Dear Teacher:

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theatre experience with *Rudyard Kipling's How the Elephant Got His Trunk & Other Animal Tales* as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the show, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post performance discussion topics, as well as puppet-making ideas. These are just suggestions… Please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

Background:
The Pink Elephant and the Yellow Cat are your hosts in a large-scale puppet production, featuring classical music, puppet-making ideas to take home, and plenty of fun! The four sequences included in this production are:

**The Magic Pear Tree**
**Music:** “Gaité Parisienne”
**Composer:** Jacques Offenbach (1819 – 1880)
**Puppet Style:** Paper bags
**Story:** An original story inspired by tales such as “Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock.” A trickster rabbit discovers a magic pear tree – whenever someone mentions the pear tree by name, they instantly fall asleep. The rabbit tricks other animals into saying these words, and while they’re asleep, he steals their food. The rabbit eventually receives his comeuppance as he is tricked to say the magic words himself.

**How the Elephant Got His Trunk**
**Music:** “First Symphony, First Movement,” “First Symphony, Fourth Movement”
**Composer:** Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911)
**Puppet Style:** Hand shadows
**Story:** Also known as “The Elephant’s Child,” Rudyard Kipling’s tale from “Just So Stories” concerns a very curious little elephant. His friends all tease him for asking so many questions, so when he wants to know what crocodiles eat for dinner, he decides to gain first-hand knowledge. The crocodile’s large mouth grabs onto the elephant’s tiny nose, and in a tug-of-war, the nose stretches and becomes longer and longer. Though he’s upset at first for looking different, the young elephant soon discovers that having a long trunk can be a wonderful thing. (Note to teacher: Kipling’s original story includes a scene in which the elephant receives a spanking – this episode has been eliminated in our retelling.)

**Barnyard Opera**
**Music:** “Overture to Cinderella” (also known as “La Cenerentola”)
“Overture to Barber of Seville” (also known as “Il Barbiere di Siviglia”)
**Composer:** Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868)
**Puppet Style:** Rod Puppets
**Story:** When a pesky mosquito lands on a bull’s horns, he sets off a chain of events that eventually results in the rooster’s refusing to crow and wake up the sun in the morning, thereby putting the entire farm in darkness. The animals appeal to the wise old owl to help to put things right.
The Elephant's Body
Music: “First Symphony, Second Movement”
Composer: Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911)
Puppet Style: Muppets
Story: The Pink Elephant’s huge pink body is finally revealed in a visually stunning finale to this production.

Pre-performance Activities:
1. Review proper theatre etiquette with your class. They may be seeing our show as part of a class trip, with many other schools attending. They should carefully follow their teacher’s or group leader’s directions. During the show, they should be quiet, so that they do not disturb other audience members (and the actors!) during the performance. However, actors love cheers and applause, especially when the show is over. This is a great way to thank actors for all their hard work in performing this show for you!
2. If time permits, read “How the Elephant Got His Trunk” (also known as “The Elephant’s Child”) from Rudyard Kipling’s “Just So Stories.” Children will enjoy seeing a new interpretation of a story they are familiar with. You may also read Kipling’s other “Just So” stories, explaining how animals got their unique characteristics.
3. Find a recording of one of the pieces of music featured in this show (the Rossini overtures in the Barnyard Opera sequence are particularly accessible to young children). Play this music as children arrive in the classroom for a few days prior to their seeing our performance. The students will recognize “their” music when it is heard in context in the show.

Post-performance activities:
1. As soon as possible after the performance, engage your class in discussion about the show. Which was their favorite section and why? Did they recognize any of the music heard in the show?
2. What animals were featured in this production? What facts about these animals do your students know? What is another name for a male cow? What can elephants do with their trunk? What do crocodiles really like to eat? For older students, you may assign them different animals to research – what is their natural habitat? What do you call a baby animal? Can your pupils come up with any other animal facts?
3. “How the Elephant Got His Trunk” explains how this animal got his long nose. Have your students create other stories about how animals’ unique characteristics came to be – why the owl is awake only at night, how the leopard got its spots, why the ostrich can’t fly.
3. “The Barnyard Opera” is a story about cause-and-effect. To further illustrate this concept you may wish to read stories like “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie” with your class, and then construct your own cause-and-effect tale with input from your students. For example: If a bear eats honey, his paws will get sticky. A student may add that because his paws are sticky, he’ll need to wash them. The next student may add that because the bear washes his paws in the river, he scared the fish away... And so on. Each student can then write the statement on a piece of paper and illustrate the scene. You can then have the pages bound as a book or display them in order around the classroom.
4. Throughout the show, Jim West uses a variety of different methods to create puppets. On the next few pages of this study guide, you’ll find instructions on how to make many of the puppets featured in the show.

For even more activities, and instructions on how to make additional puppets, please visit Jim West’s website:

www.JimWestPuppets.com
Paper Bag Puppets

1. Move puppet’s mouth with hand in bag.
2. Cut out a piece of cardboard the same size as a paper bag.
3. Fold cardboard in half and paste for tape into the fold of the paper bag.
4. Change shape of cardboard mouth – add paper, collage, mark, paint, etc.
5. Paste a piece of paper on top of bag and cardboard. Cut into a shape.
Rod Puppets

Suggested below are cardboard rod puppets. Any soft cardboard or heavy paper may be used. Poster board, which comes in many different colors and is easily found in stationary and art supply stores, is perfect for these rod puppets.

Thin wooden dowels available in hardware stores and lumber yards cost a few cents. Rolled-up black posterboard and double-up cardboard can substitute for wood.

Here is a basic shape that almost any animal head and tail can be attached. 

Pin on head with paper fastener. 

Tape small stick or ruler to back of leg.

Tape string to back of puppet's back. 

Children should paint, decorate, marker, crayon, or collage the body of the animal.

Tape a short piece of string to tip of rod. 

Paint rod black.

Lion

Giraffe
Shadow Puppets

Use slide or overhead projector to create a shadow light and have children take turns practicing shadow puppets. Encourage the students to create their creatures using the two illustrated here as examples.