

Rag & Bone

# The Cow Show



Study Guide

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# A Note to Teachers



This study guide offers some ideas for classroom work before and after your students see *The Cow Show*. It includes a synopsis of the show, the words to some of the songs, vocabulary words, discussion topics, a word search, how to make butter, and the original version of the Norse myth about the cow who created the world. There are also instructions on how to make a scrap wood puppet like the ones that are used for the cavemen in the show, and how to make shadow puppets. Feel free to photocopy any of this guide for use with your class.

We hope you will find this guide useful, and I hope it will add to your students' enjoyment of *The Cow Show*.

Yours truly,

*Kathy, John & Russell*

# The Company

Founded in 1978 by John Nolan and Kathy MacLellan, Rag & Bone's shows include *The Nightingale*, *A Promise is a Promise*, *The Story of Holly & Ivy*, *Felicity Falls*, *The Light Princess*, *Zoom at Sea*, *The Tempest*, *The Flying Canoe*, *The Last Polar Bears*, *Owl at Home* and *The Doll's House*. Rag & Bone has been awarded a Citation of Excellence in the Art of Puppetry from UNIMA-USA, the international puppetry association.

Kathy MacLellan is an award winning writer, performer and puppet-maker. Kathy has written over fifty television scripts, including episodes of *Under the Umbrella Tree*, *Theodore Tugboat*, and *Mr. Dressup*.

Actor, puppeteer, and designer John Nolan has built sets, props and puppets for stage and television, and has appeared on television and in many theatres, including GCTC, The National Arts Centre, Opera Lyra, Odyssey Theatre and Skeleton Key Theatre. He played Jackson on YTV's *Crazy Quilt*.

Kathy & John have also taught many puppet-making and drama workshops in schools across Ontario.

In the Ottawa area we are accompanied by musician Russell Levia. Russell is a popular Ottawa musician who appears frequently in clubs, folk festivals, and daycare centres. He has been working with Rag & Bone for 20 years.



*The Last Polar Bears*



*Felicity Falls*



*The Wind in the Willows*

# Synopsis



*The Cow Show* is a collection of songs and stories about cows—a moosical revue. It's also a history of the cow and her world.

## *A Norse Creation Myth*

The first scene is an adaptation of an ancient Norse creation myth. In the beginning was the cow, living alone on an empty plain that was covered with ice. Then the cow was hungry. She licked the ice, and it melted, revealing a world of colours. This is represented by the gradual unfolding of a huge, handmade quilt. Other animals join the cow: a bear, rabbits, a deer and a unicorn. These animals, and their babies, fill the forests. We have a birthday cake to celebrate, and the audience helps us to make a wish and blow out the candles.

## *Man Discovers the Cow*

The next scene is about the first people. A primitive person discovers the cow, and shares his happy discovery with another. Their joy is interrupted by a third person, a much rougher one, who steals the cow away for himself. Thus, the cow becomes domesticated. She gives us meat, milk, leather, help with farming, and, as a result, civilization. But she must go to market, like the calf in the famous Hebrew folk song, *Dona Dona*.



### *The Cow Sold Three Times*

The first Europeans to settle in Canada were from France, so the next story in the show is a French Canadian folk tale, *The Cow Sold Three Times*. Armand is a farmer, an habitant who, one day sells the same cow to three different people: M. Courtemanche, the notary, M. Hamburger, a lawyer, and M. Le Docteur, the Doctor.

By the time that they realize they've been tricked, Armand has already spent his money. He must go to court, to be judged by the seigneur. On the advice of his sneaky lawyer, his reply to every question is "Moo". The seigneur declares him insane, and not guilty. But when the lawyer wants his fee, Armand's answer to him is also "Moo".

### *Milking the Cow*

In the next scene, we milk the cow. At first it doesn't work, but a special nursery rhyme breaks the spell, and sure enough, real milk is produced. (How? Don't worry. The audience is bound to ask in the question period.)

### *The Future*

The last scene takes place in the future. The world is a modern city, covered with buildings and pavement. The ozone layer is gone, and the people are blind. There are no parks, no farms, no animals, no cows. And the people are running out of food.

