

# **MRT EDUCATIONAL PACK:**

## ***The Real Legend of Sleepy Hollow***

Thank you for bringing Montana Repertory Theatre's Fall 2010 Educational Outreach Tour of *The Real Legend of Sleepy Hollow* written by Ron Fitzgerald to your community. We hope you enjoy this Educational Packet. It includes the following materials:

- \*A biography of Washington Irving**
- \*Notes from the Director and the Playwright**
- \*Exploring Mistaken Identity as a Theatrical Device**
- \*Workshop Outlines Used by the Tour Actors**
  - #1 Fattening Up a Skinny Character**
  - #2 Super Scary Ghost Stories**
- \*Open Scenes**
- \*Hints on Theatre Etiquette**

As always, Montana Repertory Theatre is honored to be a part of your community, your school, and your lives. Thank you again for this opportunity. If you have any questions, please call me at (406) 243-2854 or email me at [teresa.waldorf@umontana.edu](mailto:teresa.waldorf@umontana.edu).

Teresa Waldorf  
MRT Educational Outreach Coordinator

# Biography: Washington Irving

[www.notablebiographies.com](http://www.notablebiographies.com)

**Born: April 3, 1783**

**New York, New York**

**Died: November 28, 1859**

**Irvington, New York**

Considered the first professional distinguished writer in the United States with short stories like "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Washington Irving was influential in the development of the short story form and helped to gain international respect for American literature.

***Childhood:*** Washington Irving was born and raised in New York City, the youngest of eleven children of a prosperous merchant family. Named after President George Washington (1732–1799), Irving was fascinated by the upper class of New York City and would often sneak out of family prayer meetings to attend the local theatre.

A dreamy and uninspired student, Irving apprenticed (worked to gain experience in a trade) himself in a law office rather than follow his elder brothers to nearby Columbia College. In his free time, he read avidly and wandered when he could around the misty, rolling Hudson River Valley. This area just north of New York City was steeped in local folklore and legend and served as an inspiration for his later writings.

***Begins writing career:*** As a nineteen-year-old, Irving began contributing letters under the pseudonym (assumed name) Jonathan Oldstyle to a newspaper owned by his brother Peter. His first book, *Salmagundi* (1807–08), was a collaboration with another brother, William, and their friend James Kirke Paulding. This highly popular collection of short pieces poked fun at the political, social, and cultural life of the city.

Irving enjoyed a second success in 1809 with *A History of New York, from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, a comical and purposefully inaccurate account of New York's Dutch colonization (settlement by a foreign nation) narrated by another pseudonym Diedrich Knickerbocker, a Dutch American.

Irving's carefree social life and literary successes were shadowed at this time, however, by the death of his fiancée, Matilda Hoffmann. For the next several years he floundered, wavering between a legal and writing career.

***Life in England:*** In 1815 Irving moved to England to work in the failing Liverpool branch of the family import-export business. Within three years the company was bankrupt, and, finding himself at age thirty-five without means of support, Irving decided that he would earn his living by writing. He began recording the impressions, thoughts, and descriptions, which he reworked several times. These became the pieces that make up *The Sketch Book*. The volume was introduced under the pseudonym of Geoffrey Crayon.

*The Sketch Book* comprises some thirty parts: about half English sketches, four general travel pieces, six literary essays, two descriptions of the American Indian, three essentially unclassifiable pieces, and three short stories: "Rip Van Winkle," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," and "The Spectre Bridegroom." The varied material in *The Sketch Book* appealed to a broad range of readers; the work received a great deal of attention and sold quickly. Irving found himself America's first international literary celebrity. In addition, the book's considerable profits allowed Irving to devote himself full time to writing.

Remaining in Europe for more than a decade after the appearance of *The Sketch Book*, Irving wrote steadily, and soon published *Bracebridge Hall; or, the Humorists: A Medley* (1822), which centers loosely around a fictitious English clan that Irving had introduced in *The Sketch Book*.

After 1824 Irving increasingly turned his attention from fiction and descriptive writing toward history and biography. He lived for several years in Spain, serving as a diplomatic attaché (a person who works for their government in a foreign country) to the American embassy in Spain while writing a life of Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) and a history of Granada, Spain. Irving served as secretary to the American embassy in London from 1829 until 1832, when he returned to the United States.

