

# WILL & COMPANY

## PINOCCHIO

**Art Form:** Theatre

**Style:** Contemporary

**Culture:** Western European

### MEET THE ARTIST:

**Will & Company** is a multicultural theatre ensemble with Professional Designation in Arts Education that performs exciting adaptations of some of the world's greatest classic literature. Under the artistic direction of Colin Cox, the company presents major scenes from plays, interspersed with narration and background information. Trademarks of their productions include physical humor and dazzling swordplay. The troupe performs Shakespeare's perennial favorite *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as adaptations of literature's great works: *Robin Hood*, Homer's *The Odyssey*, Charles Dickens' novella *A Christmas Carol* and Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*. Will & Company has performed locally at The Geffen Playhouse, The Los Angeles Theatre Center, and El Capitan and tours nationally to present both classic works and original plays on subjects pertaining to diversity. In 2005, Will & Company was nominated for a GLADD award for their production of *A Pebble in My Shoe*.

### ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

The story of *Pinocchio*, written by Carlo Collodi, takes place in Tuscany, Italy where the author lived. This production, performed by five actors and adapted by Stephan Wolfert, is a 45 minute adaptation of the classic tale. Ten pre-selected students from your school, will work with the company to bring the story from the page to the stage. In this version, Antonio Cricket narrates the story of Pinocchio, a puppet, and his quest to become a real boy. Geppetto, a woodcutter, has longed for a son. One day he is given a magical piece of wood and is inspired to carve a life-size puppet. From it he names the puppet Pinocchio and hopes that someday he will earn the gift of life by being good and honest. However, Pinocchio runs away from home and finds himself in situations where he is tempted to disobey. Unfortunately, he makes a series of bad choices and his troubles increase. Each time he tells a lie, his nose grows and eventually he turns into a donkey. Luckily, a kind Fairy guides him to learn the things he needs to know, such as patience and honesty, and he becomes a real boy.



Puppets and Masks: Beth Peterson  
Puppet Costumes: Jennifer Kostner

### PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

The story of *Pinocchio* was written 200 years ago by Carlo Lorenzini, who later changed his “pen name” to Carlo Collodi. He chose the last name of Collodi because it was the name of the hillside village where his mother was born. Early in his career he translated some French fairy tales, which led to the idea of writing his own. After his first success, he devoted himself to writing for children “because adults are too hard to please.” *Pinocchio* came out of a story called “Adventures of a Puppet.” It was not published as a book, but was printed in a newspaper each week as a series. People became involved in the story and waited anxiously each week for the next chapter. About two years later (1883), all the chapters were put together and published as a book called *Pinocchio*, which became a children’s classic.

Fairy tales have been told for hundreds of years in most parts of the world. Although the place, time, characters and challenges change according to specific cultures, the themes are universal. Here are some of the **common elements** that might be found:

- Begins with the words: “Once upon a time...”
- Takes place a long time ago or in another land.
- Characters include royalty or powerful characters.
- Common people rise in status due to their own abilities or magic.
- Unusual or talking animals may be present.
- There are both good and evil characters.
- The main character solves a problem.
- It often ends with the magical phrase, “And they lived happily ever after...”

There are also **common story structures** such as:

- A hero/heroine has a mission or task to fulfill.
- Character may be banished from home.
- Character violates a rule.
- Involves at least one villain.
- A magic spell or curse is cast.
- The hero meets mysterious people, mentors or creatures.
- Magical gifts, or valuable knowledge, are earned.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- If you were to describe the story of *Pinocchio* in two or three sentences, what would you say? Think of the beginning, middle and end.
- If you had 15 minutes to spend with one of the characters in the play, which character would you choose? Why? What would you do or talk about?
- Which character did you identify with most? Which character did you identify with least? Why?
- What is the main lesson or idea you got from the play?
- What was the role of the Blue Fairy? What was she trying to get Pinocchio to understand and do?
- Why did Pinocchio become a donkey? What animal can you imagine becoming? How would being that animal change your life if you still considered yourself human?
- Describe the traits of the fox and the cat. How were they similar? How were they different?

## FRAMEWORK FOCUS - LANGUAGE ARTS

### Vocabulary

**Allegory:** An allegory is a story or piece of art with two meanings, a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often personifications of abstract ideas such as charity, greed, or envy.

- Think about the following characters. Tell or list things about each one that are real; then identify the main trait that each represents - love, cleverness, greed, evil, temptation, kindness, wisdom, or betrayal.
- **Antonio:** the Cricket
- **Geppetto:** Lonely woodcutter; creates Pinocchio
- **Pinocchio:** Wooden puppet with dreams
- **Fox:** Pretends to have a hurt leg
- **Cat:** Pretends to be blind in one eye
- **Blue Fairy:** Fairy who helps Pinocchio
- **Fire Eater:** Master of Commedia dell'Arte
- **Lampwick:** Naughty boy and friend of Pinocchio
- **Coachman:** Evil man who runs Land of Toys

Write a paragraph about what you think is the main moral of the story and why.

- Legend:
- ⊗ Artistic perception
  - ❖ Creative expression
  - ▮ Historical & cultural context
  - ⇒ Aesthetic valuing
  - \* Connections, Relations, Applications

## ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- \* **Honesty:** The quality of communicating and acting truthfully. This includes listening, actions, and speaking (stating facts and views as one truly believes them to be). It also includes honesty to others and to oneself, and one's own motives and intentions. Think of a time when you were dishonest, then write about it. Think of a time when you were truthful, then write about it. How did you think and feel in each situation?
- ❖ Working with a partner, one of you take the character of Pinocchio and one take the role of Lampwick. Improvise (make up) a situation where you have an argument. Pinocchio wants to make a good choice and Lampwick tries to persuade him to make a poor choice. i.e., paying money to buy candy or stealing the candy; helping a child walk or pushing them down and making fun of them.
- ⇒ Recall the masks used by the characters. Identify the main colors, designs, shapes and sizes of each. Discuss how the masks illuminated his/her personality.
- ⊗ Read the information on Page 1 about the elements of a fairy tale. Discuss which elements are in the story of *Pinocchio*.

- ❖ Select a favorite character from *Pinocchio*. Make a simple, yet expressive, rod puppet of this character. Use a stick, such as a popsicle stick, as a base. Draw your character and trace it out onto construction paper. Cut additional pieces for clothing or important characteristics or add bits of fabric or buttons, etc. Glue these on and cut out the puppet. Turn the puppet face down, place the stick lengthwise and tape it in several places to the stick. Improvise with others to

create your own scenes.

- ▮ If you have use of a computer, research one of the following: Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio*, Fairy tale, or Will & Company. Share your findings.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Adventures\\_of\\_Pinocchio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Adventures_of_Pinocchio)