



# imaginary theatre company

2010–2011 SEASON

Major Sponsor:



MONSANTO FUND



Book, Music and Lyrics by Brian Hohlfeld  
Directed by Kat Singleton

## contents

- 2** *Chanticleer!*
- 3** Setting the Scene • Who's Who?
- 4** What's the Story?
- 5** Words to the Wise
- 6** Activity Sheets



# Imaginary theatre company



Book, Music and Lyrics by Brian Hohlfeld  
Directed by Kat Singleton

**Musical Director**

Neal Richardson

**Scenic Designer**

Scott Loebel

**Costume Designer**

Dorothy Marshall Englis

**Fight Choreographer**

Brian Peters

**Stage Manager**

Danny Maly

**Director of Education**

Marsha Coplon

## The Company

Henrietta and Fern / **Ann Ashby**

Chanticleer / **Lakeetha Blakeney**

Fox and Pig / **Jordan Reinwald**

Scooter and Phil / **Christian Vieira**



Financial assistance for this theatre has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis; and the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission.

# setting the scene



Things on the Feffenfer farm seem to be going well—Henrietta and the hens are laying their eggs while Scooter, a young male chicken, is learning how to become a rooster. All of this, of course, is because of one ridiculously talented and supremely awesome rooster—Chanticleer. You see, without his super-terrific crow, the sun would never come up and the farm would be plunged into complete and utter darkness . . .

Or would it?

When the Feffenfer's are away, a wily (and hungry!) Fox slips onto the farm to play. Posing as George Washington, he tricks Chanticleer and the hens in an attempt to eat a whole lot of chicken dinners.

Will Chanticleer prove his awesomeness by saving the day? Or will he find out that the sun still rises without him, and that he's not the rooster he thought he was?

# who's who?



According to our main man **CHANTICLEER** the rooster, the sun rises because of his majestic crow and the world revolves around his awesomeness.

**HENRIETTA** and the other **HENS** on the farm just aren't able to function without Chanticleer.

Can rooster-in-training **SCOOTER** ever fill Chanticleer's massive shoes?

Watch out! You never quite know where the **FOX** is lurking, and this guy is as slick as a, well, fox!

**PHIL** and **FERN FEFFENFER** own the barnyard. What will happen to the chickens while their farmer friends are away for a family reunion?

## Animal Attributes Answer Key

Owl	Wise
Lion	Pride
Coyote	Trickster
Cheetah	Speed
Dove	Peace
Dog	Loyal
Mule	Stubborn

## Who Said It? Answer Key

1. Fox
2. Chanticleer
3. Henrietta
4. Scooter
5. Chanticleer
6. Fox
7. Chanticleer



# what's the story?

It's just another day on the farm thanks to Chanticleer, the rooster of the barnyard. Because of his mighty crow, the sun has once again risen on the Feffenfer farm. Henrietta and the hens can lay their eggs, Scooter the cockerel can play, and everyone can admire and enjoy the pure wonder that is Chanticleer and his awe inspiring morning call to the sun.

But wait—who's that hiding just out of view? It's the Fox, and he is starving!

While Fox remains hidden, everyone is aflutter over Chanticleer. The girls, Scooter, heck, even Chanticleer himself can't believe how undeniably awesome he is. This dude is so cool, he even lets Scooter beat him in fencing (just this once, anyway) so the young rooster-in-training can impress Henrietta.

All the while, Fox is hatching a plan. Chicken dinner sounds really good to him right about now!

Meanwhile, the Feffenfers (you know, the farmers who run the barnyard) are getting ready to head out of town for a family reunion. Since they'll be gone, they ask Chanticleer (the best around the barnyard) to take care of things while they're away.

Seeing his opportunity, Fox springs into action. After tricking Chanticleer by posing as a concerned George Washington, Fox takes out his fork and knife. He's got Chanticleer right where he wants him, and it's time for a feast!

Just then, a little voice in Fox's head stops him. After an argument between his good side and his bad side, Fox comes up with an even better idea—eat all the chickens, not just Chanticleer! Fox hatches a new scheme, this time convincing Chanticleer that there's a crow crook on the loose, stealing the majestic crow of roosters everywhere.

The next morning, Chanticleer cannot crow. It seems a thief in the night has taken his talent from him. The whole barnyard is in despair—what will they do if the sun won't rise?

And just then, it does. But how? Chanticleer didn't crow! Confused and ashamed, Chanticleer flees the barnyard. It seems that this whole time his awesomeness was a fraud. He's not special or talented—the sun comes up by itself!

No sooner than Chanticleer leaves, Fox pounces onto the scene ready to eat. Can the girls hold him off? Can Scooter find Chanticleer and return in time? What will Chanticleer do without his majestic crow?

Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.

The activities in this guide address the following Missouri Show Me Standards and Illinois Learning Standards.

MO: CA1, 2, 3, 4; FA2, 3, 5; SC1, 2, 3  
IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 13, 16, 25, 27

## words to the wise



**fanfare:** a lot of fuss or commotion for a particular event or happening

**fetching:** attractive or appealing

**fowl:** a bird raised and kept for its eggs and meat; usually a chicken or a turkey

**perceptive:** particularly quick at catching on to something or noticing something

**without peer:** unequaled or unrivaled, to be without peer is to be superior

**pompous:** irritatingly grand or full of oneself

**cockerel:** a young male chicken

**en garde:** French for “on your guard,” what fencers usually call to begin a match

**parry:** to ward off or avoid a weapon or attack

**conceited:** overly proud of oneself

**unscrupulous:** not honest or fair, not knowing right from wrong

**emaciated:** particularly skinny and scrawny

**farce:** an absurd event

## read more about it



**Dahl, Roald. *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, Puffin Books, 1970.**

Want to know about animal life from the fox's point of view? Check out this book, which was recently made into a movie, and find out how the fox survives.

**Muldrow, Diane. *The Little Red Hen*, Random House Golden Books, 1954.**

The little red hen needs help with her chores, but none of her farm friends seem to be willing to lend a hand. Learn about the importance of teamwork in this favorite.

**White, E.B. *Charlotte's Web*, Harper Collins, 1952.**

Life on the farm can be a challenge for any animal, and Wilbur's life with his farm friends is a classic for all ages.

***Chicken Run*, 2000, Dreamworks Animated, 84 minutes, DVD.**

Here are some other chickens having a tough time living on a farm. This funny 2000 movie includes the voice talents of Mel Gibson as the cocky rooster, Rocky.

***Chicken Little*, 2006, Walt Disney, 81 minutes, DVD.**

These classic characters jump out of their storybook and into a modern town where Chicken Little finds that the sky is falling in a whole different way. With lots of music and lots of fun, this retelling is a must-see and stars Zach Braff, Joan Cusack and Garry Marshall.

# Face to Face: Chaucer

*Chanticleer!* is a pretty cool story, right? You bet it is! It's got funny characters, awesome fight scenes, and a message for all of us (hmmm . . . what do you think the message is?). It's fresh from the farm and exciting too; not like some of the other stories you've read—you know—some of the old and boring stuff.

Actually, *Chanticleer!* isn't as fresh as you'd think (but it's every bit as exciting!). The story has already been around for 700 years. That's right—700 years!

The story of our proud rooster actually comes from Geoffrey Chaucer and his book, *The Canterbury Tales*, written at the end of the 14th century. As you can probably guess, *The Canterbury Tales* is a collection of stories, 24 to be exact. But Chaucer didn't just take 24 stories and string them together into a long book. He actually threads the needle between stories by having characters in the book tell the stories to each other.

Did I lose you there? After all, aren't the characters in the book the characters in the stories? Not exactly. You see, *The Canterbury Tales* is actually a series of stories told by religious pilgrims on a journey to the Canterbury Cathedral. Everybody gets a turn—the Knight, the Physician and Cook just to name a few!

So whose tale is Chanticleer's? It's "The Nun's Priest's Tale" (told by the Nun's Priest, in case you're confused), and it's kind of a spin-off of the tale told right before it, "The Monk's Tale." In the original story, the rooster's name is actually spelled Chauntecleer, because Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *The Canterbury Tales* in Middle English (the way the English language was



spoken and written between the 11th and 15th centuries).

Even cooler, most of the stories are like the tale of bold Chauntecleer—written in poetic verse (it's rhythm and rhyme time, ladies and gentlemen!). In "The Nun's Priest's Tale," animals can walk, talk and act like human beings. There is, of course, our friend Chauntecleer with his proud crow, his wife Pertelote (the best looking hen around), and the wily fox. Just like in the play, the fox is out to get some dinner and Chauntecleer thinks he's the center of the universe.

In Chaucer's version, Chauntecleer dreams that the fox is coming to get him, though Pertelote assures him it was just a bad dream (and maybe some indigestion). The next day, Chauntecleer meets the fox, and just like in the play, the fox flatters the rooster and tricks him into crowing. Unlike the play, however, the fox snaps his jaws down on Chauntecleer and drags him off into the woods.

As the other farm animals give chase, the fox's own pride gets in his way. He stops to let them know they'll never catch him, they might as well just give up. Chauntecleer, no longer locked in the fox's jaws, seizes the opportunity and flies up a tree. Though the fox attempts to woo the rooster down, it seems Chauntecleer has learned his lesson.

