

APPlause!

K-12 Performing Arts Series



*Enriching lives, sparking imaginations,
and inspiring a love of learning through the arts!*

The Trolleys by Sara West

presented by Appalachian State University's Department of Theatre and Dance

October 7, 2022 - Valborg Theatre

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Before the performance...

Familiarize your students with what it means to be a great audience member by introducing these theatre etiquette basics:

- Arrive early enough to find your seats and settle in before the show begins (20-30 minutes).
- Remember to turn your electronic devices OFF so they do not disturb the performers or other audience members.
- Remember to sit appropriately and to stay quiet so that the audience members around you can enjoy the show too.

PLEASE NOTE:

***THIS EVENT IS SCHEDULED TO LAST APPROX 70 MINUTES.**
10:00am – 11:10am

- Audience members arriving by car should plan to park in the Rivers Street Parking Deck. There is a small charge for parking. Buses should plan to park along Rivers Street – Please indicate to the Parking and Traffic Officer when you plan to move your bus (i.e. right after the show, or after lunch) so that they can help keep everyone safe.
- Adults meeting a school group at the show will be asked to sign in at the lobby and wait to be escorted to their group by a security guard.



THE TROLLEYS

Study Guide



Created by: Alex Contianos and Allie Mariotte

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About The Play

Synopsis

The Trolleys are a group of six kids who live on the outskirts of a city. In this post-apocalyptic world everyone has a jar of light, but the lights are fading fast and no one knows why. All the Trolleys know is that if their light goes out, they disappear into a colorful cloud of dust. It is up to the Trolleys to discover why their lights are fading ... and they're running out of time.

CHARACTERS



SAVAGE KIM

The oldest. Tough and strong-willed leader of the Trolleys. Age 12.*

RIVER

Twin to Blue. A very good gatherer. Is glad to have found the Trolleys.

BLUE

Twin to River. Thought to be the smarter of the two. River and Blue are 9 years old and can't stand to be apart.

BABY MAY

The youngest of the group at age 6. Her age doesn't stop her from being the bravest.

JONES BOY

The brains of the group at 8 years old. He finds it hard to be heard over Savage Kim.

LEMON

10 years old. She has lived on her own for a while but has found ways to keep her light bright.

PHLEGM

10 years old. Very mischievous and is always thinking about food.



DUSTERS

The Dusters are wanderers - until their light flickers out.

**We'd like to acknowledge the historically harmful use of the word "savage" when referencing the indigenous and colonized communities of both Australia and the United States. As a cast and production team, we are working to portray the word "savage" here as strong, bold, and fierce.*

About The Playwright



Playwright Biography

Sara West is an Australian actor and author. She published *The Trolleys* in 2014 and won an Australian Theatre for Young People Foundation Commission Award for the play.

Glossary



The Trolleys is an Australian play, so some of the words in the play might be unfamiliar.

Trolley

A shopping cart or buggy that you put groceries in.

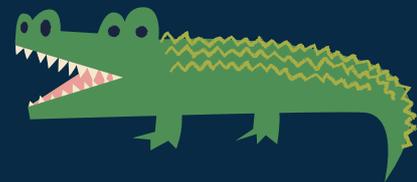


Crock

Someone who is lying.

Duster

In the world of the show, a Duster is someone whose light has gone out.



Nana

An old lady.



Savage

Fierce, powerful, and strong

Director



Dr. Gina Grandi

The world we've created in *The Trolleys* is not a literal world – this does not take place in a specific place or after a specific event.

Instead consider this world the metaphorical space our young people are living in – living through Covid, through the #BlackLivesMatter protests, through the overturning of Roe v Wade. This is a world of anger, distrust, and fear, where young people are directly impacted by those in power but do not have power themselves – a familiar but unfamiliar world in which young people are being left, in many ways, to fend for themselves as their caregivers and leaders are tearing themselves and the world apart. The children are left to create their own communities and leadership, and to figure out for themselves how to love and how to trust.

The Trolleys are fighting to keep their light – they are fighting to find and keep connection, trust, and hope.

As you watch this play, ask yourself:

How can I keep my own light bright?

Dramaturgy Team

What is Dramaturgy?

Dramaturgy is the research-based part of understanding a piece of theatre. Dramaturgs are the people who do this research to help both the director and the actors have a better understanding of the world the show takes place in. A lot of this research happens before rehearsals start, however, any questions that arise during the rehearsal process are the responsibility of the Dramaturgs to provide answers for. Dramaturgs also help the actors with their characterization to make the show feel more authentic.

