

House of ShAkE presents

## Stage-a-Page – A Theatre-in-Education Resource

Stage-a-Page is a resource designed to facilitate in-depth comprehension of written texts through the creation of short live performances. Modest in scope but full of possibility, the basic idea is simple: a single page (or a bit more, if absolutely necessary!) from a larger work becomes the material out of which a performance is developed. But, as participants discover, even a page can contain a world – and each fragment is itself only part of a richer, more complex configuration.

By “zooming in” on just one moment of complete work, Stage-a-Page allows us to linger with the written word, to dive deeply – spending time with words’ meanings and associations, sounds and structures, histories and possibilities. The limited focus makes Stage-a-Page practical, but of course participants and spectators must grasp enough of the whole to understand the excerpt. An overview can be provided through classroom study, preparatory reading, in-performance narration or, most interestingly, through a collection of “staged pages” presented together. This creates opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between groups of students, separate classes or different schools, or on a more sophisticated level, between professional artists, each contributing pages in their own unique style, according to their own readings.

As an educational resource, Stage-a-Page comes with a collection of activities and examples to awaken artistic potential and impart relevant skills. Modules highlighting various dimensions of live performance guide participants in text exploration and staging. To help make the words come alive for contemporary participants and audiences, these go beyond conventional theatre to introduce such forms as environmental, site-specific and post-dramatic theatre, dance-theatre, “poor theatre”, theatre of images, performance art, multimedia and audience participation.

Video clips, photographs and descriptions are provided to spark participants’ own imaginations, exploring in particular how the use of text has been revolutionized over the past hundred years of artistic practice. This encourages the varieties of communication to be mined for their unique qualities: words printed or projected visually; read aloud or silently to oneself; enacted with emotion, recited calmly, chanted or declaimed; translated or otherwise transformed; illuminated with images, animated by movement, set to music, whispered in the ear ...

Stage-a-Page is customizable for just about any organization or environment. Its guidelines, suggestions and examples make the crafting of successful short performances possible, whatever the available resources. And Stage-a-Page is completely scalable, from one-person classroom presentations to intramural stagings of whole works, from intimate events shared with families and communities to large-scale public performances in support of particular books, authors, literacy campaigns or institutions, including public awareness events and fundraisers.

In an age of media storms, Stage-a-Page employs the strategies of spectacle to honour the humble *word* – building block of our shared human culture. In an era of streaming images, it celebrates the endurance of *writing* – a silent scribble until literacy’s magic releases its power. And in a time of fragmentation and short attention spans, it celebrates *the whole*, but in a contemporary way – through brief moments that evoke the larger works from which they come.

Michael R. Caplan, Artistic & Executive Director of House of ShAkE, devised Stage-a-Page by drawing on his broad range of experience in various kinds of theatre, community-based performance, educational facilitation, typography and page design, and project production.