



DELAWARE
THEATRE
COMPANY

INSIGHTS

DTC's Teacher Resource



HONK!

Based upon "The Ugly Duckling" by Hans Christian Andersen

Book and Lyrics by Anthony Drewe

Music by George Stiles

Directed by Bud Martin

Delaware Theatre Company

April 17—May 12, 2019

From Hans Christian Andersen...

It would be too sad to tell of all the hardships and miseries which he had to go through in that hard winter. When the sun began once more to shine out warm, he was lying among the reeds in the marsh, and it was the beautiful spring. Oh, it was lovely here, and straight in front of him came three beautiful white swans.... The Duckling recognized the splendid creatures, and a strange sorrowfulness came over him.

"I will fly to them, these royal birds, and they will peck me to death because I, who am so ugly, dare to approach them; but it doesn't matter...." So he flew out into the open water and swam towards the stately swans, and they saw him and hastened with swelling plumage to meet him. "Yes, kill me," the poor creature said, bowing his head down to the water, and waited for death. But what did he see in the clear water? He beheld his own image, but it was no longer that of a clumsy dark grey bird,. He was a swan himself.

It doesn't matter in the least whether you are born in the duck-yard, if only you've lain in a swan's egg.

It delighted him now to think of all the hardships he had suffered; now he could rightly discern his good fortune and all the beauty that greeted him. The great swans swam round him and caressed him with their bills. Some children now came into the garden and threw bread into the water, and the smallest of them cried, "There's a new one!" They clapped their hands and danced about and ran to their father and mother. More bread and cake was thrown into the water, and everyone said; "The new one is the handsomest of all!" And the elder swans bowed before him.



At that he felt quite ill at ease, and covered his head with his wings, and knew not what to do. He was more than happy, and yet not proud, for a good heart is never puffed up.

—From "The Ugly Duckling,"
first published in 1843.

INSIGHTS

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Delaware Theatre Company

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**40th Season
2018-2019**

HONK!

Book and Lyrics by Anthony Drewe
Music by George Stiles

Directed by
Bud Martin

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Delaware Division of the



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Characters and Summary

A Note to Readers: To assist educators in preparing their students for seeing our shows, the Department of Education and Community Engagement at DTC prepares and shares detailed summaries of the plots of our productions. These summaries disclose important plot points, including the climax and resolution of each play. Furthermore, our study guides are constructed under the premise that the educator has read our summary, and additional articles herein may reference these same plot points. This notice is intended to provide a “spoiler alert.”

Characters

Ugly is the youngest hatchling of a family of ducks. Naïve, but kind and sincere, he loves his mother dearly and seeks acceptance in the world, learning eventually that he has beauty in being who he truly is—a swan.

Ida is the mother duck who cares for her family and loves her children, including Ugly, unconditionally. She risks her own life and sacrifices her own wishes for the needs and happiness of her children.

Drake is the father duck who shirks responsibility at first, but learns to appreciate the work it takes to be a good parent and a good spouse.

Cat is a sly, charismatic character whose hunger and instinct lead him to pursue Ugly as his prey.

Penny is a kindhearted and beautiful swan who befriends Ugly.

Greylag is a proud leader of his gaggle of geese, giving orders and looking out for the safety of his troops.

Grace is a somewhat regal duck whose banded leg is viewed as a mark of honor in the community of ducks and hens at the farm, making her one of the most respected animals there.

Maureen is a hen who is something of a busybody at the farm, but sympathizes with Ida’s plight as a mother.

Queenie is a slinky, comfortable housecat who does not want to trouble herself to do anything out of her routine—until she meets an attractive outdoor tomcat.

Lowbutt is a domesticated chicken who finds life in her owner’s house easy and comfortable and wants everything to stay the same as it is.

Bullfrog is an easy-spirited, jovial character whose healthy self-esteem and positive outlook become contagious.



Adam Hoyak, top, and Kim Carson, below, play Ugly and Ida in the musical HONK! at Delaware Theatre Company.

