



Teacher's Guide  
for the University of Kansas  
Theatre for Young People's  
production of

# The King Stag

by Sylvia Ashby

**Based on *Il Re Cervo* by Carlo Gozzi**  
Directed by Dennis Christilles

Lawrence & Rural Schools  
Rural Schools  
General Public

1:00 p.m. September 22, 23, 25, 26  
1:00 p.m. September 24  
10:30 a.m. September 27, 2:30 p.m. September 28

## **Inge Theatre, Murphy Hall**

Tickets for Rural School performances are \$2.50  
Complimentary tickets for teachers and students on free/reduced lunch programs

Public Performance  
Public Performance

10:30 a.m. September 27  
2:30 p.m. September 28

Tickets are \$5 for all students, \$10 for all adults, and \$9 for senior citizens.

Most appreciated by families and children ages 9 and up.

## **Preview for Teachers and Parents** **7:30 p.m. Sunday, September 21**

Parents and teachers are invited to attend the final dress-rehearsal of *The King Stag* in the Inge Theatre in Murphy Hall. This rehearsal is a wonderful way to acquaint you with the play so you may be able to prepare your children/students for the performance.

This final dress-rehearsal will begin at 7:30 p.m. and run non-stop until about 8:30 p.m.



## The Story of the Play



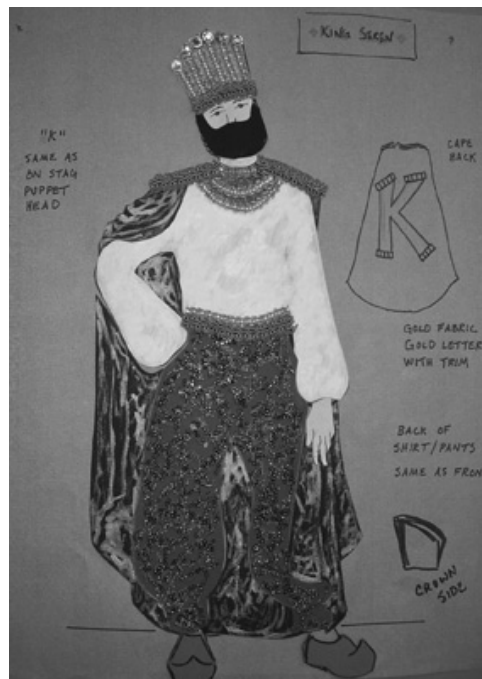
- Based on an old Italian tale about King Seren, who sets out to find a queen for his kingdom of Serendipity.
- With a wizard's help, he is able to tell the true feelings of each of the young women in the kingdom.
- He is about to give up his search for his queen when he finds out that Angelica really does love him for who he is.
- The king's Prime Minister (Periglio) also loves Angelica and plots to have her and the kingdom all for himself.
- Out on a royal hunt, Periglio traps the king's spirit inside the body of a stag.
- Periglio then inhabits the body of the king, but everyone at the court knows something is very wrong with the king due to his strange, new personality.
- In the end, the king, disguised as an old woman, is able to reclaim his body, kingdom, and his future queen.



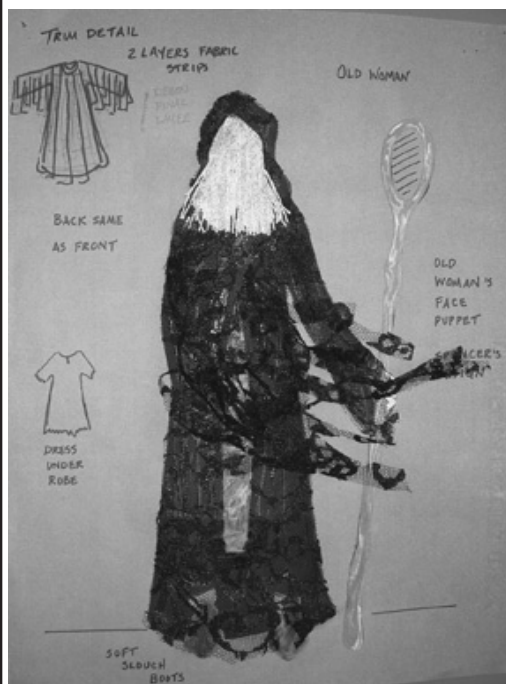
## About the Author



- Carlo Gozzi was born in December of 1720 in Venice, Italy.
- Worked as a playwright and poet and promoted the Italian style of comedy called "Commedia dell'arte." (coh-may-dee-uh del-art)
- Wrote many plays based on fairy tales including *Il Re Cervo* which is the source for our play, *The King Stag*.
- *Il Re Cervo* was first performed in 1762!



