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A celebration of the alphabet: A collaborative creative project for kindergarten and fourth grade

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The University of Montana

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A CELEBRATION OF THE ALPHABET
A COLLABORATIVE, CREATIVE PROJECT FOR KINDERGARTEN AND
FOURTH GRADE

by

Claudia LaRance

B.A. The University of Montana 1978

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

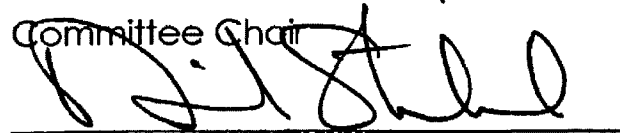
in Fine Arts, Integrated Arts and Education

The University of Montana

July 2005



Committee Chair



Dean, Graduate School

8-1-05

Date

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A Celebration of the Alphabet, A Collaborative, Creative Project for
Kindergarten and Fourth Grade

Committee Chair: Karen Kaufmann

Kak

ABSTRACT

A Celebration of the Alphabet was a project that was intended to link communication arts curricula and the fine arts in an integrated way, resulting in a collaborative, across grade level student performance. The project included a play, vocal music concert and poetry show. It involved students at the kindergarten and fourth grade levels in an educationally enriching experience that immersed the two groups in academic content and the fine arts. The process encouraged not only involvement and cooperation but also personal investment.

The planning for the performance began in January, 2005. Vocal music pieces were learned and rehearsed at that time. A script for the play was written in May. Sets and costumes were designed and produced in April and May. The program was presented for family members the last week of May.

The spring poetry project was the culmination of a year long endeavor to introduce students at both grade levels to creative ways of making meaning of the language skills they were acquiring through their communication arts lessons. The poetry was written and illustrated by the fourth graders and their kindergarten partners in mid May.

My role in the project was to facilitate the students' experience and to serve as producer and director of the play and concert. My intention as facilitator was to emphasize the process of creating the program rather than the end product. My goal was to engender in the participating students a sense of joyfulness and accomplishment about the work.

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Project Intent

My final creative project was to direct and produce a collaborative, across grade level program performed by my kindergarten students and their fourth grade partner class. The program included a play, a vocal music concert and a poetry show. I chose this multifaceted creative project because I was interested in involving students in a production that would enrich their educational experience by immersing them in the arts. My vision for student involvement was one in which every child would be allowed the opportunity to be deeply engaged and invested in the process. My primary emphasis was on the process, rather than the end product, so that the children, as well as myself, would experience a sense of joyfulness about participating in the work. I wanted the project to draw in each child in a way that would address as many learning styles as possible. I intended to put into practice what I had learned about children's individual differences in Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. I wanted to respect each child's strengths by assigning them tasks that would honor their different abilities. I gained insight into each of the fourth grade student's strengths from discussions with their classroom teacher as well as the music and art specialists.

The title of the performance, *A Celebration of the Alphabet*, reflects my goal that the project integrate the fine arts with the communication

arts curriculum. With this combination I enhanced the students' academic experience and justified my use of class time for the project.

My intention was that the project have three distinct, yet interrelated, parts. The first part was a play, an adaptation of a children's book, *The Alphabet Tree* by Leo Lionni, performed by my kindergarten students and the students in their fourth grade partner class. The second part of the performance was a vocal and instrumental concert of alphabet songs performed by my kindergartners. The project also included a display of poetry collaboratively generated by the kindergarteners and their fourth grade partners. The poetry writing allowed the students to experience the "making of meaning" aspect of the project in a very concrete way.

I based my decision to do a dramatic adaptation of *The Alphabet Tree* on two aspects of the children's book. The extraordinarily simple and beautiful way that the story describes the development of phonemic awareness and in the end, makes meaning through written expression, made it immediately attractive to me. The underlying theme of world peace was also a very appealing element of the story.

Finally, as producer and director of the performance, I wanted to involve as much of the school and outside community in the process as possible. I was aware of the enormity of the undertaking and realized it would necessitate a group effort. I enlisted the help of teachers, parents,

grandparents, and high school and university students as well as members of the local arts community.