Characters and Summary *(continued)*

Summary

The show opens with the ducks, chickens, and other feathered friends singing about how happy they are with life in the farmyard, with only the hungry Cat to worry about. Ida, a mother duck, and her husband Drake, a father duck, await the hatching of their ducklings from the five eggs on which Ida sits. Drake avoids helping her, then criticizes the strange size and color of one of the eggs, wondering why it is different and suggesting it is not a part of the family. Ida disagrees with his remarks, and as she sits, alone, on the eggs, she contemplates the joys of motherhood. Maureen, a hen, approaches, and as they talk about the worries of a mother, the eggs begin hatching, and four baby ducklings emerge. Ida explains the rules of safety to the babies. Maureen leaves, and Drake reenters. Noticing that the large, unusual egg still hasn't hatched, Ida takes her place sitting on it and tells Drake to teach the other four ducklings how to swim. Ida sings about the different egg, and when it hatches, the newest baby bird is born, looking very different from the other baby ducklings. Ida, though, cares for this baby "duckling," and begins teaching him to swim. Ida teaches him lessons as she sings, reminding him to hold his head up high—both to help him swim, and to help him overcome any difficulty he faces. He is a wonderful swimmer. Ida tells him lovingly that though he is different on the outside, it is what is inside that counts.

The rest of the duck family returns, and the young ducklings and Drake make fun of the new baby bird, who honks instead of quacking like other ducks. Other farm animals arrive, and most of the group makes fun of the unusual bird, calling him "Ugly." Ida defends him and proclaims her love for him, but the others continue to tease and criticize. The Cat, meanwhile, sees Ugly and thinks he would make a good meal. Maureen reenters with a crust of bread that was thrown to the animals, and the other ducklings push Ugly away and won't let him eat with them. Ugly, hurt and alone, sings about how hard it is when others mistreat you for being different.



Jake Blouch plays "Cat" in the musical HONK! at DTC.

Cat approaches Ugly and pretends to befriend him, offering food, but really trying to lure him away so he can eat him. Ugly, young and naïve, tries to ask Ida if he can go with Cat, but she is busily trying to take care of the other ducklings, too, and cannot give him her full attention. Cat promises safety, and Ugly leaves his mother and goes with Cat. In the meantime, Grace, Maureen and the other "women" poultry talk to Ida about her children. Ida suddenly realizes Ugly is missing and calls the others to action to try to find him.

Cat begins preparations to eat Ugly, who misunderstands what is happening and thinks Cat wants to play a game of hide and seek. Just when Cat is about to pounce, a child outside throws a baseball which crashes through Cat's window, knocking him out. Ugly decides he must go home to the safety of his mother's side and the farmyard, but when he leaves, he is confused about how to get there, and wanders away, lost. Meanwhile, Ida, Grace, Maureen, Drake, and the others return, having not found Ugly. Ida alone vows to keep her head and hopes up.

A week has passed, and Jay Bird, a TV producer for *Britain's Most Feathered*, has arrived on Drake's invitation to report Ugly's disappearance. After they leave, Ida sings of missing her son and the tears she has cried for him. As the song ends, Ida readies to leave Drake, the other ducklings, and the farm to set out and search for Ugly. She hugs her family and leaves.

(continued)

Characters and Summary *(continued)*

Summary *(continued)*

Ugly wanders through a marsh into a gaggle of geese, led by Greylag, who warns Ugly about the hunters in the area that try to scare birds into the air only to shoot them down. Ugly tells them of being lost and being told by Cat to stay away from people. Dot, a kind goose, warns him about cats, and then takes him under her wing and announces to the geese that they are going to help reunite Ugly with his mother. Cat approaches, still hungry and hoping to eat Ugly, but Greylag and the other geese are suspicious and stand up to protect Ugly. Cat pledges he is there to help, and tells them the hunters have left, and that it is safe for them to fly to look for the barnyard where Ugly lives. The geese take off in flight, and the sound of gunfire erupts. Ugly, too young to fly, realizes that Cat has lied, and though he is alone and frightened, he recalls the song Ida sang, championing him to hold his head up high to make it through the difficult times. As the first act ends, Ugly sees another human being—an old woman—who he thinks might be as dangerous as the hunters, and he darts into a cottage to hide from her.

The second act begins as inside the cottage, a domesticated hen named Lowbutt and a lazy, comfortable house cat named Queenie discover Ugly hiding in the parlor. Ugly is wary of Queenie, but she and Lowbutt explain that they are different from other hens and cats; yet they, too, think themselves superior to others. Lowbutt turns on the TV, and Jay Bird and Ida appear. Ugly tries to explain to Queenie and Lowbutt that Ida is his mother, but he is interrupted when the doorbell rings, and Cat—dressed as Drake—tries to convince them that he is Ugly's father, ready to bring him back to the farm. Ugly recognizes Cat and refuses to go. As Lowbutt and Queenie tell Ugly he is being silly, Cat suddenly realizes that Queenie is also a cat, removes his disguise, and begins romancing her, much to her delight. Lowbutt helps Ugly escape, and Cat drops Queenie and launches himself out the door to chase down Ugly.

