

The Guide

A Theatergoer's Resource

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Astoria

Adapted and directed by Chris Coleman

Based on the book *ASTORIA: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire, A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival* by Peter Stark

Peter Stark

[-Click Here-](#)

The Astor Expedition

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John Jacob Astor

[-Click Here-](#)

The World of Astoria

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Cast and Creative Team

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Further Research

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TONQUIN PARTY

Navy Men



Captain Jonathan Thorn
(played by Ben Rosenblatt)



1st Mate Ebenezer Fox
(played by Chris Murray)



Aiken
(played by Brandon Contreras)



Coles
(played by Jeremy Aggers)



Winton
(played by Michael Morrow Hammack)



Aymes
(played by Leif Norby)

Canadian & Scottish Partners



Duncan Macdougall
(played by Gavin Hoffman)



Alexander McKay
(played by Christopher Hirsh)



David Stuart
(played by F. Tyler Burnet)



Agnus
(played by Christopher Salazar)



Robert Stuart
(played by Jeremy Aggers)

Others



Gabriel Franchere
(played by Ben Newman)



Alexander Ross
(played by Nick Ferrucci)

OVERLAND PARTY

Leaders



Wilson Price Hunt
(played by Shawn Fagan)



Ramsay Crooks
(played by Benjamin Tissell)



Donald MacKenzie
(played by Jeremy Aggers)

Company



John Bradbury
(played by F. Tyler Burnet)



John Reed
(played by Michael Morrow Hammack)



John Day
(played by Nick Ferrucci)

OVERLAND PARTY CONT.

Company Cont.



Marrie Dorion
(played by DeLanna Studi)



Pierre Dorion
(played by Brandon Contreras)



Edward Robinson
(played by Leif Norby)



John Hoback
(played by Gavin Hoffman)



Jacob Reznor
(played by Ben Newman)

Voyaguers



John Bradbury
(played by F. Tyler Burnet)



John Reed
(played by Michael Morrow Hammack)



John Day
(played by Nick Ferrucci)

Arikara Leaders



Le Gauche
(played by Christopher Salazar)



Les Yeuz Gris
(played by Shaun Taylor-Corbett)



John Colter
(played by Christopher Hirsh)

IN MANHATTAN



John Jacob Astor
(played by Leif Norby)



Sarah Astor
(played by DeLanna Studi)



Mr. Greene
(played by Shaun Taylor-Corbett)

CANADIAN RIVALS

Partners of the NW Company



Benjamin Frobisher
(played by Michael Morrow Hammack)



Simon McTavish
(played by Nick Ferrucci)



Alexander MacKenzie
(played by Ben Newman)



Mr. Small
(played by Benjamin Tissell)



THE ARMORY

Theater Etiquette

Seeing a play is very different than seeing a movie. During live theatre, the audience is as equally important as the actors on stage. Please share the following points with your students, and encourage them to practice good theater etiquette throughout the workshop.

- **Live response is good!** If you tell a story to a friend and notice they aren't responding, it makes you want to tell the story better. A live audience is as critical a component of the theatergoing experience as the actors on stage. The more the audience listens, laughs and responds, the more the actors want to tell the story.
- **The actors can hear you talking.** Have you ever had a conversation with someone and felt that they'd rather be someplace else? This is the exact feeling actors get when people in the audience are talking. If an audience member is not paying attention, the actors know it.

- **The actors can see you.** Imagine telling something to a group of fellow students who are slouching, pretending to be bored, or sitting with their eyes closed in attempt to seem disinterested or "too cool" for what you had to say. Think about it: Even though the actors are pretending to be other characters, it is as much their job to "check in" with the audience as it is to remember their lines. Since stage actors only get one chance to tell the story to each audience, they want to make sure to communicate clearly each and every performance.
- **Cell phones, beepers, candy wrappers, loud gum smacking.** Please turn off all cell phones and do not eat or chew gum inside the theater. These things disturb the people around you as well as the actors. As much as you might be tempted to text a friend how cool the play is that you're watching, please wait until after it is over.

Many thanks to our colleagues at Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, from whom these excellent etiquette suggestions have been adapted.