***An American celebrity:*** After receiving warm praise from the literary and academic communities, Irving set out on a tour of the rugged western part of the country, which took him as far as Oklahoma. The expedition resulted in three books about the region, notably *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), which provided easterners with their first description of life out west by a well-known author. Irving eventually settled near Tarrytown, New York, at a small estate on the Hudson River, which he named Sunnyside.

Among the notable works of Irving's later years is an extensive biography of George Washington (1732–1799), which he worked on determinedly, despite ill health, from the early 1850s until a few months before his death in 1859. As America's first literary star with stories like "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Irving established an artistic standard and model for later generations of American short story writers.

### ***For More Information***

Bowden, Mary Weatherspoon. *Washington Irving*. New York: Twayne, 1981.

Curtis, George William. *Washington Irving: A Sketch*. New York: The Grolier Club, 1891. Reprint, Philadelphia: R. West, 1978.

Irving, Pierre M. *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving*. New York: Putnam, 1862–64. Reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1973.

Leary, Lewis. *Washington Irving*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963.

Williams, Stanley T. *The Life of Washington Irving*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1935. Reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1971.

# Notes from the Director

This is the second time I've worked with Ron on the Educational Outreach Tour. We've always believed that getting students interested in theatre is the most important goal. With *The Real Legend of Sleepy Hollow* we used a variety of comedic styles and conventions; vaudeville, commedia, mistaken identity, and of course men dressing up as women. We also took inspiration from the great minds of our generation: Shakespeare, Mel Brooks, Chuck Jones, and Bugs Bunny just to name a few.

This production is a real departure from the original stories, but we felt our goal was not to retell the tale, but rather to inspire students to think about the great "What If..." so they might go on their own to seek out these stories.

"Anxiety is the handmaiden of creativity" - Chuck Jones

--*Bobby Gutierrez, Director*

# Conversation with the Playwright

Ron Fitzgerald

**How did you arrive at the idea of using mistaken identities to build the conflict in the play?** Well, whenever I think about doing theater for the outreach program or just doing theater specifically aimed at students, I think about how to make the experience as enjoyable and theatrical as I can. We pack up a show in a van and off we go across Montana. I want us to (a) get invited back and (b) encourage people to get involved in acting, writing, directing, attending... you know, theater. So this means thinking in terms of theater history and entertaining our audience. We can talk about mistaken identities and gender reversal and many of the elements seen in *The Real Legend of Sleepy Hollow* as points of departure to talk about Shakespeare or Vaudeville and so on, and so we all learn something. But none of that matters if people have a rotten time at the show and never want to see another play in their lives. I don't look at my goal in the Educational Outreach plays as simply transferring words from a book into the script of a play. We, as a creative team, (actors, director, writer) want to take the stories of Ichabod, Rip, and Katrina and plug them into what we love most about theater. And, hopefully, the audience will love them too. Or at least not hate them. That part's important. When I did the outreach tour as an actor, I got skittles, pennies and the odd gummy bear chucked at me while onstage. I'm not naming names, but you know who you are. Anyway, while it is not acceptable for people to be winging things as defenseless actors, it does make a lasting impression.

**Congrats on your newest position. What does a "supervising producer" do?** What does any "Supervisor" do? Not a dang thing. Watch people work. Drink coffee. Tell people to work harder. Tell people to get me coffee and then get back to working harder. That sort of stuff.

I kid, I kid. Actually, it means more on-set producing duties are added to your writing responsibilities. So you break the stories (we call coming up with the plot lines for a season of a TV show "breaking stories"—I have no idea why, though it may explain why some TV shows are all messed up), then you write the episodes, you cast the actors, you deal with the different problems involved with actually shooting the episode (like: where can I find an active volcano?), then you are on set with the actors and director making sure you are filming what you intended (and changing the script as you come up with better ideas), then you edit the thing, put in some sound effects and some music, mix it all, and lastly "lock the picture" which just means saying "no more changes!" Course there are often more changes.

**What does 2011 hold for you?** Honestly, who knows? So many things have happened in the last three or so years that I had only dreamed of back when I was on stage getting pegged with loose candy and spare change.

