



Study Buddy[®]



YOUR ALIEN

An ArtsPower musical based on the book by Tammi Sauer
with illustrations by Goro Fujita.

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ArtsPower National Touring Theatre

Gary W. Blackman
Mark A. Blackman
Executive Producers

YOUR ALIEN

Based on the book by
Tammi Sauer and illustrated by
Goro Fujita

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Script by Greg Gunning
Music by Richard DeRosa
Lyrics by Greg Gunning

Costumes Design and Construction by
Dillon May

Set illustrations by
Dan Helzer/Blitz Design

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What Happens in *YOUR ALIEN*?

(From the book “Your Alien”) *One day, you’ll be looking out your window when something wonderful comes your way... and you will want to keep him.*

ArtsPower’s out-of-this-world musical tells the amazing story of George, a young boy who loves everything about space! He looks out his window every night dreaming of becoming an astronaut and meeting aliens from other planets. One night, he hears a loud crashing sound in his backyard. A few minutes later, a young alien boy walks into George’s room and exclaims, “Meep!” George and the alien boy, whom he will call Meep, become good friends. They play together and even go to school together.

As the day passes, George realizes that Meep is not happy. He soon discovers that Meep is homesick and misses his family very much. Although George does not want to see his new friend leave, he knows that Meep belongs with his family.

As night approaches, George figures out a plan that he hopes will bring Meep’s space ship back to earth to bring him home. Will George’s plan work?

Teacher Information

Thank you for using this Study Buddy! It has been written and designed to help you and your students prepare for, enjoy, and discuss ArtsPower’s musical play, ***YOUR ALIEN***, before and after the performance. We hope you will reproduce and distribute the appropriate pages of this Study Buddy to your students.



How to Enjoy a Live Performance

In order to be a good audience member, remember to:

- Listen quietly.
- Pay attention to the things the actors say and do — some things might make you happy and some might be funny. Feel free to laugh at things you think are funny!
- Do not talk during the performance, unless you are requested to do so by the actors onstage.
- If you enjoy the play, you can applaud after the songs and at the end.



What Is a Musical?

A **musical** is a story told through words that are spoken and songs that are sung by live actors onstage. The spoken words are called **lines**. The words that are sung are called **lyrics**. The music you hear that was composed just for this show is called the **soundtrack**. For this performance, the soundtrack has been recorded onto an iPad which is operated by the stage manager.

The musical **YOUR ALIEN** features four professional actors who play some of the characters found in the book. The actors wear **costumes** and perform in front of their **set**.

Because reading a book is different than seeing a live performance on stage, the **playwright**, or the person who writes the lines that the actors speak, must change parts of the story or create new characters that are not in the book. In other words, the playwright **adapts** the book into a musical play, or changes parts of it to turn the words on the page into a live performance.

ArtsPower National Touring Theatre

ArtsPower is a theatre company that creates musical and dramatic theatre productions based on books for young readers and tours them for young and family audiences throughout the United States and Canada. ArtsPower tours nine different productions each year.

The four actors and one stage manager:

- pack the set, costumes, and sound equipment in their van
- set up and break down the show
- take care of costumes and props (objects that are handled by the actors)
- stay in hotels when they travel
- sometimes present up to 9 performances in a week



LEARNING ACTIVITY

DISCUSS!

- ➔ Why is ArtsPower called a *national* touring theatre?
- ➔ If you were an actor, do you think you would like to travel to different places to perform?
- ➔ Do you think audiences from different parts of the country respond to the performance in the same or different ways? If so, why? (*Actually, audiences respond very positively to our performances, regardless of where they live!*)



Creating Theatre

Creating a musical theatre production like **YOUR ALIEN** takes a lot of time and creative energy from a group of people. Many people work together to make the changes and additions it takes to turn the book into an hour-long musical.

