BELLS & MOTLEY
Olden Music, Dance, & Storytelling

Participatory Musical Theater Performance, with Workshop Options

Get Creative, Get Expressive

- ***Our Newest Sing-along, Play-along, Dance-along Operetta for young audiences***

"THE ANT & THE GRASSHOPPER, AESOP'S FABLED FIDDLER"

PERFORMANCE:

Bells & Motley's newest musical storytelling performance piece is also their oldest, a veritable classic from Ancient Greece. We all understand the importance of the tale, about how our life's pressing labors hang in a balance with life's artistry and expression, in wonderous colors and sounds. In our telling, we are confident that all will appreciate the carefully drawn moral concerning the importance of *both* work & play.

As we weave the tale through Ant and Grasshopper's year in four episodes, each scene begins with the appropriate movement of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" evocatively performed by the artists on *harp*, *nyckelharpa* (a silvery- sounding Medieval keyed fiddle), *tromba marina*, and winds. The action and mystique of the tale are further highlighted by the audiences' sound contributions on medieval fiddles (researched and built by the artists themselves), percussion, and dancing. At the end of our maiden performance of this show, a young fellow excitedly asked: "where will we all be performing this next?"

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE - EXPLORATORY EXPRESSIONS

THE GRASSHOPPER'S FIDDLER TROUPE
The artists begin with an upclose interactive demonstration of the concept of using a stick strung with horse hair to vibrate gut strings on all manner of fiddles, from small medieval fiddles with carved dragon heads, to that 6 foot tromba marina (think 6 ft. tall bowed dulcimer), authentic replicas built in the artists' instrument making workshop. Children eagerly will try their own hand at "bowing," and learn to play together a fanciful, rhythmically humming part for the performance.

THE ANT'S PERCUSSION TROUPE
All manner of small percussion instruments are distributed to audience members, who accompany artists & fiddlers in a lively dance rhythm, as collaborative storytellers.

BUTTERFLY DANCERS
Who can resist this wonderful orchestra's dance music? Not the team of children who are taught a graceful dance, to become our Butterflies in the performance!

And now, Dear Audience, Places! And let the story begin as we sing and play together the song of El Grillo, the Cricket!

Arts Disciplines

Historic /Traditional Storytelling, Music, Dance, Fine Arts, Traditional Instruments and Folkways

Audiences & Venues

Libraries, Concert & Performing Arts Series, Children's Storytelling Series, Art Museums, Art Camps, Elementary School settings; Family Performances

Helpful Information, Fees

- Performances range from $500- $600, depending on venue size; add travel if outside of Onondaga Co. Grants available for workshop options.
- Children seated on the floor up close to the performers creates an intimate, inclusive atmosphere that young children appreciate.
- This is a performance that benefits from natural acoustics, in keeping with the spirit of a "performance party."

Related Programs

- Musical instruments from Ancient History, how they work
- Hands-On Instrument making; Instruments for storytellers

"Do you believe in fables and child butterflies,
A harmonious Ant Queen and her rhythmic troupe of ants,
One childish grasshopper and his high-strung sidekicks?
A classical change of seasons and happy endings? *Believe!*

"We journeyed with Bells & Motley through their newest operetta 'The Ant and the Grasshopper' accompanied by their audience, the children of the Sherburne Public Library. The arists and children danced, fiddled, drummed and sang the fable, presented in four acts, to the familiar tunes of Vivaldi's *4 Seasons.* We learned not only to value the worth of each industrious ant and frolicking grasshopper, but that even in the library 'only in music can two or more voices speak at the same time, and actually enhance the sense of what is being said.' "The end of our summer reading program, graced by the music & voices of John and Sondra Bromka, could not have been happier. *Long live Bells & Motley!"*

Cathy Weinell, Children's Librarian
Sherburne Public Library

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