

Fort Wayne  
**youth**theatre  
*Education  
Guide*



2023-24 SEASON

# Fort Wayne youtheatre

About Us...

As the fifth oldest active children's theatre in the nation, Youtheatre is dedicated to its mission to "educate, engage and entertain" through quality theatrical experiences. In 1934, Dr. Clive McAllister, president of the Old Fort Players (now the Civic Theatre), appointed a committee to create a junior or children's theater branch of the organization. The committee established the philosophy that the new "Children's Theatre" would develop poise, better diction, and self-esteem for children through dramatic instruction. They would give at least one play a year, and awaken enthusiasm in children for beauty in art and integrity in dramatic literature.

The first class began with an enrollment of a whopping 40 students, each of which paid just \$1.00 for 8 classes! The first production, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," was performed at the Majestic Theatre in Fort Wayne and had a cast of 75 young people. Tickets were only 10 cents for children and 25 cents for adults.

In 1954, the Majestic Theatre was deemed unsafe for children by the fire department and so the Children's Theatre spent the next 10 years at various locations in the city. By the time it rejoined the Civic Theatre at the Old Palace Theatre, it had a new name, the "Fort Wayne Youtheatre." In 1973, both organizations moved to their current home in the Arts United Center on E. Main Street in downtown Fort Wayne. The Youtheatre became autonomous in 1984.

In 1978, Broadway star Harvey Cocks became the Executive Director of Youtheatre. Even after retiring from that position, Harvey remained as our Artist in Residence; inspiring young artists for over forty years until his death in 2022. In 2010, Leslie Hormann took the reigns, serving as Executive/Artistic Director until 2018.

Youtheatre is currently managed by Executive/Artistic Director Todd Espeland, who came to us in 2018 after serving as Artistic Director of the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre. He is joined by Associate Director/Director of Outreach Christopher J. Murphy, Administrative Assistant/Marketing Director Morgan Montgomery, Administrative Assistant Kimee Gearhart and a staff of outstanding local artists who serve as teachers, guest directors, choreographers, music directors and designers.

For over three quarters of a century, Youtheatre has produced classes, camps and theatrical productions for the artists and audiences of northeast Indiana. Our touring "Youtheatre-On-The-Go" troupe takes literature-based shows into the community, performing in hospitals, libraries, community centers and more. In 2018, our Linda L. Ruffolo "Young Heroes of Conscience" Series, which has spotlighted the likes of Anne Frank, Ryan White, Harriet Tubman and Ruby Bridges, won the "Mayor's Arts Award."



# ELEMENTS OF A PRODUCTION

## SETS

The scenery pieces that form the area in which the performers act out the play. Sometimes scenery is very realistic, making the audience think they are inside a real house, for example. Other times the scenery is quite fanciful or limited. What different sets can you name in the show? What time and place does it look like?

## LIGHTS

The lighting instruments that help to create the right atmosphere on the stage. Lights direct the attention of the audience to specific areas of the stage or to a specific performer. The lights may be different colors to add special effects such as nighttime or a storm. How do the lights in this production show changes in the time and place?

## PROPS

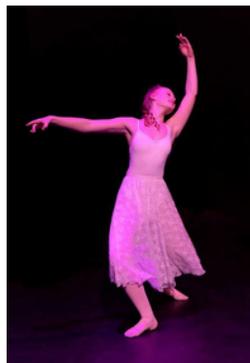
The objects performers carry to help them act out the story. Look for important props that help define character or place. Can you name a few?

## MAKE-UP

The cosmetic bases, blushes, lipsticks, mascara and eye liners which helps the performer physically become the character he/she is playing. Make-up is also used so that the performers facial features can be seen clearly under the bright stage lights from a distance. Do you notice any special make-up in the show?

