



# TREEHOUSE SHAKERS

## **HATCHED** **Life on The Farm** **STUDY GUIDE**



### **THE PERFORMANCE**

#### **Hatched**

#### **A Seedling Drama**

**An Interactive Performance About Life On The Farm  
For Babies, Toddlers, Preschoolers and Their Siblings**

**Told Through Puppets, Live Music, Dance, and Story**

**Hatched**, conceived and directed by Mara McEwin, is the original performance of a newborn chick emerging from her shell at sunrise to a strange and busy world. Told to the youngest of audience members 0-6, it is a first introduction into the theatre, while incorporating both the museum and farm. Performed through movement, handcrafted puppets, and very little human dialogue, the story is set amidst an American family farm.

The chick is met by a feisty old rooster, a wobbly calf learning to walk, a gaggle of dancing chicks, a lamb, and a noisy nest of baby birds.

Intimately staged, young audience members are encouraged to interact with the newborn animals as they explore their worlds. Through movement and music, the calf learns to walk, the baby birds attempt to fly, and the lamb makes a new friend with the curious hatched chick. Audience members interact and play with the characters on stage; they give the chicks their feed, milk bottles to the lamb, are licked by the cow, and feed worms to the baby birds. Babies in the audience will be enticed by the animal sounds and textures, while toddlers will love watching and imitating their favorite farm animals as they come to life. Preschoolers will delight in learning about life on the farm and older kids will be entertained by the delightful storytelling, live music and dance. **Hatched** is a beautiful tale, told through exquisite visuals, music, and the exploration of baby animals on the farm.

## **BEFORE SEEING THE PERFORMANCE**

### **AGES 1 AND UNDER**

- ❑ Introduce farm books
- ❑ Talk about each animal
- ❑ Ask and repeat animal sounds
- ❑ Point to animal pictures and say the names of each
- ❑ Sing: Old MacDonald Had a Farm, The Farmer in the Dell

Some Great Resource Books:

**On the Farm: Bright Baby Touch and Feel** by Roger Priddy

**Barnyard Dance** (Boynton on Board) by Sandra Boynton

**My First Farm Board Book** by DK Publishing

### **AGES 2-3**

- ❑ Toddlers love learning about Life on The Farm
- ❑ Introduce different animals who live on the farm
- ❑ Have your toddler make the sounds of each animal
- ❑ Ask how each animal moves
- ❑ Play a dance game: Turn on music and have your child move like a specific farm animal, and then stop the music and have them change animals.
- ❑ Farm Animal Yoga: Have your Toddler Stretch like Different Farm Animals.

Poses include; cat/cow (rounding and arching the back on all fours), Downward Dog (lift one leg up and shake it for a wagging tail), Cobra can be a worm, frog jumps, and flapping chicken wings.

Plant a garden with your body: In Child's Pose, you are the seed.

Grow tall to standing. Lift one leg to balance in Tree Pose. Pretend to water the Tree Poses, and give sun with a Sun Salutation. Maybe someone could even sit under the Tree's shade!

- ❑ Discuss that the Barn and why it is an important place on the farm. This is where the animals live. Ask your toddler where they live.

- ❑ Explain where our food comes from. When giving a snack, or a meal, talk about how milk and eggs are made. How fruits and vegetables are grown.
- ❑ Plant a seed and watch it grow; discuss what the seed needs to grow.
- ❑ Sing Old McDonald, The Farmer in the Dell
- ❑ Read farm books to your toddler

Some Great Resource Books:

**The Farm Book** by Jan Floog

**Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type** by Doreen Cronin

**Giggle, Giggle, Clack** by Doreen Cronin

**Big Red Barn** by Margaret Wise Brown

#### AGES 4-5

- ❑ Show pictures of different farms
- ❑ Talk about the barn, silo, hen house, horse stables, and pig pens
- ❑ Talk about the shapes you find on the farm
- ❑ Farm animal yoga: Stretch like different farm animals
  - Poses include; cat/cow (rounding and arching the back on all fours), Downward Dog (lift one leg up and shake it for a wagging tail), Cobra can be a worm, frog jumps, and flapping chicken wings.
  - Plant a garden with your body: In Child's Pose, you are the seed. Grow tall to standing. Lift one leg to balance in Tree Pose. Pretend to water the Tree Poses, and give sun with a Sun Salutation. Maybe someone could even sit under the Tree's shade!
- ❑ Visit a local farm
- ❑ Talk about the cycle of food, and what foods come from the farm
- ❑ Plant a seed and watch it grow: Discuss what the plant needs to grow
- ❑ What fruits and vegetables can be grown on a farm
- ❑ Read books about farm life