A husband and wife team of scientists, Dr. Zaran and Dr. Boomboom, are working to save the world with a time machine. They hope to be able to go back in time and change the course of history. But they need a living animal to lead them through the time warp. Their children, Rendar and Diane, discover an ancient nursery rhyme, *Hey Diddle Diddle*, which summons a cow from the past.

The cow leads the people back in time, back to nature, back to where they can all see again. And there, a wonderful thing happens. The cow really does jump over the moon.

# Songs from the show



## *Hey Diddle Diddle*

Hey diddle diddle,  
The cat and the fiddle,  
The cow jumped over the moon.  
The little dog laughed to see such sport  
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

## *Cushy Cow Bonny*

Cushy cow bonny, let down thy milk  
And I will give thee a gown of silk.  
A gown of silk and a silver tee  
If thou wilt let down they milk to me.

## *The Cow Song*

I got a little story that I want you to hear  
I think you're going to like it but I want to make it clear  
It ain't about a monkey, nor a giraffe,  
It's all about cows—have you ever heard 'em laugh?

### CHORUS:

They go Moo  
Moo ma ma moo ma moo  
Moo ma ma moo ma moo  
Ma ma moo ma ma moo ma moo  
Yeah!

We got cows in the meadow and cows in the barn  
There are cows in the woods, they're all over the farm  
Down in the valley and up on the hill  
And early in the morning when the air is still—

### CHORUS

Now I know a lot of cows, and they got a lot of class.  
They stand around the meadow and they eat a lot of grass.  
You milk 'em in the morning and you milk 'em in the night  
And when they're feeling good, cause they're doing alright—

### CHORUS

# Vocabulary



Many of these are simple words, and in the show they are used in a way that makes their meaning clear, but some concepts may be new to some students.

myth	market
Vikings	swallow
melt	bound
court	slaughtered
quilt	time machine
giant	habitant
guilty	notary
create	seigneur
plain	pasture
important	sorrow
Norse	meadow
capture	civilization
udder	will
scan	<i>(as in testament)</i>
fate	defendant
ozone layer	bewitched
time warp	
ancients	



# Follow-up Topics



How are myths and legends different from fiction? From fact?

The first cows, six thousand years ago, were giants compared to today's cows. Find out about them. How big were they? What else was different about them? What made them become smaller?

Is Armand bad? Who is the most dishonest person in the story of *The Cow Sold Three Times*? How does the story work to make us want Armand to win? (Hint: what do the other three men do with the cow?)

The way that we got the milk out of the cow was a trick, but most of the effects in the show depend on using your imagination: the ice, the river, the world, the buildings,

the pavement, the scanner, the time machine. How did we show each of these things? What in your classroom could be used to show a mountain? A fierce animal? A happy day? Angels?

Read *Six Darn Cows* by Margaret Lawrence for a good story about life on a modern day Canadian farm.

Read the original version of the Norse creation myth, the story of Audhumbla. How is it different from our version? Why did we change it? How does the story relate to what we know about the ice age?

Make shadow puppets (see accompanying instructions) and dramatize the story of Audhumbla.

What was the seigneurial system? How did it work?

What do you think life will be like in the future? Your version could be very different from ours. What can we do to stop pollution, the depletion of the ozone layer, the encroachment of cities and civilization onto farm and park lands?

How do the children of the future save the world? What do we value that these people have forgotten? (Our history and culture.)

# Auðumbla

## A NORSE CREATION MYTH



In the beginning, there was nothing but a bottomless deep: the cold, dark night. Far away to the south was day, full of fire and brightness. Between these two stretched twilight; a great, empty plain.

Then warm winds came from the south. They blew over the plain, turning the ice into misty clouds. From these vapours came a living creature, the cow, *Auðumbla*. (“ð” is pronounced like “th”.) She lived all alone in the frosty, misty twilight.

Farther to the north, another being sprang from the mist: Ymir, the first giant. He came from the dark north to drink the cow’s milk. It was bitter, but it fed him.

