State Theatre New Jersey welcomes you to the school-day performance of *Guess How Much I Love You* and *I Love My Little Storybook*. These two beloved storybooks are brought vividly to life in this delightful production by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia.

These Keynotes provide information, discussion topics, activities, and resources to use both before and after the performance. The materials are designed to help you integrate the show with learning objectives in many areas of the curriculum.

We look forward to seeing you and your students at the State Theatre!.

### ABOUT MERMAID THEATRE

Founded in 1972, Canada’s Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia is renowned for their charming stage adaptations of beloved classics of children’s literature, featuring innovative puppetry, striking scenic effects, evocative original music, and gentle storytelling. Their productions have played to well over two million people in 13 countries in North America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The show has been performed in English, Spanish, French, Dutch, Japanese, Mandarin, and Korean!

Mermaid Theatre’s headquarters, in Windsor, Nova Scotia, includes production studios, rehearsal space, and the Mermaid Imperial Performing Arts Centre, a 400-seat theater. In 1998 the company launched the Institute of Puppetry Arts, offering classes, workshops, and demonstrations for theater professionals as well as the general public.

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Contact: [education@STNJ.org](mailto:education@STNJ.org)

State Theatre New Jersey—creating extraordinary experiences through the power of live performance.


**GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU**

Little Nutbrown Hare looks for the right words to tell his dad just how much he loves him. He comes up with one idea after another (for example, “I love you as high as I can hop!”). But even when his feelings stretch as long as his arms, or as high as his hops, he is fondly one-upped by Big Nutbrown Hare, who has longer arms and higher hops to show how much he loves Little Nutbrown Hare. Their game goes on until Little Nutbrown Hare becomes too sleepy to think up any more ideas. He drifts off to sleep, as Big Nutbrown Hare whispers, “I love you right up to the moon...and back!”

**THE PRODUCTION**

Mermaid Theatre’s creative, visually striking production makes it seem as if the pages of the storybooks have come to life right on the stage! Here are some of the theater techniques you’ll see in the show:

**PUPPETRY**

The show employs a variety of puppetry styles—including rod and jointed puppets—to tell the two stories. Amazingly, all of the puppets and scenic elements are manipulated by just two puppeteers! The puppeteers are visible to the audience throughout the performance. They are so skilled at bringing the puppets to life, however, that you will forget they are even there!

**BLACK LIGHT**

One scene in the show uses the visual magic of black light, which can create illusions such as objects floating through the air or appearing out of nowhere. The puppets and scenery are painted with fluorescent paint, which glows in the dark under ultraviolet light (also called black light). Under black light, anything black becomes invisible, so you won’t see the puppeteers as they move the puppets.

**NARRATION & MUSIC**

Along with the visual storytelling, the show employs pre-recorded narration of the text for the stories, as well as a pre-recorded musical score by Steven Naylor created especially for this production.

**I LOVE MY LITTLE STORYBOOK**

An eager little hare just loves his storybook—from the way it looks and feels to the places he can go in it and the fantastical characters he can meet. He lies on the grass, eagerly opens his book, and within moments enters a world of enchanted forests, gentle lions, wondrous unicorns, stomping giants, and sleeping princesses—just a few of the adventures waiting to be discovered through the magic of books.
SAM MCBRATNEY (author, *Guess How Much I Love You*) was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1943. During the 20 years he worked as a primary and secondary school teacher, he wrote and published over 20 novels, most of them for young adults. In 1990, he retired from teaching in order to concentrate on his writing. He has written in a wide range of genres: historical fiction, science fiction, light-hearted ghost stories, family stories, real-life dramas, short stories, and more. In all, he has written over 100 books and scripts. Published in 1994, his best-known work, *Guess How Much I Love You*, has sold over 30 million copies worldwide, and has been translated into 53 languages.

McBratney’s original aim was to help students who had trouble reading, but he continued writing for a more personal reason: “The act of imagining simply makes me feel good,” he says. Where does the author get his inspiration? “I told my children stories when they were young,” he says, “so when I write I try to think of what they would have liked.” But there may be another source guiding his writing as well. His father—who worked at a newspaper, and whose favorite books were westerns—is the person Sam McBratney credits for giving him his love of the English language. “Most of my picture books—*Guess How Much I Love You*, *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs, Just One!*, and *Just You and Me*—explore the relationship between a big one and a wee one,” the author notes. “The big one is not called the father in the stories, but that’s what he is. Although my dad died before I became a writer, the father in my stories has a voice and a presence that he would have recognized and understood.”

ANITA JERAM (illustrator, *Guess How Much I Love You*; author/illustrator, *I Love My Little Storybook*), was born in 1965 and grew up near the sea, in Portsmouth, England. As a child, she loved animals, and decided that she wanted to be either a veterinarian or a zookeeper when she grew up. It turned out that she had a real talent for art and English, she decided to pursue a career drawing and writing stories about animals instead. She studied art in college and published her first book for children—*Bill’s Belly Button*—the year after she graduated. She published *I Love My Little Storybook* in 2002. In addition to writing and illustrating her own children’s books, she has created the illustrations for books by other authors; the most famous of these is *Guess How Much I Love You*.