Speaking of which—did you know that each of the stories in *The Canterbury Tales* had a moral or lesson? With all this flattery and pride running around, what do you think is the lesson of this story?

# Write On!

Brian Holfeld's play *Chanticleer!* is an adaptation of one of Geoffrey Chaucer's stories from *The Canterbury Tales*, that is—the play takes an older story and tells it in its own way. Sometimes an adaptation remains very true to a story, keeping original characters and action, while other times an adaptation is simply inspired by the prior story and springs forward from where it ends.

Now it's your turn to write an adaptation. Think of a movie or book you like and write your own version. It can be true to the original with the characters and actions, or it can be something new and exciting based on the story!

What's the name of the original story?

---

What pieces, characters or actions will you take from the original?

---

---

---

Now write a short version of your adaptation:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

(Have more to write? Continue your adaptation on your own paper.)



# Get the Facts: Chickens

Think you know all there is to know about chickens? Bet you didn't know that the chicken is the closet living relative of the Tyrannosaurus Rex (think about that before you call someone a chicken!). Don't be like Chanticleer—check out the facts before you strut your stuff!

The chicken (scientific name *Gallus gallus domesticus*) is the most plentiful bird in the entire world, with over 150 varieties numbering over 24 billion worldwide. They've been kept on farms and raised for meat and eggs for at least 10,000 years, though they weren't always known as barnyard animals. All chickens can be traced back to the Red Junglefowl, a wild bird that lives primarily in northeast India, southern China, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia.

These birds come in a variety of colors, from whites and greys to more exotic reds and multi-colored patterns. And though they are birds, chickens aren't known for their ability to fly. While some of the lighter chickens may partake in short flight, the longest recorded chicken flight lasted only 13 seconds.

Whether they're on a farm or not, chickens live in flocks. And just like in the play, these flocks have a pecking order, or social order in which dominant individuals have priority over the others. At the top is the dominant rooster (that's the male), followed by hens (the females, who have their own mini-pecking order) and then the younger birds (known as chicks). If a

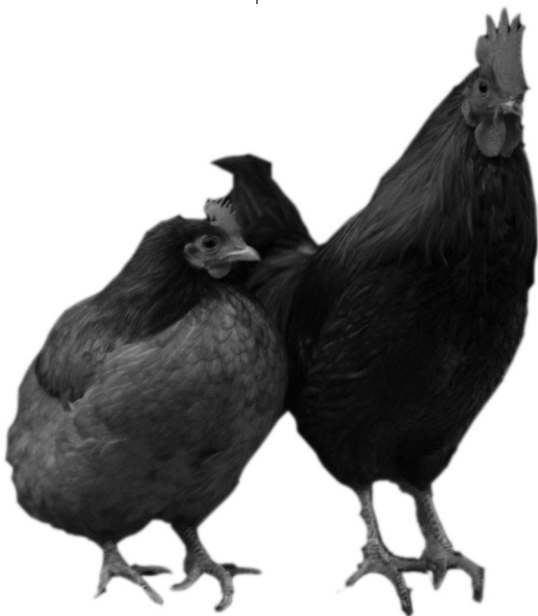
flock happens not to have a rooster, then a hen will step up and take the dominant roll and crow for the flock.

As they are at the top of the pecking order, roosters are responsible for a lot in the day-to-day flock duties. A rooster not only crows every morning with the sunrise, but also is responsible for fertilizing eggs and defending the flock. Watch out for the spurs a rooster has on the back end of his feet—that's what he uses to defend himself and the flock!

Hens basically have one job, and boy do they do it well—laying eggs. It takes a hen around 24 hours to lay an egg, and a truly dedicated hen can produce over 300 eggs a year. And they don't need roosters to lay the eggs, they only need roosters for fertilized eggs (that is, if they want the eggs to hatch chicks).

Though we tend to think of chickens as pecking at the ground for the grains we feed them, they are actually omnivores (or eaters of both plants and meat). With all that pecking around, a chicken may hope to find not only grains or plants, but insects or even small rodents.

And why does the rooster crow? Actually, each sound a chicken makes has a pointed purpose. Whether it's alerting others to danger or calling after a chick, every cluck and crow means something different. It's generally thought that a rooster's crow in the morning is a territorial call out to other roosters, letting them know he's the top dog.





# Animal Attributes

While animals can't really talk and act like humans, we often assign them human traits based upon how we think an animal acts. This happens so frequently, in fact, that there are often human attributes commonly associated with particular animals. Listed below are a series of animals and a series of attributes. Can you match the traits with the animal you think it best describes or represents?

## ANIMAL:

OWL

LION

COYOTE

CHEETAH

DOVE

DOG

MULE

## ATTRIBUTE:

TRICKSTER

PEACE

SPEED

NOBLE

STUBBORN

WISE

LOYAL

What's your favorite animal?