# Disguises and Mistaken Identities As Theatrical Devices

By Cody Hyslop (Tour Actor)

The following is a series of discussions and activities to work on with your class after they have seen *The Real Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. They address the uses of Disguises and Mistaken Identities in both the play the students have seen and in the history of Western Theatre, the goal being to deepen the students' understanding of the play and of these theatrical devices.

## **Discussion questions for the show itself:**

Here are some basic questions from the play to get the ball rolling.

1. How many different disguises did each character have? Can you identify those different identities?
2. What did each character hope to accomplish by disguising themselves as someone else?
3. What complications arose from instances of mistaken identity in the play?
4. How do you think actor's approach playing a character who is pretending to be another character entirely?

## **Classroom Project – Creating Masks:**

Here is a project you can work on with your students that will address the concept of masks. It includes each student making and then decorating a mask, followed by a brief history lesson on masks in Greek theatre and then a discussion on the idea of masks as disguises.

### **Step One – Mask Making**

This allows the students to have a hands on, concrete introduction to the idea of masks by making and decorating one of their own. It involves making a paper mache mask, and building it on an empty gallon milk jug. Ask students to create a mask that expresses a possible alter ego for themselves, which will both facilitate a later discussion and give focus to the creative energies of the students. Directions for mask making can be found online.

### **Step Two – The Importance of Masks in Greek Theatre**

The next step is for the students to have a historical understanding of masks as disguises. A brief history lesson about the importance of masks in Greek theatre will help achieve this goal. Don't forget to emphasize how important Greek theatre is to the play they have just seen, since Greek theatre is the basis for all English language Western Theatre.

Utilize the information in the following website - <http://web.archive.org/web/20050408044829/http://alumni.imsa.edu/~chuck/project/mask-why.html> .

### **Step Three – Alter Egos**

Now that students have created masks that express their alter egos, discuss how masks can be used to create disguises and different identities.

1. Identify times in your life when you have had occasion to wear a costume or disguise. Did you wear a costume for Halloween? Why is it fun to dress up as someone else for Halloween? Have you ever attended a costume party? Participated in a play? Why do you think people choose certain costumes to wear on Halloween (like a Fireman, Zombie, Fairy, etc.)?
2. Do you think people try to create disguises or different identities when they are interviewing for a job? Or for their first day of school? Or for a date? Have you ever purposely changed your appearance?
3. What traits from your alter ego do you wish you yourself possessed?

### **Shakespeare**

Now that you have covered Greek Theatre and masks, it's time to move on to the importance of Disguises and Mistaken Identities in Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare often used disguises and mistaken identities as theatrical devices in his plays, to both further the plot and to create comic situations. Below are three of Shakespeare's comedies that use these theatrical devices. Read out loud to the class the play or scene summary, and then choose volunteers to read the scenes. Discuss the summaries and the scenes, specifically addressing how and why Shakespeare uses disguises and mistaken identities. To deepen the understanding of this topic keep your volunteers, or choose new ones, and act out the scene. Included in each scene description is a list of props you will need to successfully stage the scene.

#### ***Twelfth Night***

Summary: Shipwrecked in Illyria, Viola disguises herself as a young man named Cesario so that she can work for the Duke. Sebastian, her twin brother, who has no idea that his twin sister is in Illyria, shows up and is mistaken for Viola/Cesario. Also Feste, the Countess Olivia's fool, disguises himself as a priest to further torment the pompous Malvolio, whom he has had imprisoned in an insane asylum.

Scene:

This is the entirety of Act Two, Scene Two, of *Twelfth Night*. In this scene Olivia has sent Malvolio to give Viola a ring. Viola was earlier sent by a Count to woo Olivia for him, but Olivia has now fallen in love with Viola instead, hence the ring. This scene will need a ring, and a man's hat or baseball cap for Viola to tuck her hair under making her look more like a boy.

MALVOLIO.

Were you not even now with the Countess Olivia?

VIOLA.

Even now, sir; on a moderate pace I have since arrived but hither.

MALVOLIO.