Costume Designs by  
Tammy Keiser



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## About the Production



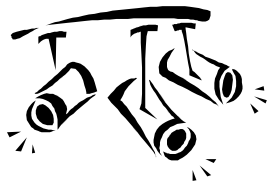
- The Kingdom of Serendipity is made of trash and junk! You will see costumes, set pieces, and puppets all made from using what you might normally throw away.
- The inspiration for the set is from the idea of using “found objects” and the work of the artist Louise Nevelson.
- The play includes original puppets built by KU theatre major Spencer Lott.
- The cast has been rehearsing for more than four weeks. That’s more than 70 hours of rehearsal!



## Did You Know?



- Junk, trash and various found objects have been used to make the Kingdom of Serendipity come to life on stage. According to the Environmental Protection Agency: “The United States leads the industrialized world in municipal solid waste generation, with each person in the United States currently generating on average 4.5 pounds of waste per day.” (<http://www.epa.gov/Region4/recycle/faqs.htm>) Just think of how many puppets and theatre sets could be created from all that trash!
- Costume Designer Tammy Keiser had this to say about her work on the show: “I used collage for the first time in the renderings for two reasons. First, just to try it as a working process and get myself out of a formulaic way of working that had developed over the school year and second because of the concept of the show. It seemed very appropriate to work with bits and pieces of things that I had lying around the apartment and applying them to the forms on the paper.”



## Spotlight On...

- Name: Spencer Lott
- Age: 20
- Major: Bachelor of General Studies in Theatre & Film
- Hometown: Lawrence, KS
- Elementary School: Quail Run
- Favorite Food: Burritos
- Favorite Color: Green
- Favorite Subject: English and History
- What was your role? “I am the creative designer. Or as Dennis (the director) says ‘The brains behind the operation.’”
- What is your favorite thing about your role? “I got to create ALL of the puppet characters.”
- Why did you use trash in this show? “I have seen several puppet shows that could be classified as ‘junk theatre’ or ‘object theatre’. The style was intriguing, challenging, and also a way to show young audiences a new way of thinking about puppetry, and theatre in general. Combine this with all of the recent focus on environmental awareness, and this ‘puppet show’ becomes a creative outlet for things that would normally clog up a landfill.”
- What is your favorite thing about theatre? “All of the craziness that goes on to make what goes up on stage look ‘normal.’”
- What is the name of the program you attended after high school? “It was a Sesame Street puppeteers training workshop.”
- When did you go and for how long? “I was in New York, for a week.”
- How many other students out of the country were selected? “50 of us from the US and Canada were selected to come. Most of them were already established professional puppeteers. I was one of two performers under the age of 20.”
- What did you do while there? “We got to use REAL Muppets and do puppetry exercises. We did improv. We performed monologues and worked in group scenes.”
- What is the name of your puppet company? “Squiggle Puppet Productions.”
- What are your future plans after KU? “I’m moving to New York (The puppetry headquarters of the United States) to try making a living as a dolly wiggler. Hopefully you’ll see me on Sesame Street one day.”





## Before and After the Show...



- What can you use in your own classroom to create your own original puppets? Can a rolling chair with rulers for arms and a calculator for a face become a robot puppet? Can you create a puppet out of paper, socks, or even your own hand?
- Can you think of ways you can reduce the amount of trash you create as a class? Do you recycle? Why or why not is this important to do?
- How were the puppets used during the show? How was magic used in the story?
- How did the characters change throughout the play?
- What do you think happens after the play ends? Can you write a second act to this play in which you continue the story? If you were to write a letter to one of the characters, what would you say?
- Why is it important that the king finds someone to love him for who he is?
- What other main themes or ideas did the play make you think about?
- If you could ask the actors, backstage crew or designers a question, what would you want to find out?