Education Programs: Stage Door

Our Education Programs provide young people with opportunities to experience the art of theatre, to directly participate in its process, and to apply its collaborative principles elsewhere in their daily lives. Stage Door is an unforgettable opportunity for students to experience professional theatre in a context that supports their education.

The following activities have been constructed by our Teaching Artist to help students explore themes found in our production of Astoria: Part One. We encourage you to adapt these activities for your group as needed.

GOALS:

- Encourage personal connections between students and the major themes of the play.
- Excite students about the story and theatrical elements in the production.
- Engage students using the actors' tools: body, voice, and imagination.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Socialized Teamwork – Leaders Emerge
- The Structure of a Journey
- Uncovering Drama in Every Journey

Activity #1/Activity #2:

Group Decision

The goal of this activity is to highlight purely democratic decision-making, and the pressures of leadership.

HOW IT WORKS:

- This is a Mill & Seed activity for as many of the group as will fit in the given space.
- Group should be instructed to walk briskly, filling the space, with their eyes up (and elbows down).
- The first part of this activity is: **Group Start/Stop**
- Without any cluing or cueing, the group will come to a frozen halt, ala mannequin challenge.
- Again, without any clues, the group will resume its brisk pace, as if the image was un-paused, all at once.
- No one should be leading the changes. The changes come out of each person being aware of, “the beginnings of a stop or start.” “If you think someone MIGHT be slowing down, you slow down too.”
- Encourage them to stop and start more often as the exercise progresses.
- The second part of this activity is: **Circle of Attention**
- Again, Mill & Seed.
- The function of this exercise is to have one person in the group become the randomly chosen, center of attention, with everyone looking at him/her.
- While still walking, without cluing or discussion, all eyes will fall on one person in the group. Coach, “Look around and look to see where everyone else is looking.”
- Once everyone is looking the same way, pause the group, and applaud whomever was just looked-at.
- Repeat as time allows.

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS:

When is it helpful to have a leader, and when a committee? How did it feel to have everyone in the room looking at you? Did choosing to stop/start feel more empowered than looking at whomever was chosen?

Right: Clockwise from top: Leif Norby, Ben Rosenblatt, Shawn Fagan and DeLanna Studi in *Astoria: Part One*.

Photo by Kate Szrom.

Activity #3:

Band Together

Students will utilize problem-solving, leadership and communication skills in this exercise which focusses on the structure of a Journey.

HOW IT WORKS:

- Before the Journey, ask for one item from each student to be placed in a pile at the far end of the room. This will serve as motivation for the Journey.
- Students will have to work together to cross the distance of the room, without touching the floor. Standing on clothes, chairs, books, paper, all acceptable.
- The group wants as many people as possible to make it across. Any quitters forfeit their belongings for the duration of the exercise.
- Summons – Preparation – [Journey] – Loss – Return
- Highly encouraged to add obstacles to the journey.

REFLECTION/DISCUSSION:

What were the effective techniques which got everyone to safety? How did you decide who was going first or last? If you could have prepared for this (small) journey, what would you have done?



Activity #4: AutoAuthor Adventure

This activity focusses on the dramatic effect of conflict and obstacles on story-progression. Role-play and improvisation will be developed at the pace of each group.

HOW IT WORKS:

- For two performers and one “author.” Two performers will be acting out the story that is being improvised/narrated by the author
- Authors should offer opportunity and context, and allow the performers to shape the dialogue.
- Performers should strive to justify their contexts, and make bold choices whenever possible.
- Take a suggestion from the group to begin with, ask for a mundane trip or errand.
- Together as a group, everyone is working to make it the most dramatic, perilous, life-shaping journey.
- If needed, title the scenes – Summons, Preparation, Journey, Loss, Return.

REFLECTION/DISCUSSION:

What would summon you to journey? If there is an outward preparation for a Journey, what do we begin to bring on an inward Journey? If the outward Journey brings out the “best in us”, or shows us “what we’re made of,” does the inward Journey begin by delving beneath the less of us and show us we aren’t made of what we thought? Journey into the known, versus Journey into the unknown, provides more assurances and thus less faith in the outcome to exceed expectations



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