She returns this ring to you, sir; you might have saved me my pains, to have taken it away yourself. She adds moreover, that you should put your lord into a desperate assurance she will none of him: and one thing more: that you be never so hardy to come again in his affairs, unless it be to report your lord's taking of this. Receive it so.

VIOLA.

She took the ring of me: I'll none of it.

MALVOLIO.

Come, sir, you peevishly threw it to her; and her will is it should be so returned. If it be worth stooping for, there it lies in your eye; if not, be it his that finds it.

[Exit.]

VIOLA.

I left no ring with her; what means this lady?  
Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!  
She made good view of me; indeed, so much,  
That me thought her eyes had lost her tongue,  
For she did speak in starts distractedly.  
She loves me, sure: the cunning of her passion  
Invites me in this churlish messenger.  
None of my lord's ring! why, he sent her none.  
I am the man; --if it be so,--as 'tis,--  
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.  
Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness  
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.  
How easy is it for the proper-false  
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!  
Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we;  
For such as we are made of, such we be.  
How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly,

And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;  
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.  
What will become of this? As I am man,  
My state is desperate for my master's love;  
As I am woman, now alas the day!  
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!  
O time, thou must untangle this, not I;  
It is too hard a knot for me to untie!

***Comedy of Errors*** (From Wikipedia)

The *Comedy of Errors* tells the story of two sets of identical twins that were accidentally separated at birth. Antipholus of [Syracuse](#) and his servant, Dromio of Syracuse, arrive in [Ephesus](#), which turns out to be the home of their twin brothers, Antipholus of Ephesus and his servant, Dromio of Ephesus. When the Syracusans encounter the friends and families of their twins, a series of wild mishaps based on [mistaken identities](#) lead to wrongful beatings, a near-[seduction](#), the arrest of Antipholus of Ephesus, and accusations of [infidelity](#), [theft](#), madness, and [demonic possession](#).

Scene:

In this excerpt from Act One, Scene Two, Antipholus of Syracuse has sent his servant Dromio of Syracuse out to collect some money that is owed him. Unfortunately, Dromio of Ephesus enters and sees Antipholus of Syracuse, mistaking him for his own master, Antipholus of Ephesus. When Antipholus asks for his money, and Dromio doesn't have it, Antipholus becomes angry and beats Dromio. This scene will need some soft object, like a foam sword or length of newspaper, for Antipholus to hit Dromio with.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,  
And tell me how thou hast dispos'd thy charge.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS.

My charge was but to fetch you from the mart  
Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner:  
My mistress and her sister stay for you.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Now, as I am a Christian, answer me,  
In what safe place you have bestow'd my money:  
Or I shall break that merry scone of yours,  
That stands on tricks when I am undispos'd;

Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

I have some marks of yours upon my pate,  
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,  
But not a thousand marks between you both.--  
If I should pay your worship those again,  
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Thy mistress' marks! What mistress, slave, hast thou?

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Your worship's wife, my mistress at the Phoenix;  
She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,  
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,  
Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave.

DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

What mean you, sir? for God's sake hold your hands!

Nay, an you will not, sir, I'll take my heels.

[Exit DROMIO.]

***Merry Wives of Windsor*** (A single scene summary from Wikipedia)

Falstaff goes to meet Mistress Ford, but Mistress Page comes back and warns Mistress Ford of her husband's approach. The women try to think of ways to hide Falstaff other than the laundry basket which he refuses to get into again. They trick him again, this time into disguising himself as Mistress Ford's maid's fat aunt, the old woman of Brainford. Ford tries once again to catch his wife with the Falstaff but ends up beating the "old woman", whom he despises, throwing her out of his house.

Scene:

Throughout the play Mistress Page and Mistress Ford are devising schemes to trick Falstaff, punishing him for trying to manipulate them in matters of love (it also doesn't hurt that they are both married). In this scene they convince him to hide from Mistress Ford's husband, who is a terribly jealous man, by dressing as a particular woman that Ford loathes, knowing that Ford will try to do some damage to the old woman. For this scene there should be a dress or a shawl for the male student who is playing Falstaff to disguise himself as a woman, plus again some soft object for Ford to beat Falstaff with.

FORD

Help to search my house this one time. If I find not what I seek, show no colour for my extremity; let me for ever be your table-sport; let them say of me "As jealous as Ford, that searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman." Satisfy me once more; once more search with me.