Project Achievements and Accomplishments

The successful performance of *A Celebration of the Alphabet* was the most obvious accomplishment of the project. The other valuable achievements were far less concrete. My personal learning experience and the learning experiences of the children involved in the process were beyond measure. Having never attempted a production of such magnitude with my students, I did not anticipate the amount of planning, logistics and problem solving generated by each phase of the project. When it was required, dealing with forty-three students was an enormous undertaking.

The high level of enthusiasm from both the fourth grade and kindergarten students about every phase of the project surprised me. While I was familiar with how special projects can energize five and six year olds, I was not prepared for the amount of eagerness and investment that virtually every fourth grade student displayed.

The positive results of the collaboration between the two grade levels can not be overstated. At every turn the fourth graders willingly and responsibly mentored and guided their younger partners. The older students inspired the kindergartners to do their best and each group experienced the positive effects of cooperative relationships. This sense of cooperation was especially evident in the poetry writing portion of the project. I anticipated that the fourth grade students, because of their

advanced writing skills, might dominate the activity. Instead, the older students were very open to kindergarten involvement. As a result of their authentic cooperative effort the poetry that they wrote truly represented an across grade level creative writing activity.

Personally and professionally my strongest sense of accomplishment came from the knowledge that, despite the fact that many parts of the production were not within my area of expertise, I was able to direct and produce the project in a manner that enabled the students to benefit from and enjoy the process.

The Play: The Alphabet Tree

I chose the children's book, *The Alphabet Tree* by Leo Lionni, for use in a dramatic adaptation for several reasons. The story beautifully demonstrates basic phonetic progression and written language development. That is, it shows how isolated letters and sounds can be systematically combined to make words. Those words can be combined in certain ways to make sentences and those sentences can have powerful meaning. I could see the potential for the story, when presented as a play, to integrate the communication arts curriculum for both kindergarten and fourth grade students in a dramatic production.

In kindergarten, the students begin by being introduced to the letter-sound relationship. This concept is extended when the children begin blending sounds to make simple consonant, vowel, consonant, words. Next, they learn to combine words to make meaningful sentences. This progression of beginning reading instruction is graphically illustrated in *The Alphabet Tree*. The play relates to fourth grade communication arts curriculum in a more sophisticated way. For these students the play's message that it is important to say something relevant with written language is linked to the emphasis on making meaning and comprehension skills taught at this level.

The other appealing feature of the story is its antiwar theme. The author, Leo Lionni, wrote *The Alphabet Tree* in nineteen sixty-eight during

the Vietnam War. I wanted to do the play even though I was aware that this theme, given the current political climate, might generate some controversy. My adamant belief in the importance of teaching peace in our schools is supported by Susanne Wichert's *Keeping the Peace*. Wichert discusses her hope that teachers will promote peace education in order that all children grow up in happiness and peace. Her reasoning is as follows.

"Many of the values that people carry through their lives have their beginnings early in life. Sadly, in an increasingly violent world, parents and teachers of young children often fail to address the issues of conflict and violence. Just as violence has become a seemingly acceptable part of children's culture in this society, so we must confront those ideas, call them what they are, and help our children learn an alternative view of the world and the skills to make that alternative a part of their lives." (p.1)

The play production incorporated a variety of elements including: writing the script, designing and producing the set and props, choosing music and sound effects, designing and producing costumes, selecting and training actors and developing choreography. Each piece required a great deal of thought, planning, time and energy to complete and incorporate into the whole. I wanted as many of the elements as possible to include student participation.

Writing the script was my first task. I began by researching other scripts written for children's stories. I primarily modeled my script after a musical based on a book, *Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy Visit Amazing Amazo* by Jean Bethell. Transforming the book into script form was much

more labor intensive than I had expected. Describing the setting and every environmental action and every character's movement as well as rewriting the dialogue proved to be a three day process.

Once the play went into the first rehearsal it became apparent that the script lacked action and interesting dialogue. The book did not translate as easily into play form as I had hoped. I also felt the story needed some humorous dialogue and action. The script improved enormously when, along with the other changes, I added three new characters and more sound effects. Logistical considerations of the characters moving around on the complicated set required some last minute script changes. I eventually revised the script five times before the last rehearsal. The process of successfully adapting a short story to the stage made me realize what an immense a task it is to write a screen play.