Back at home, Drake is out of sorts as he tries to take care of the growing ducklings. He recognizes how difficult Ida's job in caring for him and for the ducklings has been, and he misses her in more ways than one. In a parallel scene, Ida sings of missing Ugly. The other animals help tell the story of Ida's journey as she travels throughout the land, seeking her child. Ida meets others on her journey—Lowbutt, Queenie, and eventually, Cat, and knows she is on the right track. Time passes and seasons change.

The next scene opens with the frantic calls of Penny, a swan, who is trapped in fishing line and needs help. Ugly passes by, and as he helps her, he learns she is a swan and is mesmerized by her beauty and her kind manner. She learns he is lost and invites him to join her and her mother in migrating south for the winter, but he declines, saying he must stay and find his own mother. They promise to try to find one another again in the spring. Penny honks a goodbye as she leaves, and Ugly, startled, recognizes that his own honking sounds like hers. He sings of his discovery of friendship and possibly something more. His excitement leads to worry as he fears she will forget him or, worse, will decide she does not like him because he is different.

Just then a Bullfrog hops up, and as he and Ugly talk, he sings of accepting and loving himself as he is, and proclaims to Ugly that he should embrace his uniqueness, and wait for the time when the right one comes along and loves him for who he is, warts and all. The froglets join in song, encouraging

(continued)

Characters and Summary (continued)

Summary (continued)

Ugly that he is lovable as he is, and that he will find love from another, too. The frogs exit, and suddenly, a farmer appears and throws a net over Ugly, announcing his plans to eat him. The farmer leaves to get his knife, and Cat enters and makes a bargain with Ugly, saying that he will rescue him from the net if Ugly will cooperate and return to the barnyard for one last goodbye with his family before Cat eats him. Ugly accepts the bargain and Cat releases Ugly.

A snowstorm rushes in, and Cat and Ugly wander, lost, through the blinding snow. Ida, too, searches through the snowstorm, and when the sun comes out again, she finds Ugly buried under a snowdrift, seemingly dead. She grieves. Penny and her swan family return and encourage Ida to continue to have hope. Ugly shakes off the snow, revealing that he has grown into a beautiful swan. Ugly and Ida joyfully embrace each other, and Penny tells her family that Ugly was the one who rescued her from the fishing line. Penny and her family invite Ugly to join them, but when he asks if Ida can come along, Ida refuses, saying she does not belong with them, and she wants him to be happy in his new pursuits. Mother Swan offers to look after him, and Ida lovingly hugs Ugly and releases him to live his life and be who he is.

Yet Ugly and Penny return to Ida, and Ugly tells Ida that it doesn't matter that she is a duck and he is a swan; she is his mother. He is happy to be different, like his mother said, and he and Penny want to add some diversity to the farm by having a swan family there. As the show ends, Ugly helps Cat out of his snow bank, and Cat, defeated, runs off. The barnyard celebrates Ugly's return and the animals ask forgiveness for the wrong they did, and he extends it to them. The animals sing of finding the happiness and beauty of being yourself as the lights come down.



Newton Buchanan plays "Bullfrog" and "Turkey" in DTC's production.



Adam Hoyak and Jenna Pastuszek, as Ugly and Penny, celebrate with other animals in the barnyard at the end of the musical.

(Photo by Matt Urban)

Teachable Themes and Topics

An Allegory for the Ages

Hans Christian Andersen, the Danish author who wrote the short story “The Ugly Duckling,” was a popular writer of fairy tales, poems, books, and plays in the mid- to late 1800s. He traveled in esteemed social circles, made friends with wealthy people, was celebrated during his lifetime by his countrymen, and remembered long after his death for his contributions to world literature. Yet he himself once remarked that in writing “The Ugly Duckling,” he had written his own life story, for he knew of his own past as a child teased by others for being different. And in fact, perhaps the most remembered element of the story is the transformation of the title character into the beautiful swan he was born to be. But Andersen was clear that the story was not intended to be a tale of bird species and their biological development; it was written for greater symbolic potency, carrying a message about more than physical beauty. This symbolism makes “The Ugly Duckling” an allegory, which is a play or story that offers a hidden meaning or moral in its seemingly simple frame.

Andersen’s childhood was a difficult one. Though his father worked steadily as a cobbler (a shoemaker), the family was poor, and Andersen felt the pain of poverty as a child. Unlike most of the children in his community, he loved singing and the theatre, and was teased for being different and at times called “ugly” because of his appearance. These encounters, plus the social stigma he knew he would face if people learned of other scandals in his extended family, made him feel isolated and yearn to be accepted. Even when the adult Andersen became a successful writer and lauded entertainer, he still felt self-conscious and wrote of these feelings of insecurity in both private letters and published works.