MRS. FORD

What, ho, Mistress Page! Come you and the old woman down; my husband will come into the chamber.

FORD

Old woman? what old woman's that?

MRS. FORD

Why, it is my maid's aunt of Brainford.

FORD

A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element. We know nothing. Come down, you witch, you hag you; come down, I say!

MRS. FORD

Nay, good sweet husband! Good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

*[Re-enter FALSTAFF in woman's clothes, led by MISTRESS PAGE.]*

MRS. PAGE

Come, Mother Prat; come, give me your hand.

FORD

I'll prat her. — *[Beats him.]* Out of my door, you witch, you rag, you baggage, you polecat, you ronyon! Out, out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you.

*[Exit FALSTAFF.]*

### **Wrap-Up**

Allow the students to write and act out their own scenes in which mistaken identity or the use of disguise features prominently.

# **Workshop # 1: Super-Scary Ghost Stories= Supernatural+Superstition +Super Staging**

## **Goals:**

- \* To introduce students to the elements of a story, more specifically ghost stories.
- \* To explore ghost stories and what makes stories scary.
- \*To help students learn the basics of creating their own original scenes.
- \*To give students more confidence in front of groups and their peers.

## **Supplies:**

- \*Scary Props like fake body parts, red-scarves for blood
- \*Chains, skulls, “obviously fake” cardboard weapons, etc.
- \*Scary sound effects and/or music

## ***OPENING DISCUSSION:***

What do all ghost stories have in common? What basic story elements do they employ?  
What is scary, and why do we like to be scared?  
Does anyone know a true ghost story? Has anyone seen a ghost?

**Warm-Ups:** Lead stretching exercises to warm-up the body. Lead Facial and Vocal warm-ups to warm up the face and voice.

## **Exercise One:**

### **MAGNETS to VAMPIRES**

In this exercise, students shuffle slowly around the space with their eyes closed, being either positively or negatively charged magnets. If they are positively charged they stick to each other when they come in contact. If they are negatively charged they don't stick together. Then move on to Vampire, which has the same slow shuffling movement with eyes closed, but where there are vampires and villagers. Vampires “bite” (by gently squeezing shoulders) villagers, who have to scream and turn into vampires. But if a vampire bites another vampire, the person who is bitten sighs and turns back into a villager. NOTE: Eyes closed requires special attention by leaders to safety of students.

## **Exercise Two: MONSTER MAKER**

This is a statue-based exercise. Students pair up, and one person is the sculptor and the other the clay. The clay is not allowed to move, and the sculptor has to carefully mold their “clay” into some sort of monster, being as detailed oriented as possible. The monsters then move about, at first exploring the physical environment, then making their monster sounds, and finally interacting with each other. Students then switch the roles of clay and sculptor and repeat the exercise.

## **Exercise Three 60 SECOND SCARY MOVIES**

To get students thinking in terms of story elements and creating scenes, they will work on this exercise in which a group of four or five students condenses a movie into a 60 second scene. Students are encouraged to think about the plot and structure of the movie, identifying what they feel are the most important elements that have to be acted out. This gets students thinking about the brain storming/rehearsal/performance structure that they will need for the final scene. Students are encouraged to think of movies that the majority of the class will be familiar with.

**DISCUSSION:** Was the audience able to identify your movie? Why or why not? What are the basic elements of almost any story? What did you leave out that your audience needed to know?

## **Review/Lecture: ELEMENTS OF A STORY**

**Exposition:** The opening part of the story or scene in which the reader, or the audience finds out where and when the story is set, who the characters are and what relationship they have to others, why they are together, etc.

**Inciting Incident:** What happens to get the story going, get the ball rolling, arouse the characters to action? The conflict, the problem, the obstacle is unearthed, introduced, occurs.

**Rising Action:** The bulk of the story or scene. The moments that build to the climax. A series of actions the characters engage in to solve the problem, overcome the obstacle, heightening the conflict.

**Climax:** The last in a series of actions that increase in intensity...the highest point of conflict...the “edge of the cliff.”

**Falling Action:** The winding down of the action, a return to a place of lower intensity, but a different, changed emotional place to be.