## COSTUMES

The clothing the performers wear. Depending on the story being acted out, this clothing may be what a character of the time would have actually worn. It may also be very exaggerated or fantastic in the case of a dream or a fairy-tale. Costumes help the audience know what a character is like or where and when he/she lived. Are the costumes drab or colorful? Do they look realistic? What do they tell you about the time and place?



# BEHIND *the* SCENES



## **TODD ESPELAND, DIRECTOR**

TODD ESPELAND is the Executive/Artistic Director of the Fort Wayne Youtheatre. He is the former Artistic Director of Commedia Zuppa Mask Company, The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre and a graduate of the world renowned Dell' Arte International. While at Dell' Arte, Todd did extensive post-graduate work in Mask, Clown, Circus Techniques, Commedia Dell' Arte and Physical Theatre. He holds MFA in Directing from the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

With Commedia Zuppa Todd served as a mask and movement specialist and artist in residence Off-Broadway for the Rosebud Theatre Company, and at many regional theatres, colleges, universities and toured original works of theatre nationally and internationally including his award winning Theatre for Young Audiences mask show BOXHEAD. During this time he was also a lead coach and director with Starfish Circus, a nonprofit that focuses on helping kids develop skills for healthy, active and enthusiastic lives through circus & performing arts.

In Kalamazoo Michigan, as well as being the Artistic Director of the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, Todd served as a Guest Artist/visiting Assistant Professor at Kalamazoo College where he taught classes in acting, mask performance and directed productions of Endgame, Servant to Two Masters, Peer Gynt and Romeo and Juliet. At the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre each year he oversaw the artistic vision and administrative realization of a 16 show season as well as directing productions of Seussical Jr., Richard III, Of Mice and Men, Mary Poppins, A Christmas Story the Musical, To Kill a Mockingbird and Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery.

### *Q: What does a Director do?*

**A:** A Director collaborates with and supervises all the other members of the production team (sets, lights, costumes, etc.) to make sure everyone is working together to tell the same story. He or she also directs the movement of the performers and helps them develop characters and relationships. In short, the Director is THE BOSS.

# The Source Material

**Our production of GO, DOG. GO! is based on the popular children's book! Here's everything you need to know about the source material.**

Go, Dog.  
Go!



by P. D. Eastman

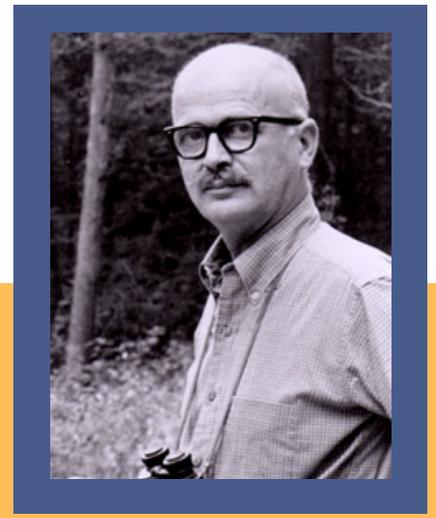
*Go, Dog. Go!* is a 1961 children's book with over 8 million copies sold, written and illustrated by P. D. Eastman. It describes the actions and interactions of a group of excited dogs, who operate cars and more in pursuit of work, play, and a final mysterious goal: a dog party. Virtually no words have been changed between the original book and the stage adaptation!

The dogs featured in the book use their cars to help them get their work done and get to places. Using simple language and humor, the book helps children learn basic concepts and actions like playing, working, going up, and going down.

Throughout the book, details in Eastman's illustrations seem to invite the reader to notice the deeper significance of small things. It has since been turned into a TV series.