Those same feelings are given to the Ugly Duckling in his story. Even as he grows into a swan, he retains the fear of rejection. Andersen wrote:

Then all at once he lifted his wings, and they rustled more strongly than before, and bore him swiftly away; and before he knew it he was in a spacious garden where were apple trees in blossom, and sweet-smelling lilacs hung on long green boughs right down to the winding moat. Oh, it was lovely here, and fresh with spring; and straight in front of him, out of the shadows, came three beautiful white swans with rustling plumage floating lightly on the water. The Duckling recognized the splendid creatures, and a strange sorrowfulness came over him. "I will fly to them, these royal birds, and they will peck me to death because I, who am so ugly, dare to approach them...."

The swans, however, regard him as beautiful and even greater than they, which troubles our hero who is still quite humble.

At that he felt quite ill at ease, and covered his head with his wings, and knew not what to do. He was more than happy, and yet not proud, for a good heart is never puffed up

For Hans Christian Andersen, the beauty of the Ugly Duckling is not so much that he has become a lovely swan to be admired with the eyes, but that his heart is still pure and kind. He does not lord it over the other fowl, but instead lets his happiness fill him from the inside. The lesson of the story, then, is in Andersen’s illuminating how one can overcome the hardships he or she faces and reveal the inner beauty that has always been there—with inner beauty’s being kindness and goodness of heart. The Ugly Duckling, then, has always been beautiful.

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Teachable Themes and Topics (continued)

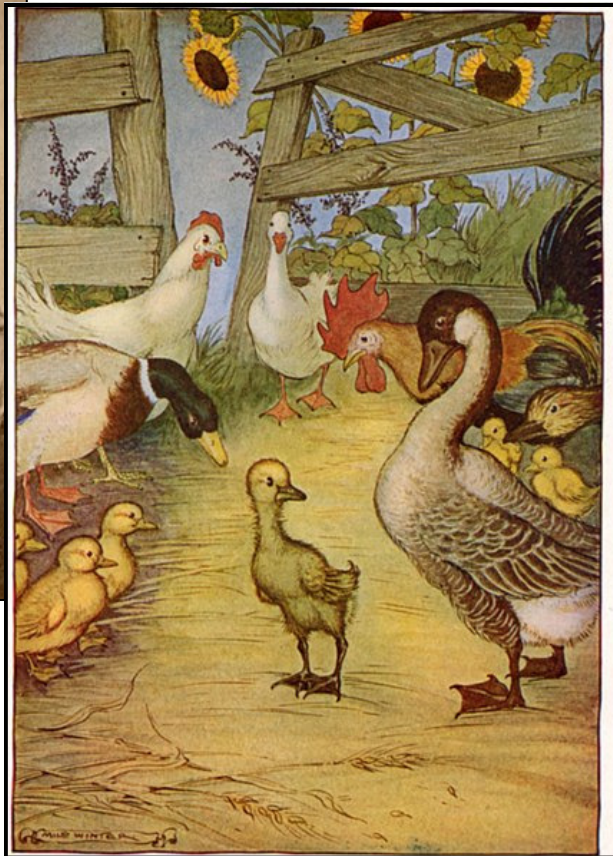
An Allegory for the Ages (continued)

The allegorical nature of the story has given it appeal to readers worldwide for over 150 years. George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, who adapted Andersen's tale into the musical *HONK!* in 1993, further highlight the message of the importance of kindness and goodness as they follow the character of Ugly beyond his transformation into a swan. Whereas the original tale ends with the hero's realization of happiness as he swims with the swans, the musical has Ugly and his new partner swan, Penny, returning to the barnyard, where he forgives those who hurt him. This lesson of goodness comes full-circle in the musical, providing healing and growth for all of the characters, and the opportunity for all of them to realize that what makes one truly beautiful is, as mother duck Ida says, "what is on the inside."

We do not have to raise ducks to appreciate the story; the allegorical nature of the tale has universal appeal. We, like Andersen himself, can look at the moments we have felt the sting of rejection and the pain of being left out. The tale of "The Ugly Duckling," and the musical *HONK!*, offer us the reminder that even in our moments of success, of being admired and appreciated, we can remain humble, grounded, and kindhearted, and thereby be our most beautiful.