**Denouement:** The final outcome of the dramatic complications. Sometimes, but not always...And they all lived happily ever after.

## **Brainstorm: ELEMENTS OF A GHOST, SCARY, HORROR STORY**

Students are asked to list the elements of a scary story specifically. How are they the same/different from the above list? Prompt students to identify specific details, gimmicks, conventions of the scary story: music, blood, weapons, lighting, sound effects, etc. Talk about the added benefits of “seeing and hearing” a ghost story or scene as opposed to just reading one. Talk about character by discussing archetypal, or even stereotypical characters, back-story and motivation.

## **Final Scene SUPER SCARY GHASTLY SCENES**

Students will create their own ghost stories to be acted out. Brainstorm, rehearse, perform.

**DISCUSSION:** What did you learn? What was your favorite part of the workshop, what did you find most difficult? What do you know now that you did not know before about ghost stories or acting?

# **WORKSHOP #2:**

## **Fattening Up a Skinny Character**

### **Goals:**

- \*To help students develop the skills needed to flesh out a character.
- \*To show the process an actor goes through when it comes to his or her character, and how deep that process can go.
- \* To give students an understanding of character biographies and script analysis, and how it can be used to flesh out a script.
- \*To assist students in their understanding of vocal and physical characterization, including the use of costumes and props.
- \*To help students step out of their comfort zones and feel more comfortable in front of their peers.

### **Supplies:**

- \*Copies of different Open Scenes.
- \*A trunk of prop and costumes pieces to help with character work.
- \*Paper and pencils.

**Warm-Ups:** Lead stretching exercises to warm-up the body. Lead Facial and Vocal warm-ups to warm up the face and voice.

### **Exercise One:**

#### **MAKING SPECIFIC PHYSICAL CHOICES**

##### *Lead with a Body Part.*

In this exercise, students will learn how simple physical adjustments can lead to developing characters. Students are asked to throw themselves completely into the exercise, but to keep their minds open as they record what sort of characters they feel like they are acting out. First, students are asked to just walk around the space, and as they walk think about which part of the body they find themselves leading with. They are then asked to, step by step on the prompting of the workshop leaders, to exaggerate that part of the body leading them, until at the end they are moving around the space in a completely absurd way. The exercise is then repeated, this time with the students picking a random part of their body to be lead by, and then finally they pick the craziest part of the body they can imagine being led by. A discussion is held afterwards where we talk about how the students felt moving in this way, and what sort of characters they envisioned themselves as when they were performing the exercise.

## **Exercise Two: MAKING SPECIFIC VOCAL/FACIAL CHOICES**

### ***Greet As If....***

Now that students have worked on some physical characterizations, it is time for vocal characterization. In this exercise students walk around the space until an instructor says, “Greet the people around you as if...”, and then whatever prompt they are given, the students have to instantly use their bodies and voices to complete the exercise. For instance, if the instructor says to greet each other as if the students were politicians in a parade, the students would use their bodies and voices much differently than if they were prompted to greet each other as if they were deathly afraid of the other person. After nine or so prompts, we have a discussion about the different choices made from one prompt to the other, and how students used their bodies and voices (voices especially) to accomplish the exercise.

**DISCUSSION:** Prompt students to identify, imitate, and discuss the physical and vocal choices used by the actors in *The Real Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

## **Exercise Three: COSTUME-INSPIRED CHARACTERS THE TRUNK**

(\*Special note. The trunk would hopefully be full of sturdy props, since they will definitely be used and abused, and costume pieces that could fit multiple body types and could be easily washed if need be. We could maybe even use the costumes and props for the student’s final scenes.)

This exercise will be used to show how costumes and props can affect your understanding of a particular character. It will also act as an introduction to the next exercise, Open Scenes. First, one at a time, volunteers are asked to step in front of the group. Instructors will put different costume pieces on the volunteers, give them a prop, and ask the audience what sort of characters they could imagine these actors being. Volunteers could also pick their own costume pieces and props, and the last couple of volunteers in this first round should be encouraged to act out a simple action in character (examples: making a withdrawal at a bank, teaching an exercise class, diapering a baby, making a bed). Next, workshop leaders will bring up two volunteers at a time and dress them, having them act out a simple scene (examples: a bank robber and a king try to get their car started, a ballerina and a farmer play checkers). Again, students could also pick out their own costumes.