Questions you might ponder as a Dramaturg: What is the time period? Why do characters speak a certain way?



Meet the Dramaturgy Team

Hello! I'm Allie Mariotte and my pronouns are she/her. I am a senior Theatre Education major at Appalachian State University. As Head of Dramaturgy, I am responsible for analyzing the relationships between the characters. For example, Blue and River's sibling relationship and how that compares to Savage Kim and Jones Boy's friendship. I researched children behavior to help the actors perform as children. **While watching the performance see if you can relate to any of the friendships in the show.**

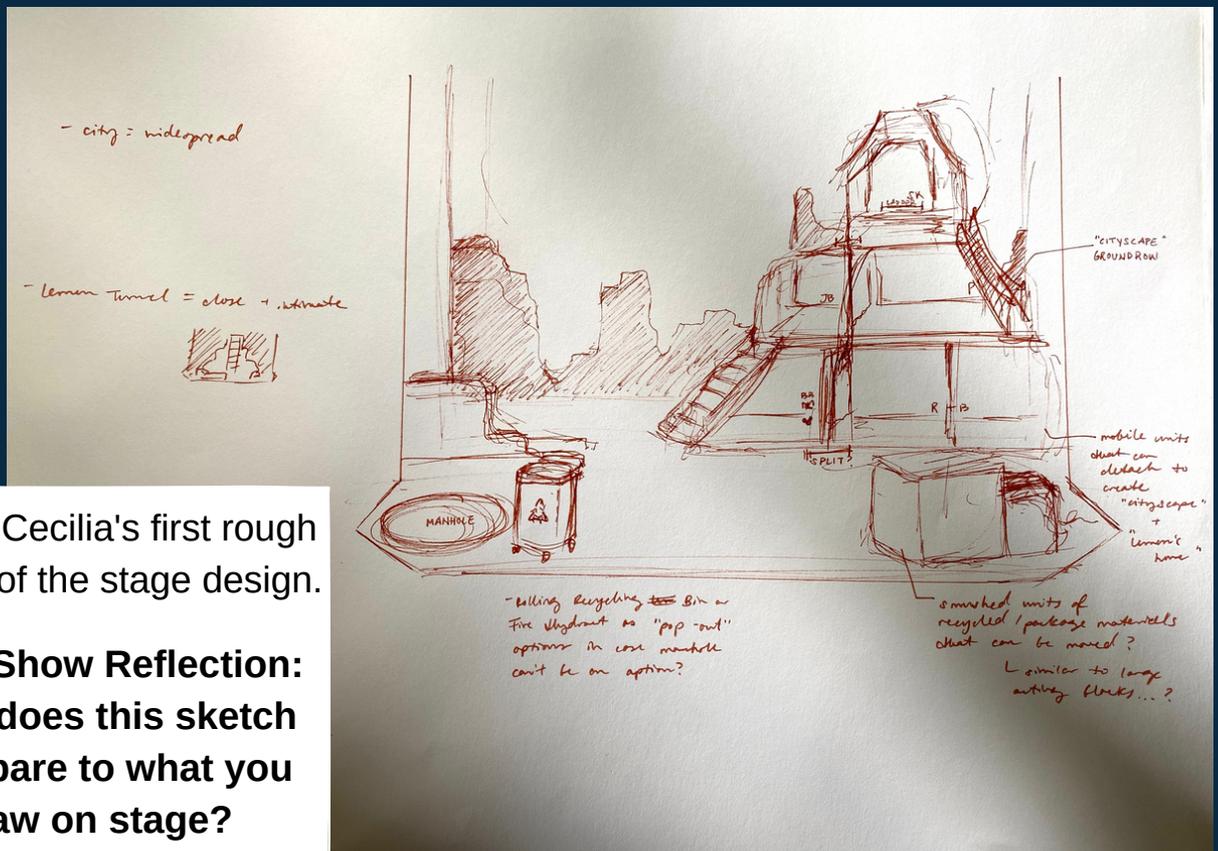


Hi! My name is Alex Contianos and my pronouns are she/her. I am a Junior Theatre Education major at Appalachian State University. As Assistant Dramaturg, I am responsible for helping build the study guide you are holding now. I helped create activities for you to do in your classrooms based on the show as well as craft a pre and post-show workshop. **Throughout the show, take notice of when there is a lot of light on stage and when there is not. See if you can make a connection between the light and what is happening in the play.**

Set Design

Meet the Set Designer

Hello! My name is Nga Sze (Cecilia) Chan, and I use the pronouns she/her. I am a Senior at Appalachian State University. I will graduate this December with a degree in Theatre Arts with a concentration in Design & Technology, as well as a double minor in Music and Chinese. I am the Scenic Designer for The Trolleys and I am very excited for this production! Throughout this summer, I've found this play to be a source of comfort for me as it invokes a sense of hope, compassion, and home, especially within our current climate of the pandemic, political discourse, and general uncertainty. The metaphorical world of this play is one that is not unlike our own, and I am delighted to create this liminal play-space for this bright and explosive journey!



