

Inter* Act Performances with Jan Turnquist: *Harriet Beecher Stowe: Catalyst For Civil War*

Grade Levels: 6-12

PRE-PERFORMANCE REQUIRED PREPARATION

TEACHERS: THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL ENABLE STUDENTS TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PERFORMANCE.

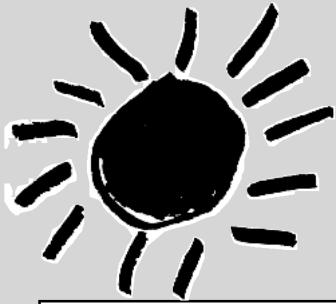
It is important that students prepare their petition for Mrs. Stowe. The information in the "TO THE STUDENT" paragraph below is important. Please read or reprint it for your students prior to Mrs. Stowe's visit. For younger students, the same information may be conveyed in language appropriate to them.

Your class is asked to pretend that they are an abolitionist group with a petition to present to Mrs. Stowe. This needs to be the tone of the group for the beginning of the visit. After receiving the petition, Mrs. Stowe will be persuaded to speak, although women in the 1800s did not generally speak in public, and most of her public appearances for abolitionist groups were in the form of silent support. Students DO NOT need to speak "in character" as abolitionists, except in a group voice when they urge Mrs. Stowe to speak. She will then reveal much about pre-Civil War life, her childhood and education, and how she came to write her famous book. As the visit goes on, students will probably listen as themselves and ask their own questions.

TO THE STUDENT:

You are about to meet historian and actress Jan Turnquist, who has come here today to tell you about the life, work, and times of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, one of the most influential books in American history. Jan's performance is a blend of stage drama and living history, similar to what you might see at Plymouth Plantation or Old Sturbridge Village. In a living history portrayal, an actor BECOMES a character, just as she does in a play, but unlike in a play, the audience may interact with the character and ask questions or make comments.

For today's visit, you do not need to be an expert on her time period (1811 to 1896), in order to speak to her -- just be yourself. BUT remember, she will know nothing of this century or of this place. She will stay in her character, and will know only the things Harriet Beecher Stowe would have known.



Young Audiences of Massachusetts

Educational Materials

Please forward to teachers

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Inter*Act Performances with Jan Turnquist:

Harriet Beecher Stowe: Catalyst for Civil War

Grade levels: 6-12

Travel back in time with Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), whom Abraham Lincoln called “the little lady who made this Great War.” This famous abolitionist and prolific author speaks about her life, her dedication to ending slavery, and the publication of her best-selling novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Students join Harriet Beecher Stowe for important lessons in American history which focus on pre-Civil War America, the Civil War, the Underground Railroad, abolitionist activities, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, 19th century travel, and life in New England and Europe.

LEARNING GOALS:

1. To explore historical and personal contexts for pre-Civil War events.
2. To gain insight into a courageous and accomplished woman of the times who succeeded despite tremendous odds.
3. To broaden learning experiences in other subject areas through drama.

PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Debating Controversial Issues*

Discuss “abolition.” Discuss the two viewpoints on slavery: slavery is EVIL and should be stopped versus slavery is UNPLEASANT but necessary. Brainstorm issues that are controversial today. Divide the class into groups. Have each group choose an issue to debate. Have students write compelling arguments for both sides. Ask them to present the arguments to the rest of the class.

POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Freedom of Writing*

Discuss the plot and theme of Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Talk about the writing and publication of the novel in light of the time period in which it was written. Divide the class into groups. Have each group research freedom of speech, the changes made to the original version of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and other controversial books written throughout history.

CURRICULUM LINKS:

English Language Arts, History and Social Science, African-American Studies, Theater, Women’s Studies

PRE-ACTIVITY: DEBATING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

LEARNING GOAL:

To understand the two views regarding abolition.

To create compelling arguments.

TIME:

One hour

STEP 1:

Have students define the word “abolition.” Emphasize that abolitionists believed slavery was EVIL and should be eliminated. Those who fought against abolition, however, did not necessarily believe slavery was GOOD, only that it was necessary.

STEP 2:

Think of controversial issues in today’s society (i.e., taxes, the death penalty, using animals for science, putting unwanted animals to sleep at the pound, etc.).

STEP 3:

Divide the class into small groups. Have each group choose an issue from the above list to debate.

STEP 4:

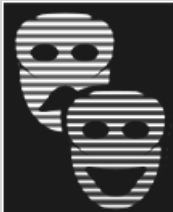
Have each group divide in half and take opposing sides. Ask the students to write down their most compelling arguments.

STEP 5:

Ask volunteers from each group (one from each side) to share their arguments with the class.

EXTENSIONS:

- 1) **Make** a simple petition and have students sign it and present it to Mrs. Stowe.
- 2) **Create** a timeline of the events in the United States during Harriet Beecher Stowe’s life (1811-1896).
- 3) **Have** students research other abolitionists. How did they help to end slavery?