**DISCUSSION:** Analyze and discuss the costumes in the play, what they said about the characters, and how the actors seemed to use them to help make character choices.

## **Acting Exercise: OPEN SCENES**

This acting exercise will facilitate students thinking in a more concrete way about fleshing out a character when it comes to a script. (see examples of Open Scenes in the MRT Education Pack)

In this exercise we will deal with Open Scenes (sometimes called Ambiguous Scenes or Nonsense Scenes) and the process of “layering” or reading it “AS IF...” By this we mean acting out an open scene with specific given circumstance with regard to time, location, occupation, age, relationship, physical and vocal characterizations, etc.

AS IF....

\*You are in a sinking ship...

\*It is midnight

\*You and the other character are Father and Daughter

\*You are freezing

\*You can only be heard if you yell

To begin with, workshop facilitators will go through the process of layering, first reading the scene flat, and then performing the scene again and again after adding a layer at a time. This can also include asking for student suggestions for the different layers when instructors are performing. Next, sets of two volunteers will be asked for, going through the same process as before but with the instructors deciding on the layers. Finally, sets of two volunteers can come up to work on open scenes, but this time with audience members coming up with the ideas for the different layers.

## **Acting Exercise: FINAL SCENES: CHARACTER SWAP**

For the final performance students will write a one-paragraph character biography, utilizing the information learned in the previous exercises. When they are finished, bios will be collected, shuffled, and handed back out to different students. (Students must not know before writing the bios that they will be exchanging them, or else they will censor themselves.) Students are given time to read and process their new bios, and then in sets of two will come up in front of the class and act out a simple scene in which two characters meet in the park and work on some simple activity (like playing frisbee).

***DISCUSSION:*** What did you learn about the process of characterization? What was the easiest part of the workshop for you, what was the most challenging, and how did you deal with having to make such strong choices? Did this workshop change the way you think about actors, acting and the characters you see on stage, on television and in the movies?

# OPEN SCENES:

*These scenes can be performed as a variety of situations. The actors pick a setting, a conflict and characters, and then perform their scenes. The exact lines must be used.*

*Need more? Write your own.*

## Scene #1

1. Are we there
2. I don't know, maybe
1. What is that
2. Can't you tell
1. Why can't you just tell me
2. You know why
1. Do you need me to get it
2. Yes
1. There, what do you think of that
2. Oh, that's great
1. You know, some days I wonder about you
2. I never wonder about you. Here, take this
1. What do you want me to do with this
2. That's your problem now

## Scene #2

1. My feet hurt
2. Really
1. Yes, don't yours
2. Nope. That's not surprising
1. What isn't
2. You know
1. Well, you still are doing the same things
2. I guess so
1. How did you know about me
2. J. J. told me
1. J. J., oh
2. Why does it matter
1. It doesn't
2. It doesn't

## Scene #3

- A: Hey.  
B: Hello.  
A: Do you want a mint?  
B: No thanks.  
A: Sure.

B: Wait, why?

A: No special reason.

B: Oh.

A: Want one?

B: OK, thanks.

# Theatre Etiquette

Dear Principals and Teachers,

Thank you for this opportunity to perform for your students. Our actors will give a curtain speech before the show about the play. However, because we want this experience to be as pleasant as possible for you, your students, and the performers, we ask that you please take time to cover these basic theatre etiquette rules with your students before they enter the theatre or performance space.

- 1. Please remain seated for the entire performance. Please use the restroom before you are directed to your seats. This performance is less than an hour long, with no intermission.**
- 2. Please turn off your cell phones. Also remember that the use of recording equipment and cameras is not permitted.**
- 3. Please do not eat, drink, or chew gum during the performance.**
- 4. Please do not talk to the actors on stage, or to your friends during the show.**
- 5. Laugh, clap, and have fun!**

**Please let the Stage Manager and Actors know if you would like to have a 10-minute question-and-answer period for your students after the show.**

Thank you so much for your support in creating the future's well-mannered and appreciative "live performance" audience members!