



**Manual Cinema**  
**Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein***  
**STUDY GUIDE**  
**October 30, 2019 | 8:00PM**  
**Jesse H. Jones Hall**



SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

*Bringing the World's Best to Houston*

For tickets, call 713-227-4772

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## About Society for the Performing Arts

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### Mission

To enrich the cultural life of Houston, in an affordable way, by presenting the world's best in multi-discipline performing arts and artists and by delivering the most comprehensive education program of its kind in the city.

### History

Founded in 1966, Society for the Performing Arts (SPA) is the largest independent non-profit presenting organization in the southwest United States. Since its inception, SPA has sponsored more than 1,000 performances of the world's finest music, dance, and theatre events, in adherence to the belief that the arts are fundamental to the overall enrichment and quality of life within the community. In addition to presenting artists, SPA seeks to provide a variety of learning experiences for adults and children through master classes, lectures and special student performances, as well as build relationships between the performing arts and other interests within the greater Houston area and throughout the state of Texas.

## SPA's Education and Community Engagement Programs

### Public Programs

Children and adults are invited to participate in various public programs offered throughout the season. On performance night, guests can arrive early to enjoy *Performance Preludes*, highlighting local performing groups of all ages, and *Arts Talks*, pre- or post-performance discussions with artists or experts giving insight to the evening's performance. *Master Classes* provide young, emerging dancers and musicians an opportunity to learn from the world-class artists SPA brings to Houston. Additionally, SPA presents *Community Events* such as drum circles and open rehearsals, as well as special front of house programming celebrating family, student, college, and young professional audiences.

### Student Programs

SPA is dedicated to enriching the lives of youth throughout the greater Houston area through various student-centered programs. *Student Matinee* performances introduce thousands of students to live performances every season, supported by classroom study guides. The *Wells Fargo Student Art Contest* showcases the talent of Houston-area visual artists in grades K through 12, offering winners a bevy of prizes. *Movement Toward Literacy* is a collaborative initiative between SPA and Writers in the Schools that explores the connection between words and dance or creative movement, introducing the power of the arts in classroom learning. Finally, *Backstage Experiences* support technical theater and sports medicine students at the high school and university level with uniquely crafted observations, tours, lectures, and discussions surrounding lighting, stage management, design, injury prevention, nutrition, and health management.

### Educator Programs

SPA offers a selection of professional development opportunities for Fine Arts and Core subject educators, including Visual Art workshops in conjunction with the annual *Wells Fargo Student Art Contest*, classroom study guides and resources in conjunction with *Student Matinees* and other education-specific performances, and opportunities to receive CPE credit for attendance at various master classes and lectures. Current educators who are members of the *SPA Teacher's Club* also receive rush discount tickets to most shows.

## Theater Etiquette

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Attending a live theater performance is an exciting and unique experience shared between the performers on stage and the people in the audience. Because the performance is live, the performers on stage can hear noises coming from the audience; therefore, as a courtesy to the performers and other people around you, it is very important to review and understand the following tips before you attend a live theater performance.

### Before the Show

- **Arrive on time.** You may not be allowed into the theater once the performance has started. Late arrivals can be distracting to both the performers and those in the audience. It is best to arrive about 30 minutes before the show begins.
- **Turn off all electronic devices.** These devices may interrupt the theater's sound system and can be extremely disruptive to both the audience and the performers.
- **Do not bring any food, drink, gum or candy into the performance hall.**
- **Visit the restrooms.** Public restrooms and water fountains are open before, during and after the performance; however, you should only leave your seat before intermission or before the performance ends in the case of an emergency.
- **Sit in your assigned seat.** Ushers are available to help you find your seats.
- **Be respectful of the audience around you.** You may talk quietly in your seats until the performance begins. Please keep your feet off the seats and do not kick the seat in front of you or stand during the performance.

