at things you think are funny!
- ★ Sit quietly and do not talk during the performance, unless you are requested to do so by the actors onstage.
- ★ If you enjoy the play, you can applaud after musical numbers and at the end.

To purchase the book
CHICKEN DANCE on Amazon,
click here.

(<http://www.amazon.com/Chicken-Dance-Tammi-Sauer/dp/1402753667>)



Study Buddy



ArtsPower National Touring Theatre

Please read this page to your students before attending the performance.

ArtsPower is a theatre company that creates musical and dramatic theatre productions for young and family audiences based on books for young readers.

The four actors and one stage manager:

- present performances all over the United States.
- pack the set, costumes, and sound equipment in their van.
- set up, change, and pack the set.
- take care of costumes and props – objects such as the books, the banners, and other things handled by the actors.
- stay in hotels when they travel.
- sometimes present up to 9 performances in a week.



Learning Activity

Why is ArtsPower called a national touring theatre?

If you were an actor, do you think you would like to travel to different places to perform?

Do you think audiences from different parts of the country respond to the performance in the same or in different ways? If so, why?



Learning Activity

Before the performance, read **Chicken Dance**. After the performance, talk about how the production was the same or different than the book. Discuss the characters, settings, and events in each version.

What Is a Musical?

A **musical** is a story told through spoken words and songs by live actors onstage. The spoken words are called **lines**. The words that are sung are called **lyrics**. The music that was composed just for this show has been recorded. This music is called the show's **soundtrack**. For this performance, the soundtrack is accessed on an iPad which is operated by the stage manager.

The musical **Chicken Dance** is presented onstage with four actors who play some of the characters found in the book. The actors wear **costumes** and perform in front of their **set**.

Because reading a book is different than seeing a live performance on stage, the **playwright**, or the person who writes the lines that the actors speak, must change parts of the story or bring new qualities to the characters that are not found in the book. In other words, the playwright **adapts** the book into a musical play, or changes parts of it to turn the words on the page into a live performance.



Study Buddy



Creating Theatre

Please read this section to your students before attending the performance.

Creating a musical theatre production like **Chicken Dance** takes a lot of time and creative energy from a group of people.

Many people work together to turn a book into a musical. Changes and additions are developed by the theatre company, ArtsPower National Touring Theatre, that help transform the book into an hour-long musical.

- The **playwright** writes lines that the actors speak.
- The **lyricist** writes the words to the songs that the actors sing.
- The **designers** create sets, costumes, and lighting.
- The **stage manager** oversees all backstage elements of a show.
- The **composer** writes the music.
- The **actors** audition for parts and memorize lines and songs.
- The **director** rehearses the actors and makes artistic decisions.
- The **producers** raise the money to create the show and manage all aspects of the production and its tour throughout the U.S.

The Creative Team for Chicken Dance



GREG GUNNING (Playwright, Co-Lyricist, and Director) is ArtsPower's Artistic Director and has written or co-written the scripts to all of ArtsPower's theatre productions. Greg's script for *Lily's Crossing*, based on the Newbery Honor book by Patricia Reilly Giff, is included in Penguin Books' "The Signet Book of Short Plays."



TAMMI SAUER (Author) grew up on a farm near Victoria, Kansas, where she occasionally danced with chickens. She earned her B.S. degree in Elementary Education from Kansas State University. Currently a full-time picture book author, Tammi has written 23 picture books. Today, Tammi hawks and rolls with her husband and two children in Edmond, Oklahoma. www.tammisauer.com



JOHN FORSTER (Co-Composer, Co-Lyricist, and Co-Orchestrator) is an award-winning songwriter who has been nominated for four Grammy Awards. John composed the music and wrote the lyrics to ArtsPower's very first musical, *Four Score and Seven Years Ago*, in 1989. He is also the composer of the Broadway musical, *Into the Light*. www.Johnforster.com



DAN SANTAT (Illustrator) received the 2015 Caldecott Medal for "The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend." He is also a winner of the Silver Medal from the Society of Illustrators for "Oh No! (Or How My Science Project Destroyed the World)." Dan graduated with honors from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, and lives in Southern California with his wife, two children, and various pets.



Study Buddy



Lines, Lyrics, and Music

Please read this page to your students before attending the performance.

Because **Chicken Dance** is a musical, the story is told through spoken words and songs. Spoken words are called lines. The musical's lines tell the audience about the characters and the story. Words that are sung as part of a song are called lyrics. Actors work with the director to speak or "deliver" their lines and lyrics with expression.

Actors' Lines

The words spoken or "delivered" by the actors are written by the playwright. Each actor must memorize the script or "lines" for his or her own character. They must also be familiar with the lines of the other characters, too.

Lyrics

There is no musical without music and lyrics. Lyrics are the words to the songs. John Forster wrote the lyrics to all the songs in **Chicken Dance**. What do these lyrics that Marge sings tell you about her friendship with Lola?

