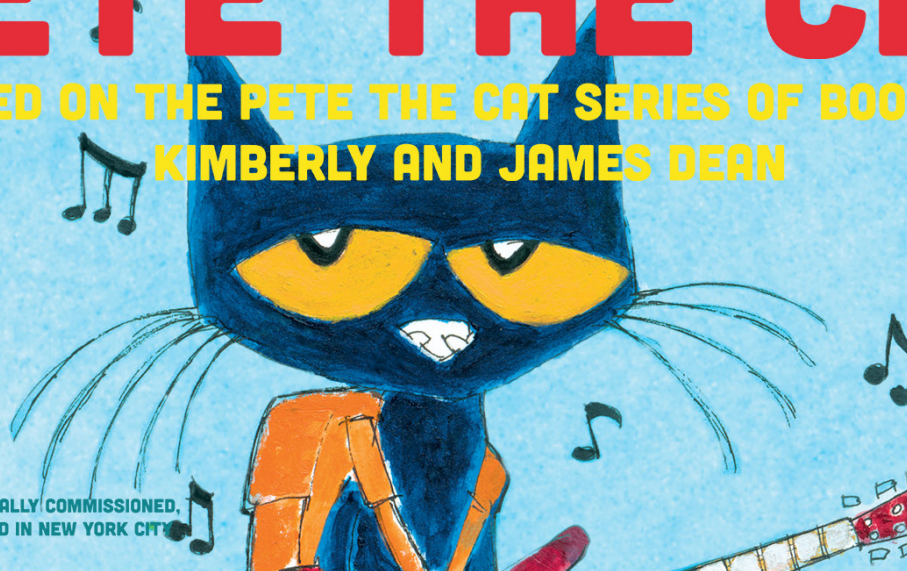


MUSIC BY WILL ARONSON

BOOK & LYRICS BY SARAH HAMMOND

PETE THE CAT

BASED ON THE PETE THE CAT SERIES OF BOOKS BY
KIMBERLY AND JAMES DEAN



PETE THE CAT WAS ORIGINALLY COMMISSIONED,
DEVELOPED, AND PRODUCED IN NEW YORK CITY
BY THEATERWORKSUSA

DEC 6 *thru* DEC 30

salt lake
acting
company

Final Report



Students from Edison, Riley and Vista Elementary Schools

SLAC's 11th Annual Professional Children's Production

PETE THE CAT

December 6-30, 2019

When Pete the Cat gets caught jamming after bedtime, the cat-catcher sends him to live with the Biddle family to learn his manners. But the minute he walks in the door, he gets the whole family rocking- except for young Jimmy Biddle, the most organized second grader on planet Earth. When Jimmy draws a blank in art class, Pete turns out to be the perfect pal to help him out. Together, they set out on a mission to help Jimmy conquer second grade art and learn a little something new about inspiration along the way.

Since 2009, SLAC has dedicated its holiday season to bringing professional theatre to Utah families and schoolchildren, particularly to K-2nd grade Title I students—historically the most under-served demographic in Utah in terms of access to arts education through field trip opportunities. Each year, SLAC hosts several thousand local children during exclusive student matinees.

Now entering its second decade, SLAC's Title I Arts Education Program invites over 2,000 underserved K-2 students from Title I schools to attend our annual children's show free of charge. Each season, we select a play or musical adapted from a well-loved book.



PETE THE CAT, a new musical based on the book series by James and Kimberly Dean, adapted for the stage by Sarah Hammond and Will Aronson.