### During the Show

- **No flash photography.** Photography and audio/video recording of any kind is prohibited during the performance.
- **Please do not talk, whisper or sing along during the show.** It is extremely distracting to other audience members and the performers.
- **Enjoy the performance!** Please applaud, laugh, and enjoy the show by having an honest reaction to what is taking place on stage.
- **Do not leave early, unless it is an emergency.** This is disruptive to other audience members and the performers.

### After the Show

- **Applaud the performers.** The performers will end the show with a bow while the audience applauds.
- **Exit the theater in a courteous manner.** Be sure to stay with your group.

## About Manual Cinema & *Frankenstein*

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MANUAL CINEMA is an Emmy Award winning performance collective, design studio, and film/video production company founded in 2010 by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, Ben Kauffman, Julia Miller, and Kyle Vegter. Manual Cinema combines handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic techniques, and innovative sound and music to create immersive visual stories for stage and screen. Using vintage overhead projectors, multiple screens, puppets, actors, live feed cameras, multi-channel sound design, and a live music ensemble, Manual Cinema transforms the experience of attending the cinema and imbues it with liveness, ingenuity, and theatricality.



Manual Cinema's *Frankenstein* is an original movie created live onstage in front of the audience with live musicians, music playing robots, a mad science lab of percussion instruments, 5 puppeteer/actors, 2 cameras, and over 500 handmade puppets. The show not only adapts *Frankenstein* but also digs into Mary Shelley's biography with an all-female acting/puppetry cast. Motherhood, loss, and ambition weave through this supernatural tale of abandonment and creation.

Mary Shelley's story (based on her essay introducing the 1832 edition of the novel) is told in shadow puppetry with hand painted backgrounds. Victor Frankenstein's story is told in black and white silent film-style, over-the-top live video. And the Creature's story is the heart of the show, and it is told in both styles and also through live video made by shooting small tabletop puppets with a handheld camera. Throughout all of this an amazing chamber ensemble is playing dozens of instruments including a giant percussion rack. They are accompanied by robots with mallets that play a variety of percussion.

Learn More: [www.manualcinema.com](http://www.manualcinema.com)

## Examine Mood & Tone

### Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS)\*: English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 7, Adopted 2017.

§110.23.a.6.E interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating;  
 §110.23.a.6.F respond using newly acquired vocabulary as appropriate;  
 §110.23.a.6.G discuss and write about the explicit or implicit meanings of text;  
 §110.23.a.6.H respond orally or in writing with appropriate register, vocabulary, tone, and voice;  
 §110.23.a.6.I reflect on and adjust responses as new evidence is presented.  
 §110.23.a.9.F analyze how the author's use of language contributes to mood, voice, and tone

\*For more information, go to [www.tea.tx.gov](http://www.tea.tx.gov)

**Tone** refers to the attitude an author displays toward her subject or audience. **Mood** refers to the audience's feeling toward the subject of the writing. Authors work hard to create specific tones and moods in their writing, and the job of a careful reader is to "hear" the tone and mood—not just to read the words on the page.

Tone and mood are often subtle. Since we can't literally hear the author's voice, we must infer her tone and mood from evidence in her writing. Reading this way requires careful attention to every choice an author makes; hence, it is called close reading. To infer the tone of a piece of literature, we will need to recognize and explain how the author uses each of the following elements: diction, imagery, details, language, and syntax.

- *Diction* refers to the author's choice of words and phrases.
- *Imagery* is a sensory perception created by the author's words.
- *Details* are small, specific facts that the author chooses to include or omit.
- *Language* refers to the register and the style of the author's writing. It also refers to the emotional distance between the author and the subject or the author and the audience.
- *Syntax* is the structure and organization of individual sentences and the piece as a whole.

### Pre-Show Discussion

Pull one or more of the following passages from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to analyze:

- p. 54, para 3 (second paragraph of Chapter VIII)
- pp. 66-67, para. 2 & 3 (ending with the Shelley citation)
- p. 125, para 2

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Ed. Candace Ward. Minneola: Dover Publications, 1994.