**I'M YOUR WING GIRL.
ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE.
I'M YOUR WING GIRL.
THERE TO SMOOTH YOUR RIDE.
I'M YOUR CONSTANT FRIEND
TO THE BITTER END.
I'M YOUR WING GIRL!**

Music

John Forster (right) is the composer who wrote and arranged the music for **Chicken Dance**. John used electronic keyboards and synthesized music - sounds generated by a special computer - to record the soundtrack. During the performance, the actors sing live to the prerecorded soundtrack on an iPad that the stage manager operates from off stage.



Learning Activity

To learn more about Mac the Duck, read this dialogue with Lola. Imagine you are playing the part of either character and deliver each line aloud with expression.

MAC THE DUCK

See folks, chickens don't have any talent! All they can do is bawk, flap, and shake!

LOLA

Ohhhh!!!!

MAC THE DUCK

Hey Lola, what's the matter?! Suddenly turn chicken?!

LOLA

That guys really ruffles my feathers!





Study Buddy



All About Elvis Poultry

Please read this section to your students before attending the performance.

The Elvis Poultry character created by author Tammi Sauer in her book **Chicken Dance** is based on Elvis Presley, a singer and entertainer who was one of the most recognizable people in the world.

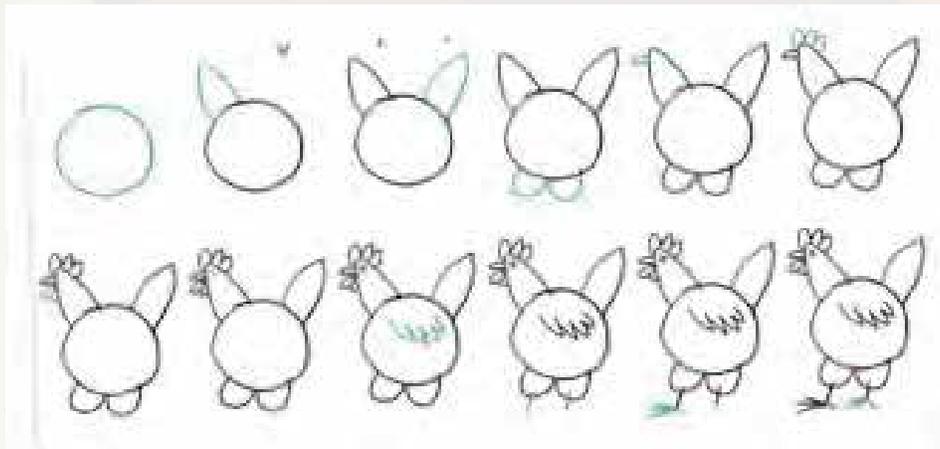
In 1954, Elvis began his singing career in Memphis, Tennessee. He starred in 33 movies and on many television shows and specials, and performed live for millions of people. He often performed in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Elvis has sold over one billion records, more than any other singer. Known the world over by his first name, he was one of the most important and loved entertainers of his time. Elvis died at his Memphis home, Graceland, on August 16, 1977.

Dan Santat, the illustrator of the book **Chicken Dance**, has drawn a rooster that resembles Elvis. Elvis often wore sun glasses and performed in very colorful outfits with high collars and brightly colored beads and jewels sewn onto them.



Draw Your Own Chicken!





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Some Fun Stuff

L Y U C X B W J L H X N F G N
G F V D A P A D J O L M M M H
Q V O L M M D N X X L H C R Z
D Q E I N G A A V I F A S I K
G E H X M S D C H W F E U Z V
L M A R G E S T T G V O E Z Z
A J F N O B Z S B H W Z S M R
U Z D H N A B S Q V E E M K Q
L U T G X I Q Q H H J D A E U
E L V I S P O U L T R Y U D O
X I N C O G D K S V W Z N C Z
X R D G Q D D P T N L S M N K
J J D G L Q H O V G Z W I B I
A T A L E N T S H O W L V Q E
F C H I C K E N D A N C E U L

Words to find:

Marge

Lola

Mac The Duck

Elvis Poultry

Chicken Dance

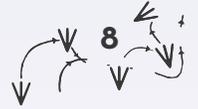
Talent Show

Draw a picture of you performing at a talent show. What would your special talent be?





Study Buddy



Let Us Know What You Think!

After you see **Chicken Dance**, use the space below to write to us OR send us a picture showing your favorite part of the performance. Please send them to **ArtsPower, 9 Sand Park Road, Suite 6, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009**. You may also visit us online at <http://www.artspower.org> and click on "Contact Us." Thanks!

Your School _____

School's City and State _____

Date _____

Dear ArtsPower,

I saw **Chicken Dance** at: _____

Here's what I enjoyed about the performance: _____

Here's why: _____

Here's what I would change about the performance: _____

Here's why: _____

From,

Your Name _____