Cast and Creative Team

Pete the Cat: **Jacob Weitlauf**
Jimmy Biddle: **Joseph Paul Branca**
Mom/Mrs. Creech/Grumpy Toad:
Shelby Andersen
Dad/Barnaby/Gus the Platypus: **Trayven Call**
Olive Biddle: **Cameron Aragon**
Director/Choreographer/Music Director:
Penelope Caywood
Assistant Director, University Professional
Theatre Program: **Sydney Stephan**
Set Design: **Gage Williams**
Costume Design: **Dennis Hassan**
Light Design: **Jesse Portillo**
Prop Design: **Justin Ivie**
Stage Manager: **Jennie Sant**
Rehearsal Pianist: **Nicholas Maughan**
Executive Artistic Director: **Cynthia Fleming**



Title I Arts Education Program

In its 11th year, SLAC's Title I Arts Education Program served over 2,000 children from 16 Title I schools (where 85% of students come from low-income homes) in Salt Lake City and Granite School Districts. These students and their teachers were able to see PETE THE CAT free of charge, offering many of them their first ever theatrical experience.



This program plays a vital role in providing a well-rounded education to Utah students. Every children's play that SLAC produces is based on a literary work. SLAC creates a study guide to accompany each play, which is distributed to every class that attends the production through the Title I Arts Education Program. The guide includes learning activities to be completed before and after the children see the play, reinforcing the connection between literacy and the arts.

Upon arrival, the students are led in warm-up activities and following the play, they take part in a Q & A with the actors, during which the students have the opportunity to learn about the actors, costumes, props, lights, sound and the set.

16 participating Title I Schools from Salt Lake City and Granite School Districts: Backman, Bennion, Edison, Escalante, Franklin, Jackling, Liberty, Lincoln, Mountain View, Newman, North Star, Riley, Rose Park, South Kearns, Washington, and Whittier Elementary Schools.

Title I Teacher Feedback

"For most of the children it was their first exposure to live theatre. They were given the opportunity to see their favorite book characters come to life. They were able to learn about how a play is made, how much work is put into making a play, the different community helpers who help with the play and be entertained by very talented performers. Now, they want to read and write all about Pete the Cat. Their **comprehension has dramatically improved** and many of their side conversations are centered around Pete the Cat and their experience at the play."

-Dona Schlappi | 1st grade, Jackling Elementary

"This year, my class got to see a favorite character, Pete the Cat, learn how to be a family pet. They saw characters interact and struggle and work together to find a solution. When we returned to school, even students that don't normally show a high level of engagement were able to recall the components of the story."

- Hillary Madrigal | 1st grade, Whittier Elementary

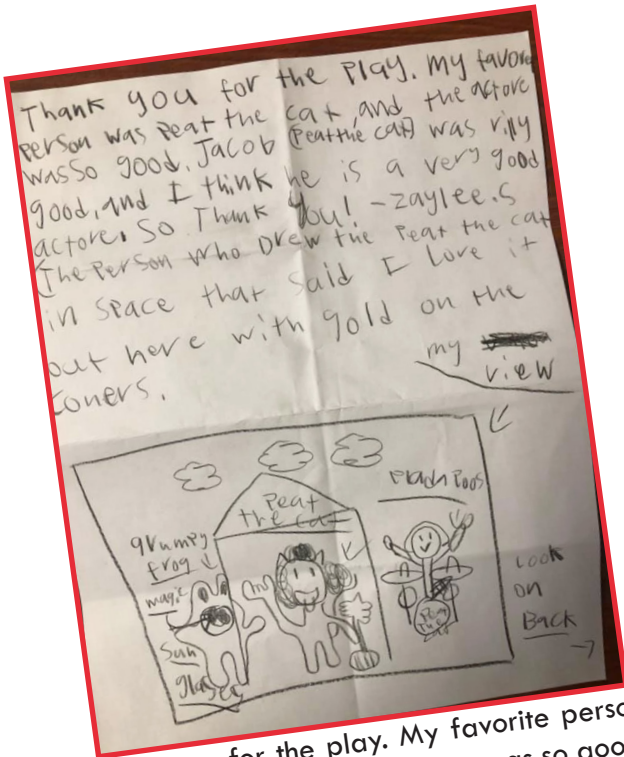
"I loved that when we all walked in, someone greeted each child. This was a delightful and exciting experience for my students from beginning to end."