# Biography: *P. D. Eastman*

**Philip Dey Eastman (November 25, 1909 – January 7, 1986) was an American screenwriter, children's author, and illustrator. He is the author of *Go, Dog. Go!***

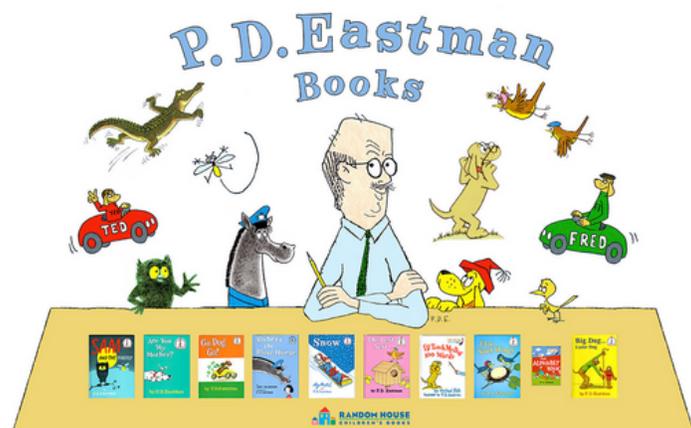


## Early Life

Eastman was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, to Clarence Willis and Ann Hull Eastman. After studying at Phillips Academy Andover and Williston Academy, he graduated from Amherst College in 1933 and later from the National Academy of Design in New York City.

## Family

In 1941 Eastman married Mary Louise Whitham of Glendale, California. He had two sons, Alan Eastman and Peter Anthony Eastman, an animator, who himself directed video adaptations of Richard Scarry's children's books. Peter has also written and illustrated his own books, and contributed new illustrations to several reissues of his father's books.



## Career

From 1936 to 1941, Eastman worked at Walt Disney Productions in assistant animation, story-sketch, and production design. From 1941 to 1942, he worked in the story department of Leon Schlesinger Productions, Warner Bros.'s cartoon unit, and was a member of Local Number Eight Hundred And Thirty-Nine of Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists, the trade union representing cartoonists in the United States.

In 1942, Eastman was drafted by the Army and assigned to the Signal Corps film unit, which was headed by Theodor Geisel, who later became known as Dr. Seuss. Here, Eastman conducted picture planning for animated sequences in orientation and training films, and he also wrote scripts and drew storyboards for the Private Snafu series for Army-Navy Screen Magazine.

From 1945 to 1952, Eastman worked at United Productions of America (UPA). He was a writer and storyboard artist for the Mr. Magoo series. Eastman also directed educational films and worked on the Flight Safety series for the United States Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics while at UPA.

# Music:

## *Thelonius Monk & Charles Mingus*

**Music goes hand-in-hand with theatre! Even outside of big showstopping musical numbers, music can be used as a tool to subtly convey themes or moods.**



**For this production, the director decided to use music composed by jazz musicians, specifically music created by Thelonius Monk and Charles Mingus. Read about their different styles and see if you can identify their songs during the show!**

### **Thelonius Monk**

Thelonious Monk (October 10, 1917 – February 17, 1982) was an American jazz pianist and composer. He was known for having a unique improvisational style.

Monk's compositions and improvisations feature dissonances and angular melodic twists and are consistent with his unorthodox approach to the piano, which combined a highly percussive attack with abrupt, dramatic use of switched key releases, silences, and hesitations.

Monk was also known for his distinct look which included suits, hats, and sunglasses. He had an interesting habit during performances: while other musicians continued playing, Monk would stop, stand up, and dance for a few moments before returning to the piano.

Monk once said, "The piano ain't got no wrong notes." In contrast with this unorthodox approach to playing, he could play runs and arpeggios with great speed and accuracy. Monk's style was not universally appreciated. For example, the poet and jazz critic Philip Larkin described him as "the elephant on the keyboard".



### **Charles Mingus**

Charles Mingus Jr. (April 22, 1922 – January 5, 1979) was an American jazz upright bassist, pianist, composer, bandleader, and author. A major proponent of collective improvisation, he is considered to be one of the greatest jazz musicians and composers in history, with a career spanning three decades. Mingus's compositions retained the hot and soulful feel of hard bop, drawing heavily from black gospel music and blues, while sometimes containing elements of Third Stream, free jazz, and classical music. He once cited Duke Ellington and church as his main influences.

