

Telling the Story on Stage

Different Ways of Storytelling

The magic of theater is that anything can happen on stage, even the story of Robin Hood with all its drama, fights, and adventure. But to bring the story to life takes some skill and a lot of imagination. The performers will tell the tale in two different ways: by narrating it (telling it directly) and by acting out parts of it. Watch for how they change the way they move and talk as they perform different characters and parts of the story.



Now You See It All

Besides some unusual objects and the two hardworking actors, you'll see everything happen on stage. And here's a fun new way to describe this—*Open Theatricality*. That means you'll see the actors the whole time (they don't leave the stage to change costumes to become different characters) and you'll see how they work with the objects around them to help you imagine the forest, fight scenes, and even a man falling into a river.

How the Arrows Fly

Before the performance, think about this challenge:

How would you show an arrow flying on stage without using an actual arrow? (Some hints: Use other objects, a background, lighting, paper, and so forth). See what the performers use to show different types of action in the story, and afterward, discuss what surprised you the most.



Boxes are one of the items the actors will use in telling this story. Before or after the performance, think of five things a cardboard box could be (besides a box). If you can, use a box to show your ideas to a friend.

A Few More Things...

About the Performers

What happens when you look at something ordinary in a whole new way? That's one question the people at Visible Fictions of Scotland sometimes ask as they create a new performance. For this show, Robin Hood's legend appealed to them as an old story that could be retold in the creative, nontraditional style for which they're known.



Your Role

Watch for...

- ❖ how the two actors perform multiple characters at the same time
- ❖ the ways Robin outwits the Sheriff
- ❖ what Robin values most in the people he invites to join the band
- ❖ how Robin and his band became generous to people who are poor

Think about...

- ❖ what words you would use to describe Robin
- ❖ which characteristic of Robin's you admire most, and why
- ❖ why Robin Hood has been a popular hero for more than a thousand years
- ❖ whether there can be such a thing as an honorable (moral) outlaw
- ❖ what the storytelling suggests about the idea of sharing wealth



After the performance, find a partner and use some everyday objects from your home or classroom (like utensils, towels, notepads, etc.) to retell your favorite part of the story. Like the performers on stage, try to add your own special twist, like a new place or a way to show a person from the legend. Perform your story for your friends or family.

And remember...

To be a good audience, there are just a few things you need to do:

- ❖ turn off and put away your phones and electronics
- ❖ turn on your imagination
- ❖ stay quiet once the performance begins
- ❖ clap at the end!

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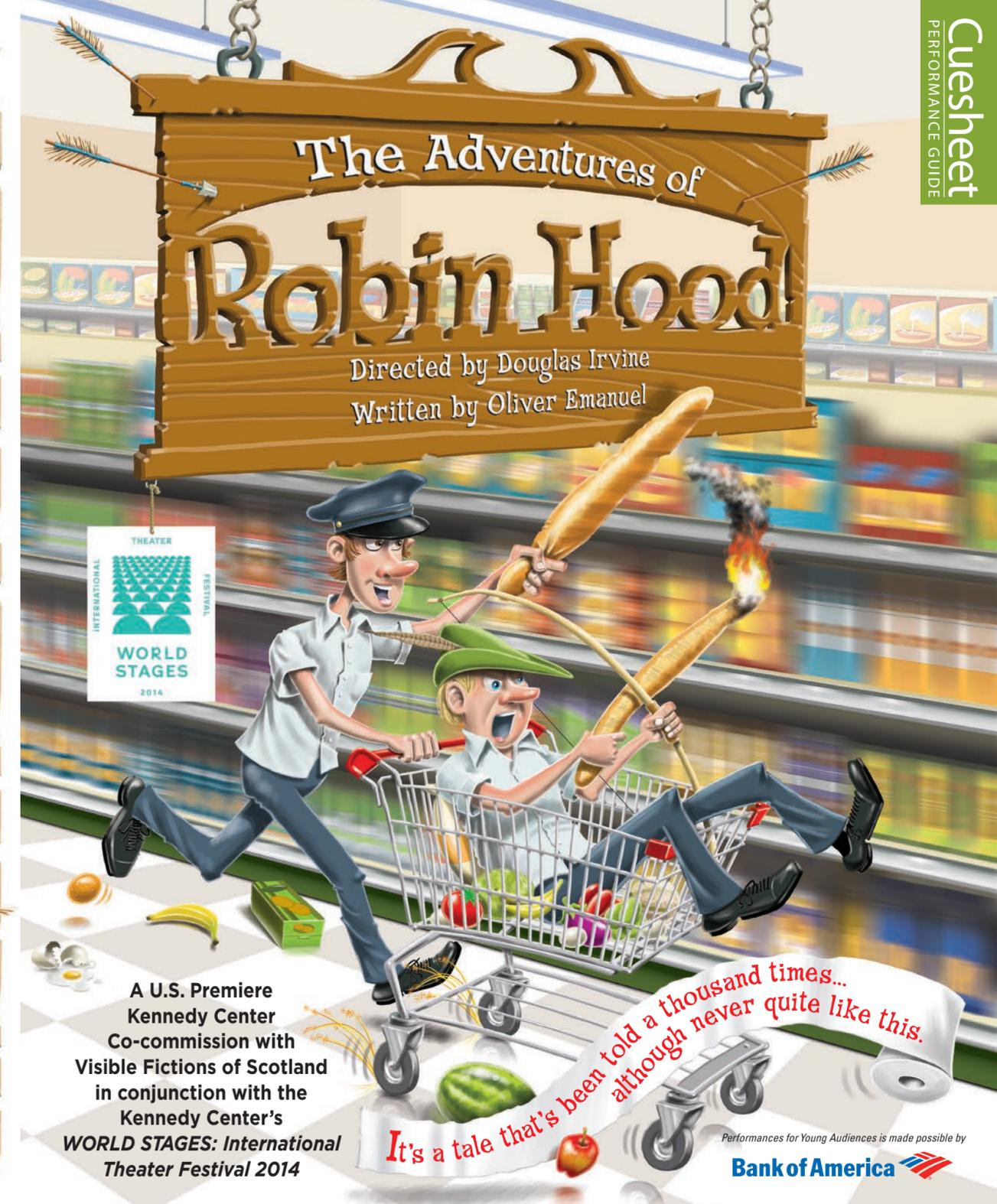
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*It's a tale that's been told a thousand times...
 although never quite like this.*