Above, author Hans Christian Andersen. Right, illustration of "The Ugly Duckling" from a 1916 publication titled Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales.



Teachable Themes and Topics (continued)

Making the Musical *HONK!*: Cackles, Costumes, and Characters

In the musical *HONK!*, all of the characters in the show are animals—ducks, swans, cats, frogs, and others. Of course, the actors playing these characters are people. Part of the fun—as well as the challenge—of creating the show is figuring out how to make the animals in the story come to life on stage, and helping the audience see the world of the animals instead of focusing on the real people portraying them. It takes the work of the actors on stage, as well as the people behind the scenes, to make the world of the play!

All ACTORS make use of three tools they carry with them at all rehearsals and in performance. These tools of the actor are the MIND, the BODY, and the VOICE. Actors use their minds certainly to read and memorize their lines and their songs and dances. But they also use their minds to imagine themselves and the other performers around them as their characters. For example, a vivid imagination allows the actor playing Ugly to pretend he is swimming gracefully on a lake, even when there is no real water on stage. Actors also use their bodies to bring these animals to life, finding ways to move the way animals might move to help the audience connect them with their characters. The actor playing Cat slinks across the floor just like a real cat might sneak up on his prey; the actor playing Maureen the hen struts and juts her head out like a real chicken might as she walks through the barnyard. And finally, the actors find ways to use their voices to sound like their animal counterparts. The actor playing Turkey warbles certain words to make audiences think of a real turkey's gobble-gobble sound. The cackling of hens occurs as the actors chatter and quibble about eating the bread thrown to them. And the actors playing ducklings not only say the word "quack" as part of their dialogue, but also use loud, nasal squawking tones in their voices when they say or sing lines like, "Look at him—legs are bandy, and the knees are knocked!" By using their minds, bodies, and voices, the actors—under the watchful guidance and coaching of the director—create the sights and sounds of the animals in the barnyard and beyond.

In addition to the efforts of the actors is the work of the technical and design teams of a theatre production. All of the furniture, the buildings, the fence, and other big objects the audience sees on stage together make up the SET. The set in *HONK!* changes to show different places. The barnyard, the inside of Cat's kitchen, the living room where Queenie and Lowbutt sit cozily on a couch, and even a marshland are created by carpenters and painters to help the audience see where the story takes place. Lighting and sound designers help the audience understand whether it is daytime or night, whether it is warm and sunny or cold and snowy, by adding sound effects or changing the type of lights used in a scene. These members of the production team work long hours in advance to plan and make the scenery and looks of each location, then continue working backstage or behind the audience during each performance to keep things running smoothly.

The COSTUMES, too, are useful in helping the audience identify the animal characters in the story. But rather than using a big chicken suit or duck suit that covers up the actor inside, the costume designer for *HONK!* chose to use clothing that reminds the audience of types of animals rather than being exactly like a real animal. One reason for this choice is that if an actor is in a huge costume that covers her whole body, the audience cannot see her facial expressions to see how she might be feeling. It would also be harder to hear an actor's voice if he had a big frog head on top of his real head. By choosing and using certain shoes or hats, or certain colors, and creating costumes that are more like people's clothing, the costume designer (Jill Keys, for DTC's production) gives them outfits that help the actors freely use their actors' tools of mind, body, and voice, and allows the audience to see and hear them clearly. And another good reason for this type of clothing is to remind the audience that

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Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Making the Musical *HONK!*: Cackles, Costumes, and Characters *(continued)*

though the story may be about animals, it is also a lesson for people about not bullying others and accepting each one's differences. "We want the audience to relate to the characters, have empathy for them, so it's very important we can clearly see the eyes and faces of the emoting actors. We are all like Ugly in our own ways, and if Adam (the actor playing Ugly) ran around in a chicken suit, we would always be laughing at him instead of relating to him," said Keys. And so the costumes look more like what people would wear, yet have connections to their characters. The ducklings all look similar except for Ugly. And though the grown-up Ida is also a duck and wears a different costume than her young ducklings, she has the same yellow colors in her costume to show her connection with them. The costume designer chose their costume looks to show that Ugly is different from the others and to make him stand out from the others. And when, at the end of the show, Ugly returns with Penny and his family apologizes to him, the costumes help demonstrate that all are embraced in the barnyard now as a rainbow of colors comes together on stage. Again, with the vision of the director staging the colorful groups no longer separate, but coming together, the story's message of embracing diversity and inviting all kinds to the community comes through in dialogue, song, acting—and in costume.