---

What are three traits that make it your favorite?

---

---

---

---



# Believe It or Not

It seems kind of silly for Chanticleer to think the sun rises because he crows, doesn't it? After all, everybody knows the sun rises and sets all on its own, right? Only a crazy chicken would believe something like that! Before we're too hard on Chanticleer, maybe we should take a look at some of the things people believed before we discovered otherwise!

## Falling Off the Edge of the World

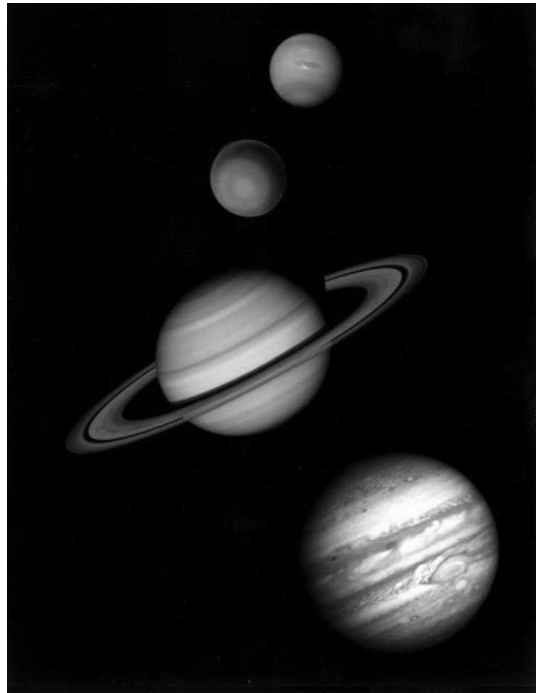
Before Christopher Columbus and the 15th century, everybody thought the world was flat. And why not—it looks perfectly flat when you're standing on it, doesn't it? When Columbus set out in 1492 he intended to prove just the opposite, however—that the world was round. And while he failed to reach India and prove that the world was round, he forever changed the world with his discovery of America and the fact that he didn't just fall off the edge of a flat Earth!

## The Center of the Universe

From nearly the beginning of time, people believed that the Earth (and themselves, very much like Chanticleer) was the center of the universe. It wasn't until the 16th century that Nicolaus Copernicus proposed that the sun was the center of our solar system, not the Earth. While he was harshly ridiculed by some for his new idea, Copernicus stuck to his guns, and boy was he ever right!

## What Goes Up ...

The ancient world, until about the time of the Renaissance, was a world dominated by a mystical and magic sense of thought. That is, everything that happened either happened because of the gods or some other inexplicable and magical reasoning. It's no surprise, then, that Sir Isaac Newton shook things up when he told people about his law of gravity. Prior to Newton, there was little to no understanding of why and how things fell or how planets orbited in space. Newton said it best when he described gravity—"What goes up must come down."



## Germ Theory

In keeping with the less-scientific mindset of earlier times, illness and disease have been highly misunderstood throughout history. Various theories have attempted to explain sickness—from displeasing the gods (and thus one is stricken) to spontaneous generation (sickness simply springs up out of nowhere). And while germ theory (the notion that germs cause sickness) has been steadily evolving since 1025, it wasn't until the 19th century that scientist Robert Koch would really get it to catch on. Koch's work is still used today to help verify what diseases are caused by.

# Who Said It?

Think you know Chanticleer? Below are passages from the play. Can you pick out who said them and then tell what was happening at that moment in the story? Bet you can't! (Hint: Some characters may be used more than once, some may not!)

1. "You see, I've been traveling around the countryside, chopping down cherry trees and what not. I'd heard there were foxes around. And I wanted to warn you."

---

2. "Haven't you heard? There's a very angry rooster going around the countryside cutting the tails off foxes!"

---

3. "Now if you could wait a few days ... fatten us up ... then we'd be nice and plump for you. Think how much better those meals would be ... when we're bigger ... juicier ... fatter!"

---

4. "Oh, please, Chanticleer. You've got to crow. If you don't, the sun won't come up and the hens won't lay their eggs and it will rain for 40 days and 40 nights and we'll be plunged into darkness and—"

---

5. "Every bird in the barnyard was put here for a special reason. I'm lucky. I know that my purpose in life is to make the sun come up. I'm good at it, and I enjoy it immensely."

---

6. "You might say that I'm deceitful, I would have to say that's true  
I'm just naturally scheming, unscrupulous; Immoral, shifty, fraudulent too."

---

7. "I'm so fond of myself  
And why shouldn't I be?  
I'm the finest bird I know  
And I fall in love all over again  
Every time I hear me crow."

---



# A-maze-ing

Help Chanticleer find his way back to Henrietta and his hen friends.