From the inception of the project I planned to use the gymnasium bleachers as the stage for the play. Because the story primarily takes place in a large tree, the bleachers seemed like the perfect solution. With the audience seated on the floor, I envisioned a set that created the illusion of looking up into the tree. Many of the characters in the story were leaves with alphabet letters attached to their fronts. These human leaves were mixed with large, colorful cardboard leaves and together, they formed the bulk of the tree. With assistance from my son, Jonas, I

constructed the trunk and branches from large sheets of bulletin board paper rolled to create dimension and attached the tree to the bleachers using tape.

Painting the parts of the set was a collaborative effort for a number of kindergarten students and fourth graders. After I cut out forty leaf shapes from large cardboard boxes, I worked with the children using a two part process. The first day, a background color was painted on each leaf. Next, the leaves were sponge painted to add veins and texture. I designed the leaves to resemble the beautiful leaves illustrated by Leo Lionni in *The Alphabet Tree*. The whole process was quite time consuming and very untidy but I found it to be an impressive example of cooperative work. At one point, twenty of my kindergartners and ten fourth graders, all wearing paint shirts, were happily painting leaves spread out on every available floor space in the school.

The day before the play I attached the leaves to the bleachers using lath, wire and duct tape. I had mapped the placement of each leaf earlier in the planning stage.

There were several drawbacks to using the bleachers to stage the production. The actors could not rehearse on the assembled set until the day before the performance because the gymnasium is used daily for health enhancement classes and having the bleachers down interfered with this instruction. As a result we had very little time to make changes

based on the actors' interactions with the set. We discovered that children moving from place to place on the stage was quite noisy, as the bleachers groaned and creaked with each step. Also, the placement of the cardboard leaves made it difficult for the actors to move. It became apparent that most movement would have to be made by children in stationary positions. This realization caused a number of last minute changes in the choreography.

The last components of the set were the clouds and sun that hung from the rafters above the tree. By the time these pieces of scenery were produced the children were immersed in other parts of the project. I cut the shapes from heavy cardboard and researched techniques for painting them. In the end, I painted them using a technique I modified from William H. Pinnell's *Theatrical Scene Painting*. The process of hanging the six clouds and sun was difficult and time consuming. With the help of my son, Jonas, I attached long sections of lath to the back of each piece. Twine was attached in two places to balance each piece. Each length of twine ended in a ball. The balls were then thrown over the rafters and we hoisted the clouds and the sun up to the desired heights and secured them on the highest bleacher.

The other project involving the visual arts related to the production was the creation of the large banner carried in at the end of the play with the message, "Peace On Earth Good Will Toward All People". I offered this

task to a shy, withdrawn fourth grade student with an extraordinary aptitude for drawing. I asked the student to create three meaningful designs for the banner. I gave him a number of small paper banner replicas with the lettering in place to use to draw his rough illustrations. A week later he shared his drawings with me and we discussed which ideas seemed most representative of the theme of the play. Each of his designs was thoughtfully conceived and beautifully rendered. Together, we decided to go with the design that showed a line of children from all over the world holding up the lettering. He had included a self portrait of himself in the drawing. He went home with a seven foot long banner planning to draw the enlarged version of his design on it and return it for me to see before he painted it. His full sized drawing was wonderful and the final, painted version was spectacular.

The actors in the play included twenty-three Alphabet Leaves, a Caterpillar, made up of six children, three Spelling Bees, two Ants and a Work Bug. Eight of the Leaves, the head of the Caterpillar the Ants, the Word Bug and the Spelling Bees had speaking parts. These students were chosen because they had leadership qualities and they seemed able to handle the responsibility of helping the kindergartners carry out their parts. No auditions were held. I gave the children a choice about accepting the roles they were offered.

Several challenges arose in the process of coaching the actors. Helping the children learn to use appropriate voice volume and dynamics proved to be very difficult. They practiced this skill more than any other.

Encouraging the actors to use animated facial expressions and dramatic body gestures was a difficult process as well. These behaviors seemed to come much more naturally to kindergartners than they did to fourth graders. I realized that by fourth grade many students are already entering the self-consciousness of preadolescence. The more the actors rehearsed, the more their level of confidence increased. Eventually their body movements loosened up and the students were quite expressive. I decided to use lapel microphones to amplify the main characters' voices. Even though dealing with multiple lapel microphones is an electronic nightmare, they made a marked difference in the quality of the performance.