In 1993, the Library of Congress acquired Mingus's collected papers—including scores, sound recordings, correspondence and photos—in what they described as "the most important acquisition of a manuscript collection relating to jazz in the Library's history".

# Your Fav Dog!

## SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS DOGS IN POPULAR CULTURE WORLDWIDE

These furry friends are everywhere! Below are some of the most famous dogs in fiction: do you spot any you know?



Scooby-Doo:  
*Scooby-Doo*



Snoopy: *Peanuts*



Pluto: *Disney*



Toto: *The Wizard of Oz*



Blue: *Blue's Clues*



Lady and the Tramp:  
*Lady and the Tramp*



Doug: *Up*



Pongo and Perdita:  
*101 Dalmatians*

Fort Wayne Youtheatre  
**ACADEMY**  
of Performing Arts

*Where Creativity Plays*



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# ACTIVITY #1: PAPER PLATE DOG

This activity, best suited for Pre-K to 5th graders, encourages students to get creative by creating their very own version of the iconic dog on the cover of **GO, DOG. GO!**



Materials needed:

- Paper plate
- Brown tissue paper
- Green, black, white, brown, and orange cardstock or colored paper
- Stapler
- Safety scissors
- Glue



Steps:

1. Cut your tissue paper into small squares and set aside
2. Cut a section out of the paper plate to create the dog's head shape
3. Cover paper plate in glue and add tissue paper until the plate is completely covered
4. Cut out the ears, nose, scarf, eyes, goggles, and hat from your colored paper using the picture provided as a reference. Feel free to get creative and make it your own!
5. Staple/glue all of your cutouts onto the paper plate as you see fit.
6. Display proudly for all to see!

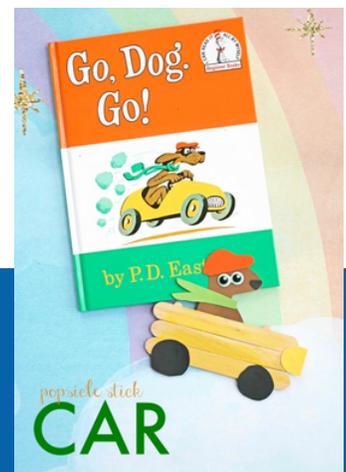
## DISCUSSION TOPIC:

**These dogs love to play and have fun! What are some games you like to play? Do you think the dogs would like it too?**

# ACTIVITY #2:

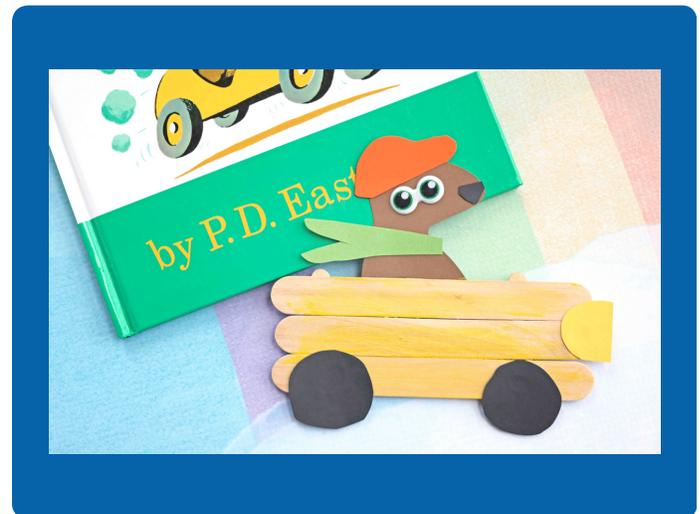
## POPSICLE STICK CAR

This craft is not only a super easy DIY for younger children, but also a great pair for one of the most iconic scenes in this wellknown children's book!



