

# ***The Incredible Magic Hat Show***

## ***Study Guide***

**Benny & Bebe's Magic Circus**

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### ***Multicultural, Theater & Performing Arts and History Learning***

One Shape makes many Hats from around the World  
Historical and International Characters come to Live!  
Benny Bendini performs physical comedy, magic, mime & chapeaugraphy.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will learn about theater through observing, responding and audience participation

- Chapeaugraphy & Quick Change Magic
- Creative Movement & Body Language
- Mime
- Facial Expression & Non Verbal Communication
- Use of Props, Music and Sound Effects

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### **ASSEMBLY**

A comical character is arriving with his long traveled suitcases at a train station. He realizes he left the coat hangers in his jacket he is wearing. At the gift shop he finds help.

Waiting for the train puts him into a daydream, he start's portraying 20 quick-change characters using one shape that changes into different hats from many nationalities, cultures and professions. Vignettes with hilarious comical situations and visual jests are created using chapeaugraphy, comedy magic, mime and music.

## **MIME**

Is a performing arts form using body language and facial expressions to tell stories and create vignettes.

The world's greatest contemporary mime artist was Marcel Marceau.

Marceau (22 March 1923 – 22 September 2007) was an internationally acclaimed French actor and mime most famous for his mime persona Bip. Benny Bendini studied the Marcel Marceau technique in Europe.

## **CHAPEAUGRAPHY**

Is an art form that was developed 400 years ago, at the time of Comedia del Arte in France and Italy - the time when Moliere wrote his comedies and plays. The fashion in Europe was to wear elaborate big hats. 200 years later you could see people adding big feathers to their hats.

Chapeau is the French word for hat.

In the USA chapeaugraphy became first very popular at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through performances at the vaudeville stages and in the circus. At that time many people were wearing hats that showed which profession they were working in. So you could tell what their profession was by looking at their hats. Felicien Trewey performed his act in the 1890's. He made some of the first films with the Lumiere Brothers.

Nowadays we do not wear so many different hats, so Magic Circus brought Chapeaugraphy into our times by showing not only historical and present time characters, but also folding the shape into different object

## **PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES**

A great preparation for "*The Incredible Magic Hat Show*" is an exploration of Body Language:

- Make a facial expression and show it to the person next to you, have him/her imitate it, transform it into another expression and give that expression to the next person.
- Can you show us anger with your eyebrows, in your shoulders? Jealousy in your chin? Sadness in your stomach? Loneliness in your legs or with your hands?
- What can you tell about people by the way they walk, sit, wave, or even breathe?
- It's been said that everyone is a head person, a chest person, or a hips person, depending on where their "center" is, where they move from. Which type are you? Which type is each person here? (One by one, students cross before the class, and the class determines where their "center" is.)
- Study photographs depicting actors or real people with a strong physical presence, then asks each student to make three observations about each, based on posture or gesture.

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## **FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

- Bring *historical* and *multicultural* characters to life. In what part of his body, do you think, was Napoleon's "center" (head, chest, or hips)?
- *One shape makes many objects:* Present to the class any simple object, for example, a shoe, a bowl, or an umbrella. Invite students to imagine what else it might be and show it. (Examples: The shoe might be a trumpet, or a cell phone. The umbrella turns into a satellite dish, or a steering wheel.
- *Multicultural Characters:* Review different countries and their typical hats, gestures and music.
- *Historical Characters:* Explore which historical moments and characters were demonstrated in the show. Have you already witnessed a historical moment in your lifetime?