Some Great Resource Books:

**Farm** by Elisha Cooper

**The Year at Maple Hill Farm** by Martin Provensen

**A Busy Day at The Farm** By Doreen Cronin

**The Farm Alphabet Book** by Jane Miller

**The Little Red Hen** by Paul Galdone

**Farming** by Gail Gibbons

#### AGES 6 & UP

- ❑ How is food grown? Discuss food cycles with your class
- ❑ Have each child plant a seed and watch it grow in class
- ❑ Watch a video on how to milk a cow. Or better yet take your class to the farm and have them watch a cow being milked by hand
- ❑ Have your class act out "The Little Red Hen"

Resource Books:

**Charlotte's Web** by E.B. White

**The Little Rooster and The Diamond Button** by Celia Barker Lottridge

## **AFTER SEEING THE PERFORMANCE**

1. Who were the characters in **Hatched**? What sounds did the animals make?
2. Talk about what happened in the play.
3. What instrument was the musician in the show playing?
4. After seeing **Hatched**, discuss it with your class.  
Who was their favorite character and why? Did they notice which actors and dancers played more than one part? How did the actors' and or dancers' movements and help make the puppets seem real?

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

1. (Age 3 & up) Have students create their own farm tales. You can have them sit in a circle and each make up a part to the story. It's okay if the story doesn't make sense; just encourage students to use their creativity.
2. (Ages 6 and up) Have children create their own farm story. They could create this together as a group or as individuals. They could write their stories down, tell the stories out loud, draw their stories or put on a play based on their stories.
3. (Ages 2 and up) Act out a story from the farm. You could choose a story like "The Little Red Hen" or the "Song Old Macdonald Had a Farm" The teacher can narrate and choose students to be different characters. You can have many students play the same part if more than one wants to act out a role. This could be a long project or even a ten-minute project. Tell the story to the students and then have them act it out around the classroom.
4. (1 and up) Ask your students to imitate the body movements of different farm animals. After they have mastered their animal movements, have them add sounds, or even abstract dance. What happens when two or more of the "animals" meet each other? You can take this exercise further by creating masks to further enhance the animal characters.
5. (1 and up) Enjoy food from the farm. Invite students to study different vegetables or fruit that is grown on the farm and make these then into foods for snack time.
6. (1 and up) Make a Worm Puppet with your class. You will need: popsicle sticks, green pipe cleaner and glue. Glue or tie the pipe cleaner on both ends of the popsicle stick to attach. For older kids have them glue on googly eyes. Have your class make up a story about a worm. Talk about how worms help food grow from seeds.

For More Puppet Making Ideas, contact us at [contactus@treehouseshakkers.com](mailto:contactus@treehouseshakkers.com)

## **HATCHED RESIDENCIES AND WORKSHOPS FOR YOUNG SEEDLINGS**

### **Ages 2-6**

Treehouse Shakers offers several residencies and workshops in conjunction with **Hatched**, connecting young students to the performance they are about to experience. Students are exposed to movement, storytelling, creative drama, and puppet making. Treehouse Shakers takes pride in tailoring our curriculum to your students' needs.

### **OPTION 1**

**3-Day Workshops:** Students are given one-day introduction workshops (spread out over 3 days) that include; puppet making with household objects, storytelling and creative drama based on world farm animal folktales, and creative movement. Each workshop lasts 45 minutes for 3-6 and tailored specifically with each age in mind. Age 2 workshops last 30 minutes.

#### OPTION 2

**3-Day Workshops:** gearing up to the performance of **Hatched** that are either in storytelling/creative drama, or creative movement.

#### OPTION 3

**6, 9, 15, 20-Day Residencies:** Students spend 6-20 days (can be once or twice a week) with the teaching artist in creating their own farm animal puppet, creating a farm play of their own, or in creative movement.

#### OPTION 4

**15-Day Performance Residency:** Older students create a dance-play of their own with creative movement, storytelling and puppets. Two teaching artists for each class are provided. 45 minutes.