Jeram says illustrating *Guess How Much I Love You* was a labor of love. “Every time I read this book,” she says, “I want to cry. The story reminds me so much of my own son, who often plays this kind of game with me when it’s time for bed.” An immediate problem arose during her early brainstorming for the illustrations, however: she had never actually seen a hare. Trying to be helpful, her paleontologist husband brought a stuffed hare home from the museum. In the end though, Big Nutbrown Hare and Little Nutbrown Hare grew out of her imagination.

Today, Anita Jeram lives by the sea in Northern Ireland with her family and a mixed menagerie of pet animals.
INTRODUCE THE STORY.

- Read the two stories to your students. Then reread the stories, inviting the students to join in and create movements to dramatize the different things that happen in the stories.

- Continue reading the stories to your students throughout the week. Provide them with a variety of dramatic play props and encourage small groups to dramatize the stories while the others narrate them.

DISCUSS WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE PERFORMANCE.

- Tell your students that they will be seeing a play based on the books *Guess How Much I Love You* and *I Love My Little Storybook*. How do they think the play might be different from the books?

- Have they ever seen a live theater performance? What was it like?

- Review the rules of theater behavior. You can use the rebus on page 12.

REFLECT ON THE PERFORMANCE.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Did you like the show? Why?

- What were some things you noticed during the show?

- What were some things that surprised you about the show?

- How was seeing the stories in the show different from reading the stories in books? How was it the same?

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:

- Have students share their favorite moments from the performance and draw pictures of these scenes.

- Gather together students’ artwork, comments, and other responses to the performance and share them with the State Theatre. We’d love to see them! You can also send any questions your students have for us or for Mermaid Theatre, and we’ll do our best to answer them.

education@stnj.org
MAKE YOUR OWN PUPPETS!

Explain to your students that in the show, the characters from the books will be puppets. Have them make their own puppets representing the characters in *Guess How Much I Love You* and *I Love My Little Storybook*, then use the puppets to act out some of the scenes from the books.

Here are some resources for making puppets.

- [www.daniellesplace.com/HTML/puppets.html](http://www.daniellesplace.com/HTML/puppets.html)
- [www.activityvillage.co.uk/puppets](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/puppets)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDF5ddeswfM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDF5ddeswfM)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNTQWJ8yCbY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNTQWJ8yCbY)

GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU

With *Guess How Much I Love You* as an inspiration, engage the class in a series of estimation games.

- **GUESS!** How many pennies are in the jar? How many steps from the front of the classroom to the back? How long is each child’s arm? After the children make their guesses, find out the actual answers. How far off were you?

- **HOW FAR?** In the story, Little Nutbrown Hare and Big Nutbrown Hare express their love for each other in farther and farther distances. Ask your students to measure progressively farther distances—from one desk to another, from one side of the classroom to the other, from the classroom to the lunchroom, from one side of the playground to the other, from the school to each of your students’ homes, from the school to the mall, and so on until you measure the distance from Earth to the moon . . . and back. For longer distances, use tape measures, maps, and the Internet.

- **GUESSING TO KNOW YOU.** In this activity, your students can play a guessing game to get to know each other better. Pair up your students and invite them to ask each other to guess things about themselves. For instance: Guess what my favorite TV show is. Guess how many brothers and sisters I have. Guess what kind of pet I have. Each student has three tries to guess the answer, after which his or her partner reveals the answer.
I LOVE MY LITTLE STORYBOOK

- SHARE YOUR FAVORITE STORYBOOK. The little bunny who narrates this story truly loves everything about his storybook—from the way it feels when he opens the pages to the magical world he enters inside it. Invite each of your students to bring in from the library or from home their own favorite storybook. Then ask them to share with the class the reasons why they love the book.

- WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET IN A STORYBOOK? In *I Love My Little Storybook*, the narrator travels to a magic forest inside his little storybook. There he meets a friendly lion, a princess, and a giant. Ask your students whom they would like to meet in the pages of a storybook. It could be anyone—a real person, a favorite cartoon character, someone from history, a Martian. Have them make up a story about what that meeting might be like. Encourage them to stretch their imaginations.

- DRAW THE GIANT. One of the characters the bunny meets inside his little storybook is a giant who stomps around the magic forest with humongous feet. His feet are so humongous, they’re all we see of him. Your students can use their imaginations to draw what they think the rest of the giant looks like.

- OUR STORYBOOK JOURNEYS. Ask children to think about all the stories you shared so far in class this year. Then help them recall the many places they have journeyed together in storybooks. Let students share their memories aloud. If any of the storybook places are real places, ask students to find them on a map. You can also hang up a map in the classroom and, with colored pins, mark off the many places you and your class have traveled in stories. If any of the places are make-believe, ask students to use their imaginations to create their own maps or pictures of those places.