One of the things that makes theatre such a vibrant, exciting art form is the element of teamwork involved in bringing a show to life onstage. The actors, director, designers, and production team all work together to tell a story to the audience. Just like in the barnyard at the end of *HONK!* where all the animals come together to celebrate each one's value, the theatre is a place where many people come together and contribute their talents—and cooperation—to make something magical and valuable happen for an audience at every performance!



Actor Adam Hoyak, as Ugly, peers through the cattails and reeds on the marsh lands. Theatre artists use wood, foam, paint, and other materials to create the different locations for each scene. The costume designer creates a look for the characters so each is recognizable to the audience. Photo by Matt Urban.

Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Making the Musical *HONK!*: Cackles, Costumes, and Characters

Look at these characters and their costumes. What details about the costumes help you know which character is which? Is there anything about their costumes—or the actors' faces or body postures—that remind you of the animals they are portraying?



Characters (clockwise from top center): Ugly, Ida, Turkey, Cat, Queenie, Bullfrog, Penny, Drake. Center—Ducklings. Costumes by Jill Keys. Photos by Matt Urban.

Teachable Themes and Topics (continued)

Pushing Apart, Coming Together

One reason that Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Ugly Duckling" became and has remained popular for over 150 years in countries all around the world is that it carries with it a deeper message of the pain caused by intolerance and bullying and the hopeful reminder that one can find happiness and kindness even after difficult times. In fact, audiences who watch the musical *HONK!*, which is based on Andersen's story, react very strongly when they see and hear the other ducklings and barnyard animals ridiculing poor Ugly. Likewise, there is a sense of joy when Ugly finds love and acceptance, first from his mother, who loves him from the start even when he seems different from the others; then from Penny, who appreciates his kindness when he helps her and she invites his friendship; and finally, when those who teased him apologize to him for their behavior, and he forgives them.

George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, who created the musical *HONK!* from Andersen's story, were inspired by the original tale's premise. Drewe was drawn to it when, at the time, his young nephews were experiencing teasing and rejection from their schoolmates. "When George and I wrote *HONK!*, it was, in part, in response to the reaction that my young mixed-race nephews were receiving at school, because their skin was of a different colour. But bullying is not limited to racial diversity," said Drewe. In fact, many people have experienced the feeling of being different, of being an outsider, and of being unwelcome, and often that feeling arises from being treated with scorn or disdain, or even physical intimidation by others. And fear of difference has fueled more than teasing and bullying in the childhood realms of school and playground. Each day there are dozens of reports of violence and hate crimes occurring close to home and around the world., often spawned by the "us vs. them" mentality of rejecting others for their differences in appearance, in ideas, in beliefs. Those who perpetuate hate and disrespect also use the relatively new technology of online platforms like social media to torment others and cause pain.

But there are ways to turn the tide back to the kindness and peace that Ugly finds and that audiences cheer. Many school districts today are using anti-bullying education programs in their classrooms to set expectations for how students and teachers interact with one another and to implement character education programs that emphasize traits such as kindness and respect. One UCLA-led study identified a leading anti-bullying education program implemented in schools in Finland that showed great success in reducing bullying and building empathy among students. That program, known as KiVa, is now being replicated in schools around the world, including some in the U.S. The Anti-Defamation League's education program "A World of Difference" champions the value of diversity as it helps teachers and students understand commonalities among people of various cultures and the underlying need all humans have for kindness, respect, and freedom. There are dozens of books about those considered "outsiders" and the allies who stand up for them and stand with them to give them the support and welcome they deserve—books such as *I Walk with Vanessa* and *Llama, Llama and the Bully Goat* for young children and *The Misfits* and *Hello, Universe* for intermediate and middle school students.

Theatre, too, is a powerful medium for teaching empathy; both performers and audience members are able to see another's perspective as characters speak and act live, out loud, and in the moment. Empathy is one of the facets of "emotional intelligence"—a person's ability to understand and manage their own emotions, and recognize those of others. Parents and families, and in many cases teachers, who guide children in understanding how their feelings change as a result of what happens to them, and in finding ways to manage negative feelings (and know that these feelings are natural and

Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Pushing Apart, Coming Together *(continued)*

will eventually pass), provide a language and support system as tools for children to use throughout their lives when confronted with challenging circumstances. And research suggests that strong emotional intelligence correlates with improved mental health—for both children and adults—including the ability to be self-aware, to persist through difficulties, and to build healthy, harmonious relationships with others.