PETITION

to the President of the United States,
Mr. Abraham Lincoln

We the undersigned do hereby protest the Institution of Slavery and do call for its immediate abolition.

POST-ACTIVITY: FREEDOM OF WRITING

LEARNING GOAL:

To get familiarized with the plot and themes of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel Uncle Tom's Cabin.

To understand freedom of speech and censorship.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:
plot summary of Uncle Tom's Cabin

TIME:

Two 45 minute sessions

STEP 1:

Ask students to share what they know about Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. Hand out a summary of the novel to the students. Have them review the basic elements of the story (plot, characters, setting, theme, etc.).

STEP 2:

Discuss the United States at the time of the novel's publication (1852). Had the Civil War begun? Which states were slave states? What was the Underground Railroad?

STEP 3:

Ask students to think about the repercussions of writing a book on a controversial issue of the time (i.e., slavery). Tell students that Uncle Tom's Cabin underwent drastic unauthorized changes because of the controversy over abolition.

STEP 4:

Divide the class into three groups. Have the first group research the changes that were made to Uncle Tom's Cabin. Ask the second group to research the issue of freedom of speech, and the third to work on other controversial books throughout history.

STEP 5:

Have groups present their findings. Have a general discussion about censorship and freedom of speech.

EXTENSIONS:

- 1) **Have** students write a story or a speech about a cause. Ask them to present the speech or story to the rest of the class.
- 2) **Discuss** reform movements. Have students research various reform movements from the past and present.



Inter*Act Performances with Jan Turnquist: *A Visit with Harriet Beecher Stowe*

Grade levels: 6-12

RESOURCES:

Golay, Michael. The Civil War. Facts on File, Inc. 1992.

McMullan, Kate. The Story of Harriet Tubman, Conductor of the Underground Railroad. New York: Dell Publishing, 1991.

The North Star: Tracing the Underground Railroad - www.ugrr.org

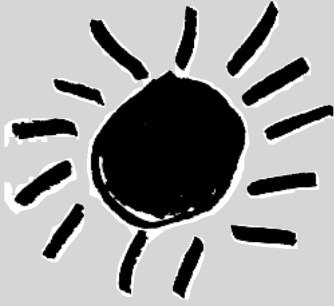
Harriet Tubman: An Unforgettable Black Leader - www.acusd.edu/~jdesmet/tubman.html

ABOUT THE PERFORMER:

Jan Turnquist is the Executive Director of Louisa May Alcott's home, Orchard House, in Concord, MA. She has presented teacher workshops at numerous sites including the Wang Center in Boston and Old Sturbridge Village and has performed internationally at sites such as Old South Meeting House in Boston, the Martin Van Buren Historical Site in Kinderhook, NY, Winter Chatauqua in Florida, and the American School in Mexico City and she has performed for first lady, Laura Bush. Jan has presented her work under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Labor, the Federal Women's Council, the National Park Service, and Continental Airlines and has performed at numerous libraries, schools, and universities. She currently portrays Miss Alcott in a public service announcement which runs nationally on the FOX Network. Jan has also appeared in several BBC productions including *Blue Peter*, Britain's longest running children's television show, *Book Worm*, and the BBC's *Open University* programs. Jan has also appeared on "This Old House" with Norm Abrams on PBS and on "Chronicle" with Mary Richardson on WCVB. For more information on Inter*Act Performances, please consult the web site: www.janturnquist.com/index.htm.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For over 45 years, YA has distinguished itself as the vital link between Massachusetts schoolchildren (K-12) and more than 95 of the region's most accomplished actors, dancers, singers, musicians, and storytellers. Its 36 ensembles offer 57 interactive arts programs that represent a range of cultures, historical periods and artistic disciplines. YA is unique in its flexibility to offer interactive performances, tailor-made residencies, workshops, teacher-training, curriculum planning and multi-year projects. All programs include educational materials and satisfy local, state and/or federal arts education standards.



Young Audiences of Massachusetts

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MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

Inter*Act Performances with Jan Turnquist: *Harriet Beecher Stowe: Catalyst for Civil War*

<i>Language Arts 3</i>	...make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.
<i>Language Arts 9</i>	...identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>Language Arts 12</i>	...identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
<i>Language Arts 13</i>	...identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and meaning of nonfiction material.
<i>History 1</i>	Chronology and Cause...understand the chronological order of historical events and recognize the complexity of historical cause and effect.
<i>History 2</i>	Historical Understanding...understand the meaning, implications, and import of historical events, while recognizing the contingency and unpredictability of history.
<i>History 4</i>	Society, Diversity, Commonality, and the Individual...learn the complex interplay that has existed from the beginning of our country between American ideals and American practice.
<i>History 19</i>	Citizenship...learn the rights and duties of citizens and the principle of equal rights for all.
<i>Arts-Theatre 1</i>	Acting...develop acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes.
<i>Arts-Theatre 5</i>	Critical Response...describe and analyze their own theatrical work and the work of others using appropriate theater vocabulary.
<i>Arts-Theatre 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