- The **playwright** writes lines the actors speak.
- The **lyricist** writes the words to the songs the actors sing.
- The **designers** create sets, costumes, and lighting.
- The **stage manager** oversees all backstage elements of a show.
- The **producers** raise the money to create and manage all aspects of the production and its tour throughout the U.S. and Canada.
- The **composer** writes the music.
- The **actors** perform the show.
- The **director** rehearses the actors.

The Creative Team for **YOUR ALIEN**



GREG GUNNING (Playwright, Lyricist, and Director) is ArtsPower’s Artistic Director and has written or co-written the scripts to all of ArtsPower’s theatre productions. Greg’s script for ArtsPower’s *Lily’s Crossing*, based on the Newbery Honor book by Patricia Reilly Giff, is included in Penguin Books’ “The Signet Book of Short Plays.” Greg is graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.



TAMMI SAUER (Author) graduated from Kansas State University with a B.S. in Elementary Education. She is currently a full-time picture book author. In addition to writing, Tammi loves to read, ski, spend time with her family and friends, go to movies, and eat out as often as possible. She lives in Edmond, Oklahoma with her husband Ron and their two children, Julia and Mason. www.tammisauer.com



RICHARD DEROSA (Composer and Orchestrator) is currently the Director of Jazz Composition and Arranging at the University of North Texas. His compositions and arrangements have been heard on stages and in venues around the world and on TV. He received a 2016 Grammy nomination for “Best Instrumental Composition.” Richard has composed and orchestrated the scores to all but three ArtsPower productions. jazz.unt.edu/derosa



GARY (above) and MARK BLACKMAN (Producers & ArtsPower’s Founding Co-Directors) founded ArtsPower in 1985. The Blackmans are graduates of Columbia College, Columbia University and Florida State University’s College of Music. In their former lives as musicians, each was named as an “Outstanding Jazz Soloist” in Downbeat magazine’s Student Recording Awards. In their present lives, Gary serves as ArtsPower’s Managing Director while Mark is Director of Development and Marketing. Gary served as a board member on the New Jersey State Council on the Arts from 2014-2018.



KAREN BIBBO (Company and Production Manager) graduated from Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications with a major in public relations and a minor in marketing and psychology. As Company and Production Manager, Karen is responsible for all operational aspects of ArtsPower’s productions and their tours.



DILLON MAY (Costume Design and Construction) is glad to be returning to ArtsPower after appearing as an actor in three ArtsPower productions. He is a graduate of AMDA New York. He wishes to thank his friends and family, but especially M+D and MC.



All About Aliens

Are There Really Aliens?

The scientific word for “aliens” is **extraterrestrials**. According to the [National Radio Astronomy Observatory](#) in Charlottesville, Virginia, there has never been real proof that extraterrestrials exist. That means that ArtsPower’s musical **YOUR ALIEN** is just a story. But, it is fun to think about the possibility that aliens, especially friendly ones, actually exist!



LEARNING ACTIVITY

DISCUSS! (after the performance)

1. Do you remember the name of the alien in the show? (*Meep*)
2. Did George’s parents really know he wanted to bring his new friend to school with him? (*No. They were too busy to notice what George was asking.*)
3. Why did Meep get homesick? (*He missed his family.*)
4. How would you treat an alien if you happened to meet one?
5. Do you think you could be friends with an alien?
6. How would you feel if you were the alien in this story?

To Order the Book

Click [HERE](#) to order the book, “Your Alien.”





DRAW YOUR OWN ALIEN

Today, I saw the musical *YOUR ALIEN* produced by ArtsPower National Touring Theatre (www.artspower.org).
Here is my own drawing of what an alien might look like.



Let Us Know What You Think!

After you see *YOUR ALIEN*, use the space below to write to us OR send us a picture showing your favorite part of the performance. Please send them to **ArtsPower, 9 Sand Park Road, Suite 6, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.**

YOUR SCHOOL _____

SCHOOL'S CITY AND STATE _____

DATE _____

Dear ArtsPower,

I saw *YOUR ALIEN* at: _____.

The best part of the performance was: _____

Here's why _____

If I were an alien far away from home, the things I would miss the most would be:

FROM: _____