It is that harmony that is the satisfying conclusion of *HONK!* as Ugly returns to his home and experiences reconciliation with those who hurt him. In contrast to the original Andersen story, in which the title character moves on happily as a swan without going back home, Stiles and Drewe finish the story in a way that demonstrates both the positive qualities of persistence in moving through and beyond hardship, and of peacemaking in offering and accepting apologies for previous hurts. Seeing those who caused Ugly's pain now recognize what they have done wrong and want to make amends, and seeing Ugly return kindness instead of revenge, audiences of all ages can experience the satisfaction and happiness that come with making peace instead of perpetuating conflict. As Drewe mentioned when asked about the success and power of the show, "I think the reason *HONK!* has enjoyed such success and been seen in so many productions around the world is that everyone can relate to the plight of an outsider trying to fit in - we have all felt it at some point in our lives. We wanted to write a musical about acceptance - a celebration of being different, where diversity is welcomed and embraced, and where everyone plays their own part in a multicultural community, albeit on a duck pond."



Children in Iraq share the peace sign.

Teachable Themes and Topics *(continued)*

Birds of a Feather... And Chickens, Too!

What do you call a group of geese? A group of chickens? Or how about a group of rabbits? What do you call a cat that is a baby? A young horse?

Animals of one species may be called by different words depending on if the animal is male or female, or young, or moving together in a group. Look at the charts below for some examples of the different names of animals.

Types of Birds:

Common Name	Adult female	Adult male	Baby	Group
chicken	hen	rooster	chick	flock, clutch, peep
duck	duck	drake	duckling	safe, raft
goose	goose	gander	gosling	flock, gaggle, skein, wedge
swan	pen	cob	cygnet	bevy, wedge

Other Animals:

Common Name	Adult female	Adult male	Baby	Group
rabbit	doe	buck	bunny, leveret	dawn, husk, warren, colony, nest
mouse	doe	buck	pinky	mischief, horde
pig	sow	boar	piglet, shoat, farrow	drove, herd, litter
raccoon	sow	boar	cub	nursery, gaze
sheep	ewe, dam	buck, ram	lamb	drift, drove, flock, herd
horse	mare, dam	stallion,	foal, colt, filly	stable, herd, team
cow/cattle	cow	bull	calf	herd

Which words appear more than once? Why do you think these words are used for different kinds of animals? Why might there be more than one word for a group of animals, such as ducks?

Find out and share your knowledge with your classmates!

Birds of a Feather... And Chickens, Too!

Using the chart on the previous page, match the words below with the animal pictures and clues! (You might use some answers more than once and others not at all. And sometimes more than one answer can be correct!)

Hen

Bunny

Bevy

Flock

Raft

Ram

Duckling

Doe

Cygnet

Gosling

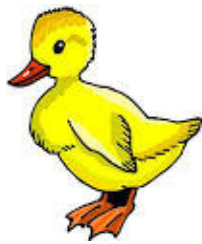
Buck

Rooster

Gaggle

Calf

Drake



Category: Duck

Baby: _____

Group: _____



Category: Sheep

Adult male: _____

Group: _____



Category: Goose

Baby: _____

Group: _____



Category: Rabbit

Adult female: _____

Baby: _____



Category: Swan

Baby: _____

Group: _____



Category: Chicken

Adult female: _____

Adult male: _____

Questions for Classroom Discussion

Knowledge and Comprehension

1. At the beginning, how does Ida feel about becoming a parent? How does Drake feel about becoming a parent?
2. What are some things Ida teaches her ducklings (including Ugly)?
3. Why does Ugly go with Cat at the beginning of the story?
4. What makes Ugly stop trusting Cat?
5. Who are some of the characters that help Ugly? How do they try to help him?
6. What kind of bird is Ugly?
7. What do Ugly and Penny decide to do at the end of the story?

Application and Analysis

1. In what ways is Ugly visibly different from the other ducklings? In what ways is Ugly different “on the inside” from the other ducklings? Which character or characters is most similar to Ugly (on the inside or the outside)?
2. How does Ida show her love for members of her family?
3. How is Queenie different from Cat? How is Lowbutt different from Maureen (the farm hen)?
4. What are the challenges and difficulties Ugly faces as he grows up? What strengths or strategies help him through these difficult patches?

Synthesis and Evaluation

1. What lessons do you think the playwright and composer were trying to get across to an audience? Do you think they were successful? Why or why not?
2. What qualities of the animals chosen to be characters do you think best suited the telling of the story? In other words, would this story be as successful, less successful, or more successful if different animals were used as characters? Why/why not? Support your answer.
3. The story of “The Ugly Duckling” is over 100 years old. This musical version was written just over 25 years ago. What modern influences are a part of this version that probably were not part of the original story? Were these influences useful to getting the story and/or message across to the audience? Why or why not? Support your answer.