Materials needed:

- Jumbo popsicle sticks
- Mini popsicle sticks
- Small circle punch
- Craft paint or colored marker
- Cardstock paper
- Safety scissors
- Glue



Steps:

1. Grab 3 jumbo popsicle sticks and 2 mini ones, laying the 3 big ones next to each other on a flat surface.
2. Take the smaller sticks and glue them onto the 3 bigger ones facing the other way to create a sort of fence. Set aside to let it dry.
3. Paint or color the front side of the popsicle sticks (the side without the mini ones showing).
4. Cut out wheels, headlights, and your own dog out of cardstock using the images above as a reference. Feel free to get creative and make it your own!
5. Glue the dog to the backside of the popsicle sticks and glue the other car embellishments to the front.
6. Play with or display proudly!

### DISCUSSION TOPIC:

**Do you have a dog? If so, what kind of car do you think they would drive? Do you think they would be any good at driving?**

# POP QUIZ:

## *Test Your Memory*



See how much you remember from the performance of **GO, DOG. GO!** with this brief quiz on the play, the plot, and characters.

- Hattie keeps asking M.C. Dog if they like her \_\_\_\_\_.
  - scarf
  - hat
  - shoes
  - jacket
- Which dog doesn't have a tree at first?
  - Yellow Dog
  - Blue Dog
  - Red Dog
  - Green Dog
- Why did the dogs climb the tree?
  - To sleep
  - To pick apples
  - To work
  - To have a dog party
- What do the dogs find under the sheet?
  - A dog party
  - Toys
  - A carnival
  - Treats
- M.C. Dog never says they like Hattie's hat.
  - True
  - False
- Which dog gets left behind?
  - Yellow Dog
  - Blue Dog
  - Red Dog
  - Green Dog
- What does Yellow Dog find instead of a tree?
  - A ladder
  - A car
  - The moon
  - The sun
- How does Hattie enter the dog party?
  - In a car
  - Dancing
  - Climbing a ladder
  - In a giant cake
- What game do the dogs play?
  - Baseball
  - Football
  - Soccer
  - Basketball
- Which dog ends up with all the sandwiches?
  - Yellow Dog
  - Blue Dog
  - Red Dog
  - Green Dog

## *Answer Key*

Q1: b: hat Q2: a: Yellow Dog Q3: d: To have a dog party Q4: c: A carnival Q5: b: False Q6: b: Blue Dog Q7: d: The sun Q8: d: In a giant cake Q9: a: Baseball Q10: a: Yellow Dog

*Want to get involved?...*

**23-24 SEASON AUDITION DATES:**

THE HOUSE.....Aug 21 & 22, 2023  
A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS.....Oct 9 & 10, 2023  
THE PROM.....Dec 10, 2023  
RUBY BRIDGES.....Feb 26 & 27, 2023  
GO, DOG! GO!.....Feb 26 & 27, 2023

*fortwayneyoutheatre.org/auditions*

# *Suggested Reading...*

**Elementary:** *Go, Dog. Go!* by P.D. Eastman, *Clifford the Big Red Dog* by Norman Bridwell, and *Dog Loves Books* by Louise Yates

**Middle School:** *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo, *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds, and *Old Yeller* by Fred Gipson

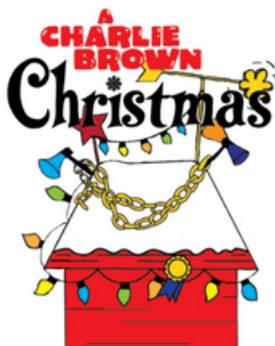
**High School:** *Stone Fox* by John Reynolds Gardiner, *Lassie Come-Home* by Eric Knight, and *Jonathon Unleashed* by Meg Rosoff



# 2023-24 SEASON SCHOOL SHOWS

Did that door just creeeeeeek open on its own? Where did those eerie footsteps come from? Do ghosts roam the halls or is the house itself evil? A trio of students enter a haunted house determined to answer this question. Using spine-tingling tales from authors like Edgar Allen Poe, Youthatre and Theatrefolk Publishing collaborate on this world premiere about the stories that lie within the walls of these haunted habitats. Only the spirits know....and they're watching you....