From the beginning of the project I planned to incorporate as much music and movement into the play as possible. My original script included a string section consisting of four musicians, a parent, a kindergarten student and two fourth grade students. The strings played the opening song and closing songs as well as some sound effects. With the help of our music specialist, I incorporated a wide variety of sound effects throughout the production. At the end of the performance the whole cast joined together to sing a song about peace. As I revised the script I

added more sound effects as a way to increase humor and interest and to call attention to the actions of the characters. Sound effects accompanied all movement and served as a cue for the onset of the movement.

The sound effects section was made up of an ensemble of six fourth grade students. We chose three of the children for the position because they had some kind of formal musical background and the others were chosen because they were students with behavior problems. We based this decision on the hope that these children would feel most invested in a task that they deemed "cool". The strategy worked beautifully. The sound effects section shined during the performance as well as the rehearsals.

I based my commitment to include as much movement as possible in the performance on my firm belief that it should be an essential part of every child's educational experience. The importance of movement is beautifully expressed by Karen Kaufmann in *The Language of Movement*.

"Since movement plays a crucial role in the development of a child, the use of movement in education can be a natural teaching tool. Movement education offers a needed diversity within the school setting by reaching students who do not respond easily to verbal approaches alone. Creative movement teaches both awareness and control. It is a language through which we learn to speak. Movement is closely connected with the mind and spirit, fostering the expressive capacities of the child. Non-verbal, kinesthetic modes of learning develop observational skills, attention span, readiness skills, focus, space and body part awareness, awareness of personal boundaries, gravity, weight and muscle coordination." (p.1)

The costumes for the play became one of the greatest challenges of the project. I researched costuming, developed designs, created patterns and selected fabric. I planned to ask parent volunteers to make the costumes. This seemed simple enough but complications occurred at every turn. Even though the parents and other family members involved in the costume-making approached the task with enthusiasm and creativity, some volunteers overestimated their sewing skills while others underestimated the time it would take to produce the costumes. After much hard work and problem solving, I assisted the volunteers in completing the costumes, the day before the performance. They were delightful and a highlight of the program.

The Concert: A Selection of Alphabet Songs

The idea of having my kindergarten students perform a concert of alphabet songs began as part of my field project during the 2004 school year. I had researched appropriate songs at that time but only found four. I continued my search until I found six very diverse songs that seemed as though they would be fun, interesting and educational. I wanted to incorporate movement, drama and instrumentation in the performance.

In my experience as a kindergarten teacher I have found that every group of five and six year olds needs and wants to sing as often as possible. I have always honored this natural inclination by integrating singing and movement into every part of the school day. I am thankful that my students this past year were exceptionally enthusiastic and gifted singers. Listening to their amazing voices would often bring tears to my eyes. Parent volunteers and other visitors to our classroom consistently commented on the energy and beauty they brought to their singing. Needless to say, the students embraced learning the alphabet songs with equal vigor. We began rehearsing the pieces early in the year. I worried the students would grow tired of them before the performance in May but my concerns were groundless. The students begged to sing the alphabet songs everyday and we sang them as often as possible.

More than once, while considering these children's "oneness" with the music, I thought about Dorothy Ling's *The Original Art of Music*. In her book she discusses her belief that all children are born with an innate, accessible musicality that is sometimes stifled by our schools. My goal, as a teacher of young children, has always been to nurture and encourage my students' musical abilities and enhance their kindergarten musical experiences in every possible way.

The Poetry Project: Spring Color Poems

The poetry writing portion of the project began with a month long investigation of signs of spring by my kindergarten students. During the months previous to that unit of study I encouraged the children in a variety of ways to generate descriptive words. These exercises were important in preparing them for the collaborative spring color poetry writing project with their fourth grade partners.

The significance of the poetry activity as a part of the overall project was to make a meaningful connection to the theme of the play and concert in the form of a creative writing project. The poetry generated was based on an authentic experience shared by the kindergarten and fourth grade students. Together the children walked to the neighborhood park on a quest to observe and record signs of spring using writing and color illustration. The next phase of the process was a joint writing session where the partners chose one sign of spring to use in writing a color poem. The resulting poems were edited and rewritten in poster form complete with symbolic illustrated borders. As I stated earlier, this endeavor proved to be far more cooperative than I had anticipated. The fourth graders encouraged the younger children to fully participate in the activity in a developmentally appropriate manner. The resulting poetry was striking in

its simplicity and beauty. As was intended, the poems exemplified how meaning can be created using written language.