The cow’s only food came from licking the hoarfrost and salt from the ice. While she was one day licking the salt stones, there appeared the golden hair of a man. Ymir was angry when he saw this hair but Auðumbla continued to lick the salt. On the second day, a whole head appeared, and on the third day, the entire form of a man was released from the ice. This new being was the majestic god, Buri.

Buri was the grandfather of the three gods, Odin, Vili and Ve. After the birth of these gods, Ymir vowed to destroy them. Instead, they slew him.

From Ymir’s body, the gods formed the world. His blood became the seas and lakes. His flesh became the earth. His bones became the mountains. His teeth, jaws and broken bones became the rocks and pebbles. From the skull of Ymir, the gods made the dome of the sky. This world of men was protected from the giants by a wall, made from the eyebrows of Ymir. It was called Midgard.

The gods then created Night and Day to gallop round the heavens in swift horse-drawn chariots. Two fair children, a girl called Sun and a boy called Moon were also sent at full speed across the sky; they had to escape the wolves that were constantly pursuing them.

The gods build Asgard, their own home, next. Only they could cross the beautiful bridge into Asgard. It was a rainbow that glowed with fire.

Finally the gods took two trees and from them created the first man and the first woman.

# Word Search



*Words about cows are hidden in the block below. See if you can find these:*

cow, calves, bull, barn, fence, grass, corn, hay, udder, milker, milk tank, truck, store, water, feed, butter, cheese, dairy, ice cream, refrigerator, cream, machine, cool, cud, farm, process, package and pasteurize.

T H M C U D C H E E S E H J P  
P A I A D R R B U T T E R G A  
C Y L L D H E U P R O C E S S  
O F K V E Q A L M I L K E R T  
W A T E R P M L L R S T O R E  
G R A S S A F M A C H I N E U  
T M N D I C E C R E A M R T R  
B L K A J K N P P H C L S R I  
A R R I H A C G T C O R N U Z  
R E F R I G E R A T O R G C E  
N J H Y F E E D J K L G H K K

# Make Butter



You need:

250 ML whipping cream,

rotary egg beater and bowl or a small jar with a lid,

wooden spoon,

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt.

Take cream out of refrigerator 10 minutes before using.

Pour cream into bowl or jar and beat or shake until lumps of butter appear (about 30 minutes).

Pour off the buttermilk that's left.

Work the rest of the milk out of the butter with spoon and wash butter in cold water.

Add salt. Store covered until used.

Hint: Cream will go through a stiff whipped stage before the butter appears.

# Make a Caveman

*A scrap wood puppet project*



You need:

wood for a handle (ruler, paint stir-stick, or moulding)

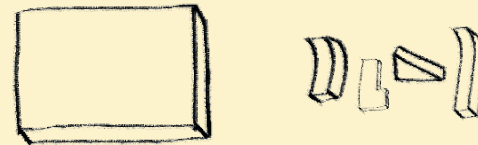
scraps of wood                      white glue

construction paper                scissors

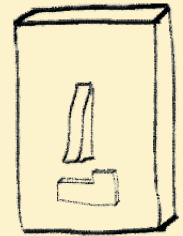
masking tape                        fabric

twist ties                              heavy duty stapler (optional)

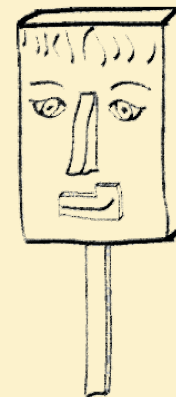
Play with two or three scraps of wood until you see a face.



Glue them together, making sure that the two sides you're gluing are both flat. Let dry.