**Performance:** Monday, October 2, 2023 | 10:00 AM | First Presbyterian Theater



Everyone's favorite holiday classic returns to Youthatre in an all new production. Charles M. Schulz's Emmy Award-winning *A Charlie Brown Christmas* has been warming hearts since it debuted on television over 50 years ago. Now the whole family can join Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, good ol' Charlie Brown and the whole Peanuts gang as they sing, dance, and learn the true meaning of Christmas LIVE ON-STAGE!

**Performance:** Monday, December 11, 2023 | 10:00 AM | First Presbyterian Theater

Since 2014, Youthatre has shone a light on young people making a difference with our *Young Heroes of Conscience Series*. To celebrate the series 10th Anniversary, we revisit a past hero whose story seems all too relevant today. Ruby Bridges was born in 1954, the same year Brown v. Board of Education ordered schools to integrate with "all deliberate speed." Six years later, as immortalized by the famous Norman Rockwell painting, Ruby became the face of integration when she enrolled in the all-white William Frantz Elementary School. Her story shows one little girl's unbeatable courage in the face of adversity, helping lead the Civil Rights movement up the front steps and into America's classrooms.

**Performance:** TBA



Youthatre and the Allen County Public Library team up for the first in our *Stories from the Stacks: Theatre for Young Readers Series*. Aimed at Pre-K through 3rd Graders (but with plenty to enjoy for all ages), P.D. Eastman's classic children's book *Go, Dog, Go!* comes to life on stage in an exploration of movement, music, color and space. The dogs delve into life with gusto, creating a visual spectacle for the audience to feast upon. They snorkel. They howl at the moon. They ride a ferris wheel. They sing and dance and climb trees. This is a rollicking free-for-all of chicanine-ery. . A big and little musical world of doggy fun. Like a pop-up book that comes to life – and never stops.

**Performance:** Monday, April 29, 2024 | 10:00 AM | Downtown ACPL Theatre

For more information and resources for your classroom,  
visit our website at [fortwayneyouthatre.org/school-shows-resources](https://fortwayneyouthatre.org/school-shows-resources)

# LANGUAGE ARTS

## STANDARDS

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Most Youtheatre productions are literature-based and on the recommended reading list of the Library of Congress.

Language Arts Standard: Perceive, identify, describe and analyze the distinguishing characteristics of form, structure and style of story.

- Retell story identifying plot, theme, characters, and setting.
- Recall story plot utilizing chronological order.

Language Arts Standard: Evaluate Theatre/Literary work based on critical perception and analysis.

- Share perception of theatre experience in the area of voice, movement, mood and motivation.
- Make suggestions for alternative endings.
- Analyze and critique story and performance through creative writing.
- Create a similar story through creative writing.

Language Arts Standard: Use Theatre /Literary work to develop affective areas of self-concept, problem solving and interpersonal skills.

- React to feelings of self and others within a production.
- Identify conflict within story as it relates to self and others.
- Compare and contrast problems and resolutions found in different stories and real life situations.
- Express personal attitudes, values, and belief systems as it relates to theatre piece.
- Interact freely in conversations, class discussions and dramatic activities.
- Contribute to the solving of problems through dramatization/improvisation.

Language Arts Standard: Examine Theatre /Literary work in a historical and multicultural context.

- Identify similarities and differences between characters from diverse cultures depicted.
- Identify historical differences/figures in different time frames depicted in story.
- Identify significance of historical aspects in story.

Exploring Aesthetics: A Philosophical Basis for Life!

- Attending live theatre helps children value its importance to the community and helps develop a lifelong commitment and love of Theatre and Literature. Students experience aesthetic growth through appreciation of Theatre.
- Students discover through experience that making art is an essential human activity. It requires collaboration, and enhances creative thinking.