Read through the passage out loud, taking turns. Then, use the five elements outlined above to begin to discuss the tone and mood of the passage. Read the passage again, this time making notes recognizing how each element is used. Once all five elements have been recognized, discuss and explain what you have found. Finally, try re-reading the passage now that you have a grasp on the emotions the author is trying to convey.

### Post-Show Discussion

Read the same passage as before. *How does your understanding of **tone** and **mood** change now that you have seen the passage performed live?*

## Exploring Film

### Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS): Theater, Middle School 1, Adopted 2013

§117.211.c.4.B explore the influences of theater, film, television, and electronic media such as key developments, figures, and works in society;

§117.211.c.5.B develop simple oral and written observations about the visual, aural, oral, and kinetic aspects of theatrical performances such as informal playmaking or formal theater;

§117.211.c.5.C identify production elements of theater, film, television, and other media.

\*For more information, go to [www.tea.tx.gov](http://www.tea.tx.gov)

### Pre-Show Discussion

Screen the original Frankenstein short film (Found at "Frankenstein (1910) [Silent Movie]" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ-OrfJHHro>).

1. Research and discuss the different adaptations of the Frankenstein story. Who originated this tale and in what form? How many times has the story been told and in what ways?
  - a. Find more information about the history of this story here: <http://www.cinelinx.com/movie-news/movie-stuff/looking-back-on-the-long-film-history-of-frankenstein/>
2. How many elements of the silent film can you identify? How do the director and actors tell the story without words?
3. What role does music play in a silent film? What about lighting?
4. Film restoration and preservation is an art of its own. Learn about the history of this first film recording at the Library of Congress Blog: <https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2018/11/the-first-film-version-of-frankenstein-newly-restored/>

### Post-Show Discussion

Discuss the difference between the two depictions of the Frankenstein story that you have now experienced.

- What are the similarities and differences between the two adaptations?
- What are the differences in mood and tone between each version? Is one spookier than the other? Why and how?

## Activity: Shadow Puppets

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In this activity students will experiment with creating their own shadow puppet backdrop, characters, and plotlines.

### Preparation

You will need to create a screen for the shadow plays. To create a screen, stretch a large piece of translucent fabric taut across a sturdy frame (i.e., a cardboard box, wooden stretcher strips, or a doorframe). After you make sure there are no wrinkles in the fabric, staple the fabric to the puppeteer-side of the frame so the audience does not see the edges of the fabric. Balance your screen on the L-shaped metal or wooden braces, or simply set the screen on a desk. Plug in a lamp behind the screen. Experiment with different light bulb wattages for the right effect based on the placement of the lamp in relation to the stage, and the size of your classroom and the screen.

### The science of shadows

Students explore creating shadows and then engage in a discussion about what is needed to create shadows and how shadows can be changed or played with.

Resource: Kennedy Center ARTSEDGE site: [Playing with Shadows: An Introduction to Shadow Puppetry](#)

### Create your own play

Develop the characters and plot of your play, using the attached supplementary sheets. Then perform your play!



# Creating Your Shadow Play

## Instructions

### Characters

You are creating *shadow* puppets, so make sure each puppet has some distinct physical feature that makes the character recognizable when its shadow is cast. You want each puppet to have its own unique shadow on the screen. Don't spend a lot of time painting your puppet since paint won't show up on the shadow. While you're creating the puppet, keep testing what kind of shadow it casts to make sure you achieve your desired results.

### Script/Dialogue

Remember that you are writing a script for a shadow puppet play. All dialogue needs to be accompanied by the puppets' actions. Therefore, dialogue should be very clear and to the point. No Fluff. Also, scene changes should be smooth and uncomplicated so that puppets, props, and scenery can be easily and quickly removed from, and set up on, the stage. Finally, don't forget that your play must have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

### Scenery

Choose scenery that is appropriate for the play, time period, and place. Keep it simple, and make sure that the scenery does not get in the way of the puppets' movements. Pick only the most relevant items to set the scene. For instance, if a scene takes place in a forest, you would only need one or two trees. A little goes a long way.