- Jamie Pritchard | Kindergarten, Lincoln Elementary

"One of my students said that the Pete the Cat play taught him this lesson: 'If you make a mistake... just stay cool.' Even my most challenging student grabbed as many Pete the Cat books as he could when we got back to school! SLAC's productions get more amazing every year."

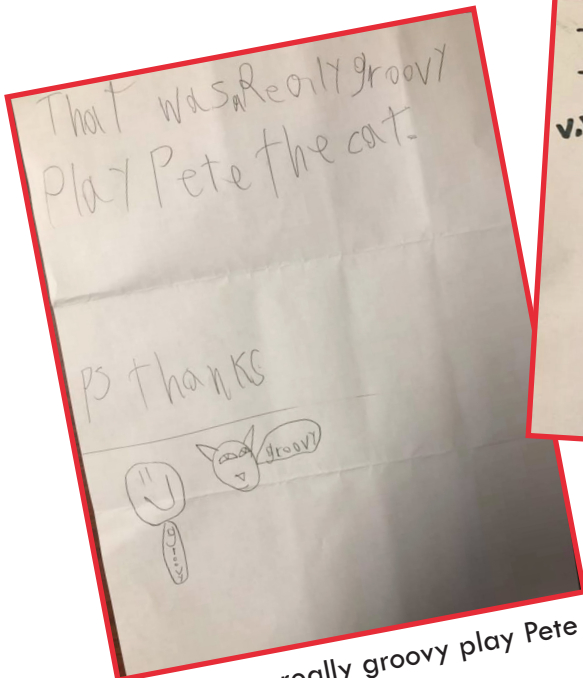
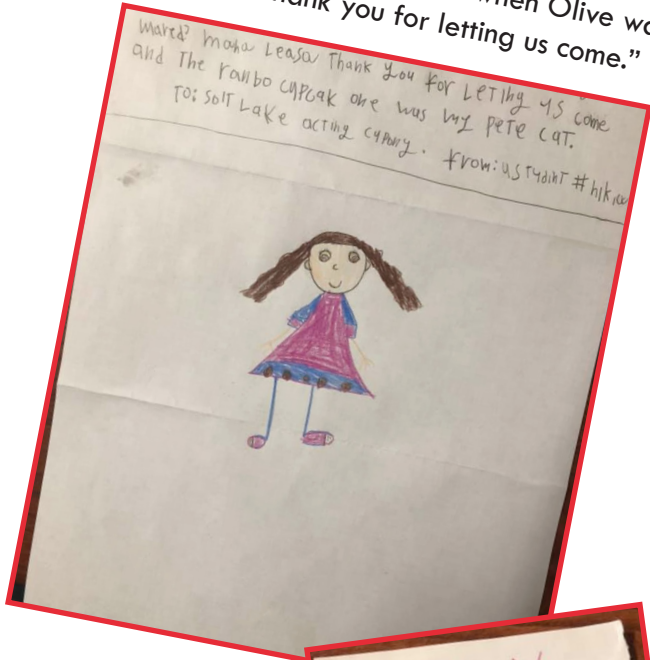
- Krista Dugmore | Kindergarten, Washington Elementary

Thank You Notes from Washington Elementary Students

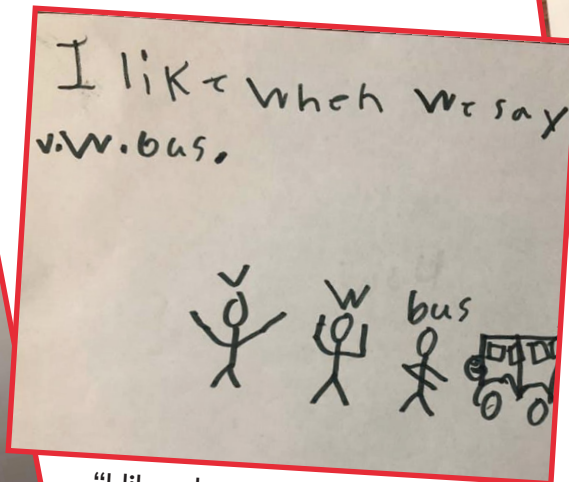


"Thank you for the play. My favorite person was Pete the Cat, and the actor was so good. Jacob (Pete the Cat) was really good, and I think he is a very good actor. So thank you!"