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A New Look at an Old Story

So, About that Robin Hood Story...

Just when you thought you knew this famous tale, two actors from Scotland will tell you the story of Robin Hood in a way you've never heard or seen it before. Your first clue that something is different is that they don't appear to be in Sherwood Forest, but an odd place with boxes and shopping carts. But don't worry. In describing and acting out the legend, the actors will take you on an amazing journey where you'll find yourself among a band of merry thieves trying to outsmart the evil Sheriff of Nottingham. Plus, you'll learn a new thing or two about Robin's story.

The Tale of Robin Hood

Robin Hood seems like a real historical person—but historians can't prove he actually existed. That makes Robin's story a legend. The other complicated thing is that there are many versions of the tale, so there is no single "correct" account. But over the years, many retellings cover a basic story that goes something like this:

About a thousand years ago, a young man named Robin Hood broke the law and fled to Sherwood Forest near Nottingham, England. There, he joined with a band of other outlaws known as "merry men." The men robbed rich travelers and gave money to the poor. They excelled at archery (shooting with bows and arrows) and also fighting with swords and staves (long poles).

Robin became known for being brave, funny, generous, loyal, and a master of tricks and disguise. The outlaws enjoyed their freedom but were always on the run from the Sheriff, who tried to capture them in an archery tournament among many other ways. In some versions, Robin and Maid Marion fall in love and even marry. Many people considered Robin a hero for his courage and good deeds.

The Times of the Merry Men

The name "merry men" might seem like one of Robin's tricks—that's because the times the men lived in were usually not very merry at all. During this medieval period (also known as the Middle Ages), people in England were ruled by kings and nobles who owned all the land. But everyone else, well, they were poor, owned very little, had no rights, and had to work for the nobles. Sometimes these nobles abused their power by taking from the poor or wrongly punishing people. Can you imagine why Robin's story of freedom, fairness, and resisting bad leaders became very popular with common people?

Did you know...since Robin Hood's first appearance on screen in a 1908 silent movie, there have been more than 50 movies based on the legend?

Some Big Ideas

The Adventures of Robin Hood explores some big ideas—helping people who are poor, resisting authorities who abuse their power, working to right wrongs, and living by a moral code (including treating everyone—even enemies—fairly). Look for these and other ideas or themes in the performance.

*Lithe and listen, Gentleman
That be of free-born blood;
I shall you tell of a good yeoman
His name was Robin Hood.*

*Robin was a proud outlaw,
The while he walked on ground
So courteous an outlaw as he was one
Was never none y-found*

Hear Ye of a Story Oft Retold

Robin Hood's story first came to life through ballads, or rhyming songs, that were passed down by singing them. These songs also were performed in "play games," or short theatrical performances at spring festivals every year. Pulling ideas from these various songs, writers have created different versions of the stories ever since and put them into books, plays, and much more recently, into movies and television shows. In this brand new performance, the creative team follows the footsteps of earlier writers in adapting, or changing, the story.

A Cast of Characters

Here are some of the most common characters from the legend. Watch to see which ones appear in this performance. Pay close attention because you might see parts of two characters combined into one. Remember, there are only two actors, so also watch how they quickly change roles—it might get a little wacky at times!

Robin Hood (also sometimes called Robin of Locksley or Robert or Robin Fitzooth, Earl of Huntingdon), the outlawed man who becomes the leader of the Merry Men

The Sheriff of Nottingham, Robin's wicked rival who wants to capture and punish Robin

Sir Guy of Gisbourne, an evil outlaw who helps the Sheriff hunt Robin

King Richard the Lionhearted, England's king who is away fighting wars when Robin is outlawed but to whom Robin remains loyal

Prince John, King Richard's brother who rules in his absence and wants Robin captured

Maid Marion (or Lady Marion), a smart woman and skilled fighter who joins the outlaws

The "Merry Men"

Little John, Robin's second-in-command and, despite his name, a huge man who befriends Robin after fighting him on a bridge

Friar Tuck, a jolly and very honest clergyman

Will Scarlet (or William Scarlock), an early member of the band known for his wisdom, hot temper, and scarlet red clothes—and for falling in love with noblemen's daughters

Alan-a-Dale, a traveling entertainer (minstrel) who writes and sing songs, especially about Robin's deeds

Much the Miller's Son (or Midge the Miller's Son), a young man in trouble for poaching (killing or stealing) the king's animals

Will Stutely, one of the first outlaws to pledge loyalty to Robin