## **ABOUT TREEHOUSE SHAKERS**

Treehouse Shakers, Inc., a non-profit dance and theater company, was co-founded in 1997 by collaborators and childhood friends, Emily Bunning, choreographer/dancer, and Mara McEwin, writer/actor. Treehouse Shakers has created and performed thirteen original dance-plays for young audiences and adults in many established performance venues, including theaters, festivals and schools across the nation. Treehouse Shakers creates work that experiments with narrative styles and explores the story's elements through the abstractions of modern dance. With each new piece, we challenge ourselves as artists to not only create the highest caliber of work, but also to create work that will stimulate, connect and entertain our audience members. Our young audience programming is unique in its offering young audiences a guided look at modern dance through powerful and meaningful theater. Our work is sometimes the first performance, specifically in viewing dance, which many young people experience. We want to sharpen their aesthetics as they are entertained, challenged, and engaged, while at the same time expanding their knowledge of various art forms. We have built our repertory to carefully address every age level within youth programming, and can proudly say we serve babies to teens. We are building audiences who are creative-thinkers and hopefully life-long performance enthusiasts.

Currently, Treehouse Shakers has six original performances for young audiences on a rotating tour across the nation as well as an annual New York City Season. Our touring repertoire includes; **Animal Rhythms**, **Desert Travels**, **Coyote's Dance**, **Hatched**, **Let's Talk About IT!**, and **Under The Tangle**. **Animal Rhythms** introduces audiences to rhythm, modern dance and theater through the power and culture of West African folklore. **Desert Travels** gives young audiences a mesmerizing taste of life in the Middle East by portraying the sights, sounds and stories of the culture. **Coyote's Dance** follows Coyote, who is both clown and teacher, on a humorous journey of deceit and adventure. **Hatched**, for babies, toddlers and preschoolers, is performed through movement, handcrafted puppets, and very little human dialogue. Set amidst an American family

farm, young audience members are encouraged and narrated to interact and play with the characters onstage; they give the chicks their feed, milk bottles to the lamb, and worms to the baby birds. It is a beautiful and delicate tale, told through exquisite visuals, live music, and the exploration of newborn animals. We want this experience to begin their relationship to the dance, helping to build future audience members, as well as lovers of imagination and artistic expression. Treehouse Shakers is currently the only American company which has an extensively touring “baby drama” **Hatched**, that allows for a guided look at movement for the youngest of audiences. **Let’s Talk About IT!** is a coming of age dance-play for teens that deftly and humorously explores peer pressure, bullying, relationships, and the challenges teens face in the twists of every day. Our newest piece, **Under the Tangle**, for ages 8 +, is the dance-mystery about an adolescent girl who becomes ensnarled in a labyrinth after the sudden loss of her parents. Throughout her journey, she confronts numerous obstacles, finding clues, which reveal insightful life lessons, which help eventually set her free from the labyrinth.

Treehouse Shakers’ young audience work has been praised by Laurel Graeber in the *New York Times*, and featured in *New York Magazine*, *Time Out Kids*, *New York 1’s Parenting Report*, *CBS-TV’s Morning Show*, *Mommy Poppins*, *Village Voice*, *New York Post*, and *The Daily News*, among many others. Our young audience work has received funding from the New York City’s Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Edith Lutyens and Norman Bel Geddes Fund, Lower Manhattan Cultural Community’s Fund for Creative Communities and Manhattan Community Arts Fund, The Nancy Quinn Fund, Puffin Foundation, Ltd., Meet the Composers, BOCES, Rosenthal Family Foundation and the Wyoming Arts Council. Some highlighted performance venues for all of our dance-plays include: *United Nations (NYC)*, *The Peter Jay Sharp Theater (NYC)*, *Flushing Town Hall (Queens, NY)*, *The Ailey Citigroup Theater (NYC)*, *BAM’s Hillman Studio (NYC)*, *Manhattan Movement and Arts Center (NYC)*, *Victoria Theater Associations (Dayton, OH)*, *Alden Theater (McLean, VA)*, *Aronoff Center (Cincinnati, OH)*, *Paramount Theater (Peekskill, NY)*, *Westhampton Beach Playhouse (L.I., NY)*, *Tribeca Film Festival (NYC)*, and *Jacob’s Pillow’s Community Day (Becket, MA)*, *Two Rivers Theater (Red Bank, NJ)*, *Black Rock Theater (Germantown, MD)*, *Bucks County Playhouse (New Hope, PA)*.

**We would love to hear from you! Send us your drawings from Hatched, or your activities from the study guide. We will to post on our website and blog.**

**Thank you!**

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