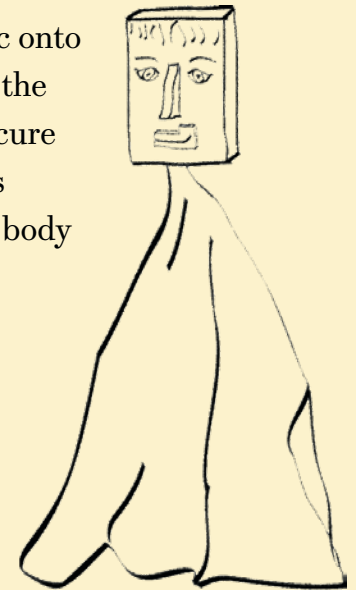


Meanwhile, make eyes, mouth, teeth etc. from construction paper, and glue on.

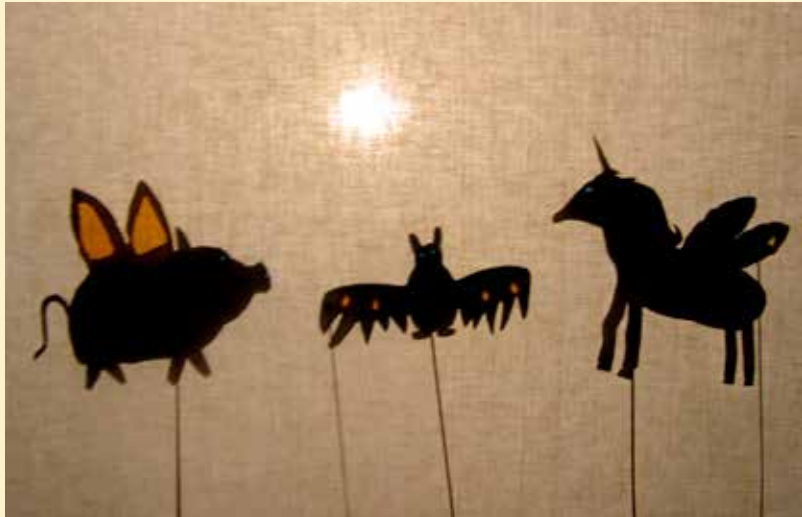


Glue handle at the back. Masking tape will hold it in place while the glue dries, or the teacher can staple to add security to the glue.

Glue a corner of fabric onto the top of the handle, the puppet's neck, and secure it with a twist tie. This becomes the puppet's body and clothing.



# Make a Puppet Show



## *Recipe for a puppet show*

Here's how to make some simple cardboard puppets. The same method can be used to make shadow puppets

Ingredients: Pencils, newsprint, cardboard, 2 straightened coat hangers per puppet (rods), 2 brass paper fasteners per puppet, fabric, glue, scissors, hole punch, wire cutters and pliers or vise grips. Crayons, and markers for cutout puppets, coloured acetate and tissue paper for shadow puppets.

Method: Draw a design on newsprint. The puppet should be about 6 inches tall. If you're making shadow puppets, make sure that you have a strong, definite outline, since that is what the audience will see: shadow puppets faces are usually best as profiles.

Choose one part (leg, arm, head, whatever) to be the moveable part. Cut out the design.



Cut off the moveable part. Trace both parts of the design onto cardboard.



When you trace your moveable part onto cardboard, add an extra bit to make an overlap. Hold the pieces together, lining up the main body and the moveable part so that the extra piece overlaps.

Punch through both halves with a hole punch.



Use a brass paper fastener to connect the two parts of the puppets.

Cut the hooks and twisted wire off the coat hangers and straighten the remaining pieces with pliers. These are the puppet's rods.

Now, bend a U shape on the end of one rod. This is the support rod. Tape this one onto the puppet's body.

Bend a small eye on the end of the other rod. Use a brass paper fastener to attach this second rod through the hole in the moveable part.

The ends of the rods can be bent into loops to provide handles. To make clothes or fur, glue fabric on the body.

Use a table top, cardboard box, or the floor for a stage. Sets and props can be made with cardboard and cardboard boxes.

If you're making shadow puppets, of course, you wouldn't colour them or dress them, but you can cut out holes in the cardboard and tape coloured acetate, tissue paper or gauzy fabric over these windows to create a stained glass effect.

An overhead is a good light source—you can even make scenery out of cardboard and acetate and put it directly on the overhead.

Have fun!



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