



Social Story:
The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Silly Hollow
by Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers of Bar Harbor, ME

About the Venue:

“The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Silly Hollow” (performed by Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers) is playing in our Downstairs Theater – that’s on the first floor, past Harlequin Hall, and around the corner to the right. The most the theater can seat is 150, but on our Sensory-Friendly Programming Days, we only offer 120 seats to allow for more wiggle room and personal space for those who could benefit from it. Helpful and friendly Center staff will greet you at the entrance and see you to your individual seat (we’ve got separate chairs in the Downstairs Theater, as opposed to the long bench-style seats in the Mainstage Theater).

Once inside the house (which is what we in the puppet biz call “the audience section”), you’ll notice that the lights are lower, and there will be some ambient, folksy, wordless music playing to set the tone for the puppet show. On Sensory-Friendly Programming Day, the house lights (the lights inside the audience section) will stay on during the show, to provide maximum comfort and reassurance for guests who may need to get up during the show. Please note: there is only one staircase in the Downstairs Theater – if you think you might need to get up during the show, you may wish to sit closer to that side staircase. There are two easily-available exits within the house: the door you came in through, and another door at the top of the theater on the same side.

As neat as the stage looks, please do not walk onto the stage! It’s tempting because it’s just so dang close, but we’ve got a lot of moving parts just beyond the curtain; for everyone’s safety, please stay off the stage.

The closest restrooms are back out the way you came, on the first floor, by the vending machines.

About the Show:

Before the show on Sensory-Friendly Programming Days, the performers will step out with a few puppets to model how the puppets work; this is intended to demystify the process, allowing everyone to enjoy the show secure in the knowledge that it’s all just pretend! On other visits to the Center, you might see this demonstration AFTER the show.

“The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Silly Hollow” is written and performed by Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers, who are visiting the Center for Puppetry Arts all the way from Bar Harbor, Maine! The show is a silly twist on the classic ghost story, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, by Washington Irving. Our hero, Ichabod, is a schoolteacher in a new town; the Headless is a ghost with a habit of scaring schoolteachers, but he’s lost his head! Ichabod falls in love with a local lady, teaches an unruly bunch of kids, and tries to fit in to Sleepy Hollow. He and Headless become friends, working together to scare away local bully Brom Bones.

The show utilizes two types of puppetry: a few scenes of shadow puppets, which are cast in red-orange light against the backdrop, and the majority of the show using hand-and-rod puppets (sometimes called “hand and mouth” puppets), like Kermit and Elmo. The puppets are designed in friendly, human caricature (Ichabod has a long nose, Mr. Van Tassel has a comically large moustache), and they are all about the same size. The largest puppet is a cyclops, who is really very silly and slow-moving; he is larger than Ichabod, but he is played for laughs.

Here's a picture of the puppeteers (Erik, Brian and Robin) with some of the puppets (Headless, Headless' horse sidekick, some loveable sheep and a bunny):



This show is fast-paced and generally energetic, and all the elements of the show work together to that end: the transitions between pieces feature music, there are lightning changes to allow for shadow puppetry, characters pop in and out of frame, sometimes quickly. There are a few scenes of menace, which are set up as part of other jokes (Ichabod is menaced by Brom Bones pretending to be Headless; Headless scares Brom Bones away while wearing a Jack-O-Lantern for a head). There are a ton of verbal and visual jokes, and the overall mood of the piece is fun and funny.

After the show, the performers will come out in front of the puppet stage and have a meet-and-greet with the audience! If you want to go meet Ichabod, Headless, Brom, or any of the other characters, you can do so after the show is over.

Don't forget to check out the Create-a-Puppet Workshop on the third floor—where you can make your very own Silly Cyclops Hand Puppet.

Enjoy your time at the Center! We're so very glad you're here.



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