This is Cecilia's first rough sketch of the stage design.

Post Show Reflection:
How does this sketch compare to what you saw on stage?

Going To The Theatre

Audience Expectations!

Create a chart of events we might go where we will be an audience. (A play, a concert, a movie, a school talent show, a sporting event, etc.)

For each event, discuss which of the following would be expected, appropriate, or inappropriate:

- Clapping
- Shouting to the performers
- Talking to those around you
- Standing up, stretching, or walking around
- Eating snacks

Discuss:

- Why is there a difference between audience behavior at different events?
- What kinds of behaviors do different performers love? Which might distract them?
- What's the difference between appropriate and expected?
- What should we remember at this performance?
- Which expectations might be difficult to remember? What strategies can we employ?

A **proscenium stage** seats the audience at only one side of the stage. A proscenium stage is also framed by a 'proscenium arch.'

A **thrust stage** seats the audience on three sides of the stage.

The Valborg Theater has a stage that has elements of both. Which definition do you think fits best?

Pre-Show Questions

What does having power mean?

What makes a good leader?

Are there different ways to be a good leader? If so, what are they?

When have you had to do something completely on your own? How did you feel?

How does someone show that they are trustworthy?

When you are feeling down, what do you do to make yourself feel better?

What are some ways that your friends have been there for you?

What are some ways your family has been there for you?

What would a world run by children look like? If you were a leader in that world, what would be the first thing that you'd do?

Upper Level Questions

During Covid, how did you stay connected with your friends or family?

When and in what ways do you think young people today are responsible for raising themselves?

Pre-Show Activities

Standard Supported:

Theater 6.C.1.1 : Use physical movement and acting skills express a variety of emotions to an audience.

Frozen Images

In groups of four, students create frozen images of the following words and phrases:
hope, shine your light, friendship, trust, community, and empathy.

What shapes, levels, and ideas do you see across the images?

Light Sorting

Light plays an important role in *The Trolleys*. Investigate qualities of light and shadow by using a flashlight to sort objects into...

- translucent
- transparent
- opaque

Standard Supported:

Science 6.P.1.2 : Explain the relationship among visible light, the electromagnetic spectrum, and sight.

Standards Supported:

Language Arts RL.5.2 :

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

Visual Poetry

Students create a piece of art inspired by Lemon's poem from *The Trolleys*. How can you show the theme and message through shapes and colors?

Lemon's Poem

Shine your light, shine it everyday
Shine your light, 'n share it in every way
If you keep it to yourself, in the dark you'll stay
So shine your light, so we can come and play

The world is dark, but I can see you clear
Take my hand, and let me pull you near
Don't stay out there on your own, in the black of night
Just come by me, so we can share the light



More Poem Activities

Our sound designers had to compose a tune for Lemon, so she could sing this poem. If you were the sound designer, how would you set this to music?

How could you illustrate this poem through a series of still images?

Standards Supported:
ELA Anchor Standards
RL.1, 2, 4, and 9
Theatre Standards C.1, C.2,
and AE.1

Can you turn this poem into a comic strip? A zine? A graphic novel? Who would the characters be? What's the story?

Go on a poem scavenger hunt: what other poems can you find that share the same themes? Words? Ideas?

Design Challenge

Imagine: You are the set designer for *The Trolleys* and you are responsible for creating what the stage will look like. Using either the first or second description, sketch out how you would design the show! Feel free to use whatever colors and shapes you want ... it's what you imagine the world to be! You can use Cecilia's sketch to inspire your drawing if you're stuck, but make it your own.