### Shadows

Any good shadow play will contain shadows that are, for the most part, sharp. But just as any master puppeteer will experiment with the look and feel of shadows for a variety of effects, your plays must contain one example of each of the following:

- a blurry shadow
- a long shadow
- a short shadow

These effects must be used with *purpose* in the play. For example, a long shadow could be used to portray a looming ghost, a short shadow could depict a character who has been shrunk by a witch, and blurry shadows could portray a crowd in the background of a scene. In other words, don't just throw in a long shadow somewhere in the middle of the play and think you're finished. Every detail in theater exists for a purpose.

# Playwriting Outline

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Names: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

Use this sheet to record ideas for your play. This outline will serve as a guide for creating the dialogue and action for your scene.

Name of assigned act:

Characters:

Setting:

Events:

Props:

Costumes:

Music/Sound Effects:

List any lines from the act that you will use in your play:

## Your Shadow Theater Roles

The success of the play depends on your hard work as individuals and as a team. As a team, you must share a common goal. In this case, your goal is the production of a shadow puppet play. By now, your team should have decided on a topic. Everyone should speak about what they would like the play to look like or be, and should decide on an overall concept and strategy to follow. Everyone in the group must agree upon final decisions.

Follow your teachers' instructions closely. Your teacher may wish to assign roles, your team may be asked to draw roles from a jar, or your team might be invited to vote based on why each member feels he/she would be best suited for a certain role. Once your team's roles are assigned, make sure you know what's expected. It's important to know your roles and take them seriously.

**Director:** Your job is to oversee the production and make sure that the play is running smoothly. Call meetings regularly to check and review progress. You will help the Script Writer, Prop Maker, and Set Maker make decisions and help overcome any challenges that may arise. You will also work with the Script Writer to finalize the script.

**Script Writer:** After your group has decided on the basic plot of the play, your job is to work out the details and write out all of the parts for each of the puppets in the play (and the narrator, if applicable). Be sure to include directions for any scene changes that occur. Make sure you communicate with the Prop and Set Makers so they are aware of the puppets they need to create. And work with the Director to come to decisions and finalize the script.

**Prop Maker:** Your role involves making the props for the play. From the basic plot of the play, can you determine whether a character might need a particular item for a certain scene (i.e., food, a baseball, a magic wand)? If not, work closely with the script writer. Read the script and figure out, with the Director's help, what props are necessary to tell the story.

**Set Maker:** You are tasked with making the sets for the play. If a scene is taking place in a garden, you might make a tree or a fountain. If puppets are at the beach, you might make water out of blue tissue paper. You don't need to create elaborate sets, just one or two items that would signify the setting. Work with the Director to determine what is necessary.

**Creating a shadow puppet play is not an easy task. Here are some helpful hints:**

- Make a checklist of all the tasks to be completed in your category. Stay on top of things by checking each task off as it is completed.
- Create a timeline for yourself.
- Make sure you have a very clear understanding of your tasks. If you have any questions, ask the Director for clarification.
- You should be able to give a status report at any time. Know what you have already accomplished; know what you are doing and what still needs to be done.



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## **Halloween Reading List**

Check out this selection of books to get you into the spooky mood, recommended by SPA staff! This list provides options for readers of all ages.

### Upper Elementary +

- *Coraline*, by Neil Gaiman
- *The Graveyard Book*, by Neil Gaiman
- *The Night Gardener*, by Jonathan Auxier
- *The Witches*, by Roald Dahl
- *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, by Joan Aiken
- *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (**adapted version for Elementary, original version for Middle & High**)
- *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, by Robert Louis Stevenson (**adapted version for Elementary, Middle, original version for High**)
- *The Halloween Tree*, by Ray Bradbury
- *The Bad Beginning (A Series of Unfortunate Events #1)*, by Lemony Snicket

### Middle School +

- *The Seer of Shadows*, by Avi
- *Wolf Rider*, by Avi
- *The Complete Stories and Poems*, by Edgar Allan Poe

### High School +

- *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley
- *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, by Shirley Jackson
- *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker
- *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte
- *And Then There Were None*, by Agatha Christie