No Child Left Behind: The Story of Gus

Gus was enrolled in my kindergarten five years ago. Although he was an extremely bright, creative child his behavior was quite developmentally young. He also seemed angry and uncharacteristically cynical. He often displayed what appeared to be attention getting behavior and had difficulty with impulse control. In short, Gus was a challenge to teach. He lacked a connection to his classmates and often alienated them by acting out.

I found Gus to be an extraordinarily creative thinker. I attempted to nurture this strength throughout the school year. For this reason Gus seemed to like and respect me. Even though he continued to struggle, Gus ended the school year with an improved attitude and the ability to make and keep friends.

I was concerned that Gus would continue to have difficulty in a traditional first grade setting. I recommended to his parents that he be placed in a different school that offered a multiage option. My hope was that, given a less structured environment, Gus would be allowed some extra time to grow developmentally and be given opportunities to express himself creatively.

Gus returned to my school last fall with the same problems he had left with, only now they seemed more severe. This past school year Gus was a student in our fourth grade partner class. Unlike his fourth grade

classmates, he put little effort into any of our cooperative projects. Two weeks before we began working on our joint performance Gus was suspended from school for screaming profanities at his teacher. His parents and teachers were running out of ideas on how to effectively deal with him.

Then Gus was assigned to the sound effect crew for our performance. As if by magic his behavior began to change. His classroom teacher and his music teacher were stunned at the new Gus. He was behaving appropriately for the first time. He was taking his assignment on the sound effects crew very seriously and his sense of responsibility was spilling over into all other aspects of school.

I spoke to his mother about her son's transformation. She said Gus had expressed a love for the music-making as a part of the sound effects crew. In her memory, he had never expressed a love of anything or anyone. Gus continued this new direction until the last day of school. I wrote Gus a letter of thanks and encouragement. I also spoke with his parents about the need to foster his newfound interest in music. My hope is that Gus will have the opportunity to continue channeling his emotions in a positive way through some form of musical creative expression.

The story of Gus graphically demonstrates the power of the arts in our schools. Without his involvement in the program Gus may never have

discovered inside himself that place of self expression that allowed the release of his long time blocked energy.

Reflections

The day I wrote my proposal for my final creative project I remember feeling satisfied that I had planned an authentic experience for myself and my students. I was confident that the project would enhance the students' experience with many opportunities for creative expression. While I realized the project was enormous I also knew it would be a valuable opportunity for me to grow artistically. In the end, all of my initial goals for the project were met and many more unanticipated but positive outcomes resulted.

The students involved in the project seemed genuinely proud of their accomplishments both during the process and after the performance. Much of the positive feedback I received came from parents attesting to their children's excitement about participating in the production.

Every phase of the project brought new discoveries about myself as a teacher and as an artist. I found that I could manage large numbers of children positively and effectively. I also realized I was quite adept at multitasking which was an essential skill in dealing with each part of the production. The amount of attention to detail was overwhelming yet I managed to either delegate responsibilities or complete tasks myself in order to adhere to the project timeline.

I discovered that I enjoyed making the vast number of creative decisions that were necessary at every each stage of the production. I truly believe my experience in *The Creative Pulse* has given me the confidence, as an artist, to embrace these kinds of creative challenges. When reflecting on the project I could dwell on the parts of the process I would have done differently. There were a myriad of problems to solve every day. There were parents who were offended by the political message of the play, logistical setbacks, complications with electronics, wardrobe malfunctions and set painting disasters.

The most unsettling challenge I had to face was related to the underlying theme of the play. When I chose *The Alphabet Tree* I recognized the possibility that the ending of the play, where the message of peace on earth is taken to the president, could potentially be controversial. Even though I anticipated some objections to the play's theme, I was stunned when a parent, upon reading the script, requested the ending be changed. Although I refused to alter the story, her comments led to a thought-provoking discussion on the importance of teaching peace in our schools.