"Hello I loved your play/musical and my fav part was when the bubbles came out and when Olive wanted to get married. Thank you for letting us come."



"That was a really groovy play Pete The Cat. P.S. Thanks."



"I like when we say V.W. bus."



"Thank you. I am happy."

Community Engagement & Events



Neighborhood House



Sugarhouse Boys & Girls Club



Rose Creek Elementary School



Donations for Washington Elementary in SLAC's lobby

This rockstar cast performed an abridged version of the play all over Salt Lake County at four schools, three shelters, one library, a music preschool, the Burn Center at the U, and, of course, the one and only King's English bookshop, one of our beloved community partners.

Outreach locations: Salt Lake City Public Library, St Vincent De Paul Parish School, Waterford School, Kindermusik: Song of the Heart, Wasatch Elementary, Rose Creek Elementary, The King's English Bookshop, YWCA Utah, Sugarhouse Boys and Girls Club, Neighborhood House, and the University of Utah Burn Center.

SLAC partnered with neighboring Title I school Washington Elementary, collecting donations from our generous audience on behalf of the school and decorating our lobby with nearly 100 student made drawings of Pete the Cat.



Separately, students at the Visual Art Institute (ages 5-17) created work based on PETE THE CAT which we displayed in our Green Room Gallery.

We collected cat food and cat treats in partnership with Salt Lake County Animal Services.



The King's English Bookshop provided PETE THE CAT books for a pop-up bookstore in our lobby.

Reviews & Coverage



“a children’s theater masterpiece” -Nate Brown | Front Row Reviewers

“I have two words to describe “Pete the Cat” at Salt Lake Acting Company: purr joy.” -Daisy Blake | Gephardt Daily

“The show is just as entertaining for parents and adults as it is for children in the 3-8 age group. The comedic timing is spot on and the collective quality of the performances is as solid as in any other first-rate theatrical production.” -Darby Turnbow | Utah Theatre Bloggers

“(SLAC) is giving the musical version of Pete the Cat a worthy Utah premiere in a superb production that pops with a vibrant children’s book feel and rollicking animated performances by its cast. Penelope Caywood’s direction achieves all of the right notes in SLAC’s 11th annual children’s production.” -Les Roka | The Utah Review

“Salt Lake Acting Co.’s now-annual kid-friendly holiday productions provide a rare place for children to experience age-appropriate material in a real professional theater setting.” -Scott Renshaw | City Weekly

Members of the cast were interviewed on ABC4, PBS Utah, Culture Bites Podcast, and KRCL’s RadioActive. Links to the clips are available at saltlakeactingcompany.org.

Production Summary

Paid Audience: 4,945

Paid Performances: 29

Title I Audience: 2,108

Title I Performances: 10

Title I House Capacity: 102%

Discounted School Audience: 461

Discounted School Performances: 3

Total Community Events Audience: 1,055

Total Audience: 8,569



Opening Night Party



SLAC celebrated opening night by inviting patrons to the theatre early to enjoy cookies and milk and spend some time with the cast.

Before the show, the entire audience learned a small section of a musical number from the play so they could later help the actors sing and dance during the performance!

Sponsors & Supporters

Thanks to the generosity of the following local businesses and foundations,
2,108 Title I students attended PETE THE CAT.

We are deeply grateful for their support!

BW Bastian Foundation

Henry W. & Leslie M. Eskuche Foundation

Richard K and Shirley S Hemingway Foundation

Mark Miller Subaru

Rocky Mountain Power Foundation

Salt Lake City Arts Council

Utah Division of Arts and Museums

US Bank Foundation

Salt Lake County Zoo Arts and Parks Program

Thank you for your support!