Classroom Activities

1. Read another of Hans Christian Andersen's short stories and, on your own or with a partner or small group, choose a section of that story to dramatize. Identify the characters in the scene and the key plot points to include, and write your scene in dramatic form using dialogue and actions instead of narration to tell the story. If you'd like, adapt the scene for modern times or for a different (yet compatible) situation. Or write a song that one or more characters might sing in that scene to help explain their thoughts and feelings or to show what is happening in the moment. Share or perform your work for your class. Afterwards, discuss the parallels between the original story and your new version. Are there any larger themes or messages that come through in your new work? What captures your attention?
2. Explore the real biome of a particular locale (a lake, a farm, a marsh) in your area. If possible, find a wildlife expert, biologist, or zoologist who can guide you through the area either in person or through photos and description. How do various plants and animals live and work together to promote one another's existence in that area? Are there any examples of symbiotic relationships? Are there any natural threats (invasive plants, predators, loss of habitats, etc.) that could impact the biome? Are there any impacts (positive or negative) brought upon the biome by human beings? Share your findings with one another and discuss how various plants and animals (including people) help one another or hinder one another's life or growth.
3. With your class, brainstorm books or movies that explore the topic of bullying. Choose a book to read together, or choose several books to read or movies to watch, and report back to your classmates. Are there any strategies that these offer for stopping the cycle of bullying? Are there any that you find more or less believable in terms of what happens in the real world? Invite other members of your school community such as a principal or guidance counselor to talk with your class about ways to deal with conflict and bullying. If your school does not have an anti-bullying program in place, consider what might be important in finding or creating one, and share your ideas with principals, teachers, guidance counselors, and parents.
4. Choose a short story or create one of your own that involves characters that are not human but who live or work together and must solve a problem together. Then draw or create costumes that a human actor would wear to represent this character. What materials do you have to use to help make the costume? What real clothes could be used and converted or trimmed with accessories to help show a character? After sharing the story with your class, have a costume parade using classmates as models or display your drawings/designs.

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Page 5—Ugly, Penny, and other characters in DTC’s production of *HONK!*. Photo by Matt Urban, NuPoint Marketing. Delaware Theatre Company.

Page 7—Hans Christian Andersen. By Thora Hallager. Public domain. Accessed at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Christian_Andersen#/media/File:HCA_by_Thora_Hallager_1869.jpg.

Page 7—Illustration from “The Ugly Duckling.” Artist: Milo Winter. 1916. Public domain image. Accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Ugly_Duckling.jpg.

Page 9—Ugly in the cattails and reeds in DTC’s production of *HONK!* Photo by Matt Urban, NuPoint Marketing. Delaware Theatre Company.

Page 10—*HONK!* characters and costumes at DTC. Photos by Matt Urban, NuPoint Marketing. Delaware Theatre Company.

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Why Go to the Theatre?

State and National Education Standards Addressed Through Taking Your Students to a Live Theatre Production

When your students view live theatre, they are taking part in a learning experience that engages their minds on many levels. From simple recall and comprehension of the plot of a play or musical to analysis and evaluation of the production elements of a show, students receive and interpret messages communicated through words, movement, music, and other artistic devices. Beyond “I liked it; it was good,” students learn to communicate about the content and performance of an artistic piece and to reflect on their own and others’ emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual points-of-view and responses. And the immediacy of live theatre--the shared moments between actors and audience members in the here-and-now--raises students’ awareness of the power and scope of human connection.

The following educational standards are addressed in a visit to a performance at Delaware Theatre Company along with a pre-show DTC classroom presentation and post-show talkback session at the theatre. *(Additional standards addressed through the use of the study guide or through further classroom study are not included here.)*

Common Core English Language Arts Standards:

Reading: 9-10 and 11-12, Strands 3, 4, 6

Language: 9-10 and 11-12, Strands 3, 4, and 5

National Core Arts Standards—Theatre:

Responding: Anchor Standards 7, 8, and 9

Connecting: Anchor Standard 11

Delaware Standards for English Language Arts (DOE):

Standard 2: 2.2a, 2.4bl, 2.5b, 2.5g, 2.6a

Standard 3: 3.1b, 3.3b1, 3.3b2

Standard 4: 4.1a, 4.1b, 4.1c, 4.2f, 4.3a, 4.4b

*Compiled by Johanna Schloss, Associate Director of Education &
Community Engagement, Delaware Theatre Company, 2016*