What I have come to realize is that these challenges were at the heart of the project. They demanded creative thinking and the development of a strong sense of commitment and investment within the community of students and adults involved. As the producer and director of the project

I came away from the experience feeling a deep sense of personal satisfaction for the task I had accomplished and for my growth as an artist and teacher.

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Appendix A: Our Performance Invitation and Program



STARRING
MS. LARANCE'S MORNING KINDERGARTEN
AND
MRS. DAER'S 4TH GRADE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2005
10:00 AM TO 11:00 AM
AT THE PAXSON SCHOOL GYMNASIUM



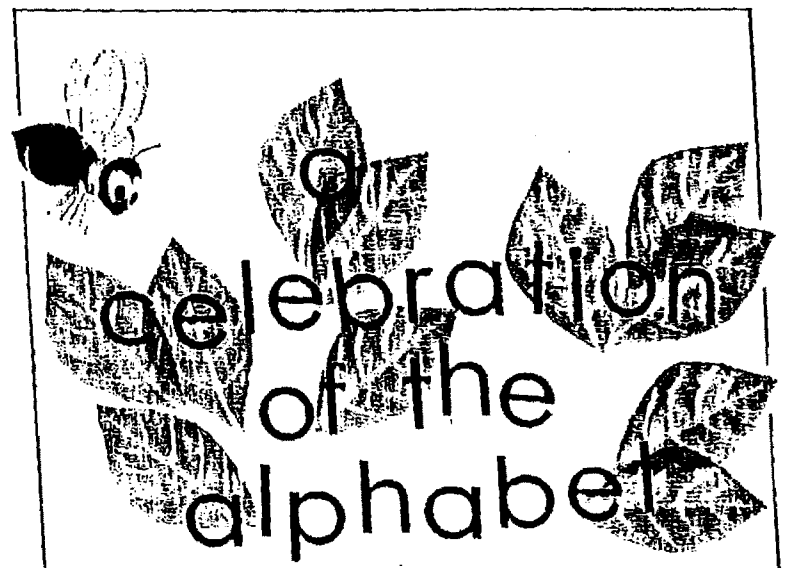
Special Thanks To:

Sally Daer
Karen Callan
Janel Polts
Susanne Davey
Lee Heuermann
Bobbie Bevington
Jody Paulson
Patsy Clark-Johnson
Heidi McDonald
Bonnie Dotz
Jorrun and Jed Liston
Maureen Roy
Marge Dewing
Lee Ann Millar
Mary Lou Strand
Jonas LaRance
Missoula Children's Theatre

Production Crew

Producer/Director.....Claudia LaRance
Musical Director/Accompanist.....Karen Callan
Set Production Assistants.....Elias Paulson, Orion
Smith, Erin Corsi, Ellen
Ipsen, Hunter Bjelland
Videographers.....Nick Hallgren, Joe
Gannon
Banner Design.....Elias Paulson
Design Consultant.....Jonas LaRance

PLAYBILL
THE PAXON SCHOOL GYMNASIUM
MISSOULA MONTANA



celebration
of the
alphabet

PRESENTED BY
MS. LARANCE'S MORNING KINDERGARTEN
AND
MRS. DAER'S 4TH GRADE

the alphabet tree

A theatrical adaptation
of the book by Leo Lionni

Script by Claudia LaRance

Cast of Characters

Ants.....Justin Galther, Annie Caron
Word Bug.....Lydia Golie
Spelling Bees.....McKindree Borges, Danny
Haniszewski, Hunter Bjelland
Caterpillar.....Steen Shober, Reid
Birkenheier, Corly Hilla,
Katrina Liston, Mariah
Eckhart, Griffin Line
Leaves.....Cady Hightower, Tycho
Thorp, Elias Paulson, Dustin
Tulberg, Ashley Duane, Anna
Billet, Chris Clark-Johnson,
Emilee Dewing, Collin Dotz,
Lake Duerksen, Lillie
Gutman, Eric Ipsen, Diego
Kjelland, Hunter Line,
Bridger Liston, Austin
Lofthouse, Madelaine
Millar, Telle Nelson, Addy
Scott, Tommy Stanton,
Brittany Strand