- PULL A STORY OUT OF A HAT. On small pieces of paper, write the names of the characters from *I Love My Little Storybook*: the friendly lion, the frog prince, the princess, the giant, the little bunny, the fairies, or any other favorites. Place the names in a hat or basket, and ask each child to pull out a name. Then ask students to make up a story about the character they pulled out of the hat. The story should be different from what happens to the character in the book.

- CREATE A JOURNEY TOGETHER. Write a class story about a magical place that you can reach only in the pages of your story. What would it be like? Would it be a forest, or a magical city, or a place in outer space? Who would live there? What would they look like? And what would happen to them?

- MAKE YOUR OWN BOOK. One of the things the little bunny loves about his little storybook is how it feels to hold the book in his hands and to flip the pages—in short, the physical qualities of the book itself. Help your class create their very own storybooks. Staple or sew pages together to create booklets, and then invite your students to write and illustrate their own stories. Encourage them to create book covers, title pages, and a dedication. And don’t forget about the book description on the back cover.
Guess How Much I Love You is the story of two hares, while I Love My Little Storybook features a young rabbit. Though hares and rabbits look similar, they are not the same animal. They are in the same family, Leporidae, but they’re different species (like sheep and goats are different species). The chart below shows some of the similarities and differences between rabbits and hares.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RABBITS</th>
<th>HARES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANIMAL FAMILY</strong></td>
<td>Mammals.</td>
<td>Mammals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE</strong></td>
<td>Smaller, with shorter ears and shorter hind legs.</td>
<td>Bigger and skinnier, with longer ears and longer hind legs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHERE THEY ARE FOUND</strong></td>
<td>More than half the world’s population live in North America. Also found in Southwestern Europe, Southeast Asia, Sumatra, parts of Japan, Africa, and South America.</td>
<td>Native to North America, Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia. Settlers later introduced them to Australia, South America, and other parts of the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIET</strong></td>
<td>Herbivores who eat softer plants, such as grasses and vegetables.</td>
<td>Herbivores who eat plants such as grass, buds, bark, seeds, twigs, and berries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HABITAT</strong></td>
<td>Live in underground tunnels called burrows.</td>
<td>Live in nests above ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL HABITS</strong></td>
<td>Live in groups called colonies.</td>
<td>Live alone most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEWBORNS</strong></td>
<td>Babies are born without fur, with closed eyes.</td>
<td>Babies are born with fur and with their eyes open.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT THEY ARE CALLED</strong></td>
<td>Female - doe, Male - buck, Baby - kit, kitten, or bunny</td>
<td>Female - jill, Male - jack, Baby - leveret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT THEY DO WHEN THEY SENSE DANGER</strong></td>
<td>Hide in their underground burrows.</td>
<td>Run away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KEEP AS PETS?</strong></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOR DISCUSSION:**

- Do you know any other hares and rabbits besides the ones in Guess How Much I Love You and I Love My Little Storybook? (for example: Bugs Bunny, the Velveteen Rabbit, Peter Rabbit)

- What do real hares and rabbits eat? Do the creatures in Guess How Much I Love You and I Love My Little Storybook eat or drink anything?

- A **herbivore** is an animal that eats only plants, such as fruits, vegetables, grass, and leaves. **Carnivores** eat meat. **Omnivores** eat EVERYTHING. Are rabbits herbivores, carnivores, or omnivores? What about people?
I LOVE YOU THIS MUCH!

Little Nutbrown Hare really loves Big Nutbrown Hare! Do you know how much? Look at the pictures and fill in the blanks.

All the way up to my

T ___ ___ ___ ___!

All the way down to the

R ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ !

As high as I can

H ___ ___ ___ !

Right up to the

M ___ ___ ___ ___ !
SHARE THE LOVE!

Color and cut out these coupons. Put a number in the blank space. One coupon is blank, for you to fill in yourself. Give them to someone you love!

I WILL GIVE YOU _____ HUGS TODAY.

I WILL GIVE YOU _____ KISSES TODAY.

I WILL GIVE YOU _____ “I LOVE YOUs” TODAY.
MATCHING GAME

Draw a line from Little Nutbrown Hare in column 1 to the matching picture in column 2.
Going to see a play at a theater is not the same as watching TV. When you are sitting in audience at the State Theatre, the actors will be able to hear and see everything that goes on in the audience. Use the key to find out what your job is at the performance.

When I go to a [PERFORMANCE], I am part of the [AUDIENCE]. I have a [WATCH] very important job. I have to [LISTEN] carefully. If I talk or move around, the performers and the [CLAP] will have a hard time paying attention to the [PERFORMANCE]. When the [PERFORMANCE] is over, it's okay for me to [CLAP].
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BOOKS

I Love You to the Moon and Back, by Amelia Hepworth, illustrated by Tim Warnes. Tiger Tales, 2015.


WEBSITES

Animated video of Guess How Much I Love You
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ze-XaKq3gU0

“Three Types of Eaters” quizzes
www.sheppardsoftware.com/content/animals/kidscorner/games/animaldietgame.htm

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
www.mermaidtheatre.ns.ca

The Puppetry Home Page
www.sagecraft.com/puppetry

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