1. "Through the tangle of unturned shopping trolleys and makeshift tarpaulin (tarp) housing we see more jars. Empty jars bar a few with light emitting from the inside... The lights revealing what we now see clearly as a pack of kids all tucked into Trolley Tower; a 3-story mammoth structure not in any way uniform."
(stage directions, p. 12-13, *The Trolleys*)

2. "We are now underground in a tunnel system beneath the city - everywhere you look there are lit up jars, maybe twenty in total. The lights illuminate a small living area with a sleeping bag and a few dozen drawings of rainbows - they are drawn during both the night and day and vary in sizes and colors - this is LEMON's home." (stage directions, p. 44, *The Trolleys*)

Post Show

What do you think the light is a symbol of?
Which character did you connect with the most?
While watching the show, was there something you could connect to your own life?
Do you think the group was right to not trust Lemon at first?
During the show you may have noticed it was difficult for Jones Boy to stick up to Savage Kim. Why do you think this was so?
Why was the color of the dust so important to the characters? Do you think the colors have a meaning?
What do you think about the characters' names in the show? Do you think those names have importance?

Discussion Questions

What stereotypes exist about: Children?
Gender? Size? Age? How do the characters in the play fight against or defy these stereotypes?

The playwright has written that all the roles in *The Trolleys* can be played as any gender. Imagine one of the characters you saw played as different gender. What would the impact be?

Connected Readings

(11+) *Gone*, by Michael Grant

Gone is “about a boy called Sam Temple. When all people over the age of 14 disappear everyone turns to him to be their leader and he doesn't know what to do, but when all the bullies start to take over the town he leaps into action to help the town of Perdido Beach and all the people in it.” (The Guardian)

(12+) *The Girl Who Owned A City*, by O.T. Nelson

“In *The Girl Who Owned a City*, a virus has killed off everyone over twelve. Ten-year-old Lisa Nelson takes on a leadership role, finding stores of food and organizing Grand Avenue for protection against gangs. After the local gang burns down her house, she gets the idea of making a defensible castle, and Lisa leads the way in turning the local high school into her own castle, a new city that she fights to run and keep.” (Bookrags)

(13+) *Monument 14*, by Emmy Laybourne

“In Emmy Laybourne’s action-adventure thrill ride *Monument 14* series, fourteen kids from Monument, Colorado find themselves trapped in a superstore. Outside, violent storms rage and a dangerous chemical leaks into the atmosphere, killing some and changing others into something not quite human. The kids must band together if they want to live. But it won’t be easy, and there’s no telling what kind of world will rise from the ashes...” (Macmillan)

Appalachian State University

“As the premier public undergraduate institution in the Southeast, Appalachian State University prepares students to lead purposeful lives as global citizens who understand and engage their responsibilities in creating a sustainable future for all. The Appalachian Experience promotes a spirit of inclusion that brings people together in inspiring ways to acquire and create knowledge, to grow holistically, to act with passion and determination, and to embrace diversity and difference.” (ASU Homepage)

“Theatre and Dance is one of seven departments housed in the College of Fine and Applied Arts at Appalachian State University. Theatre and Dance embraces the university's mission to provide: "a well-rounded liberal education and the opportunity to pursue a special field of inquiry"; "to promote the intellectual, cultural and personal development of its students"; "to serve as a center of cultural and professional activity within its state and region." The departmental philosophy is to support the university's liberal arts environment through a balanced and integrated emphasis on teaching, creative activity, scholarship, and service." (ASU Theatre and Dance Homepage)

“The Theatre Education program offers a mix of pedagogy and hands-on training based on the North Carolina Standards for Teachers of Theatre and the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. During the degree students participate in all aspects of theatre and education. Students find themselves functioning in every role-- from acting and building scenery, to designing lessons, guest lecturing, and teaching actual public school workshops based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Additionally, students in this degree are trained by theatre and education faculty on how to be more effective teachers. This training creates dynamic theatre educators of every level for the public or private school.” (ASU Theatre Education Homepage)

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Arts education and outreach programming at Appalachian is committed to connecting university arts resources to a diverse audience of community arts patrons, teachers and learners in the campus community, and in the public, private and home school network across our region. In doing so, the series strives to broaden and deepen arts experiences for audiences of all ages, while ensuring access to the arts for young audiences, building future audiences for the arts, and inspiring a love of learning through the arts.

Every season, affordable music, dance, film, and theatre events are offered to students and their teachers from K-12 classrooms across the region. Students experience everything from high-energy acrobatics and Appalachian music to international dance and literary classics brought to life through theatrical productions. In recent seasons, more than 8,000 students across our region have attended APPlause Series events.

This academic year, in addition to five in-person performances, the APPlause! Series will offer three virtual performances that are completely free and offer compelling programming to connect to K-12 classrooms, thanks in large part to generous donors who believe in supplying educators with arts programming that will spark creativity and inspire a love of learning.

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

The APPlause! 2022-23 season has been generously supported by a grant from the
JAMES G. HANES MEMORIAL FUND
&
STEVE AND SUE CHASE.