Music

Violin Bugs.....Annelies Taylor, Elissa Taylor, Hunter
Dunn, Madelyn Roy
Sound Effects.....Blake Dufner, Levi Belcourt, Marielle
Gallagher, Orion Smith, Ellen Ipsen,
Gus Maier
What the World Needs Now Is Love.....David/Bacharach

alphabet songs

Alphabet Song.....Traditional
Alphabet Action Song.....Grace Nash
Come Meet Us At the Zoo.....Carla Piper/Janne Bradshaw
A You're Adorable.....Buddy Kaye/Fred Wise/Sidney Lippman
Nursery Rhyme ABC.....Mary Alice Amidon
Alligators All Around.....Carol King/Maurice Sendak



Appendix B: The Play Script

The Alphabet Tree

A play based on the book
The Alphabet Tree
by Leo Lionni

Script by Claudia LaRance

Cast

Narrator Ants
Word Bug
Letter Leaves

Caterpillar
Spelling Bees

Scene: A country path lined with flowers and grass. The path winds past a majestic, old tree with an enormous trunk and twisted branches. At the beginning of the play the Letter Leaves are turned away from the audience. Only the tree's stationary leaves are showing. The Narrator Ants are walking along the path entering stage right as the string section plays the opening song. "Allegro"

ANT 1: Look at this beautiful, old tree! I've never noticed it before.

ANT 2: You haven't? This is the Alphabet Tree.

ANT 1: Why is it called the Alphabet Tree?
(The Letter Leaves turn toward the audience.)

ANT 2: Because not so long ago this tree was full of letters. They lived a happy life, hanging

out on the highest twigs. Each letter had its favorite leaf, where it would sit in the sun and rock in the gentle breeze of spring.

(The Letter Leaves sway from side to side with the sound effects.)

ANT 1: What happened to all the letters? Where did they go?

ANT 2: One day the breeze became a strong gust and the gust became a gale.

(The bodies of the Letter Leaves are blow to the right by the strong wind.)

The letters clung to the leaves with all their might—but some were blown away, and the others were very frightened.

LETTER LEAF 1: Oh, no!

LETTER LEAF 2: Hold on everybody!

LETTER LEAF 3: Don't let go!

ANT 1: But only some of the leaves were blown away?

ANT 2: That's right. When the storm had passed, all the others huddled together in fear.

(The Letter Leaves hug each other, shaking.)

ANT 1: Oh, no! What happen then?

ANT 2: A funny, little bug was passing by and saw them.

(The Word Bug enters from stage left and moves up into the tree.)

- WORD BUG: Why are you all so frightened?
- LETTER LEAVES: We are hiding from the wind. But who are you?
- WORD BUG: I am the Word Bug. I can teach you to make words. If your letters get together in threes and fours and even more, no wind will be strong enough to blow you away.
(The Spelling Bees move up into the tree to help turn the letters into words by placing words around the necks of the Letter Leaves.)
- ANT 2: Happily, they settled back near the highest leaves, and when the wind came they held on without fear.
(The sound effects indicate a strong wind. The leaves move slightly to the right.)
- ANT 1: So, the Word Bug was right!
- ANT 2: Then, one summer morning a strange caterpillar appeared near the tree.
(The Caterpillar enters stage left and stands at the base of the tree.)
- CATERPILLAR: Such confusion! Why don't you get together and make sentences and *mean* something?
- ANT 2: The letters had never thought of this. Now they could really write—say things.
(The Spelling Bees bring words together to make three word sentences.)
- CATERPILLAR: Good! But not good enough!

LETTER LEAVES: Why not?

CATERPILLAR: Because you must say something *important!*

LETTER LEAF 1: What could we say that would be *really* important?

LETTER LEAF 2: What could be more important than peace?

(The Spelling Bees help the Letter Leaves with words to file off stage and out exits. Two Letter Leaves return with a banner that reads PEACE ON EARTH GOOD WILL TOWARD ALL PEOPLE.)

CATERPILLAR: That's it! Now come along with me.

LETTER LEAVES: But where are we going?

CATERPILLAR: To the President!
(The Caterpillar and Letter Leaves with the banner exit stage right. The string section plays exit song. "Ode to Joy" Letter Leaves enter stage left. They form their bodies into letters spelling out THE END. The Letter Leaves are joined by the rest of the cast. The cast members link arms and sing ending song. "What the World Needs Now")

Appendix C: The Project Process on CD

Appendix D: The Performance Film on DVD

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