

theatreworks USA

# Skippyjon Jones



Skippyjon Jones is a little kitten with big ears and even bigger dreams! Sometimes he pretends to be a bird, sometimes he pretends to be a llama, and sometimes he pretends to be a whale... Anything BUT a Siamese cat!

His Mama sends him to his room so that he can think about behaving like the cat he really is. While bouncing on his big boy bed, Skippyjon's wild imagination takes over again as he catches his reflection in a mirror.

"Holy guacamole," Skippyjon exclaims. "My ears are too big for my head, my head is too big for my body. I am not a Siamese cat – I am a CHIHUAHUA!"

And not just any Chihuahua. He dons a mask, a cape, and an accent, and transforms into Skippito Friskito, the greatest canine sword fighter in old Mexico! But when the local pack of chihuahuas is terrorized by the gigantic bee, Alfredo Buzzito El Blimpo Bubblebeeto Bandito, will Skippyjon be a 'fraidy-cat or the top dog?

Based on the book by Judy Schachner, and from the creators of Theatreworks USA's *Junie B. Jones* and *Click, Clack, Moo, Skippyjon Jones* is an enchanting musical about unleashing your powerful imagination and following your dreams.



theatre  
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151 West 26th Street  
New York, NY 10001  
212.647.1100  
[www.TWUSA.org](http://www.TWUSA.org)



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STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Skippyjon Jones as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post production discussion topics, as well as a related activity sheet. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

## Background

Our play is based on the book Skippyjon Jones by author Judy Schachner.

## The Story

- Skippyjon Jones, a male Siamese kitten, lives with his sisters and his mother. He is the family troublemaker who always thinks he's another animal such as a bird, a bat or a whale.
- One day he gets in trouble and his mother sends him to his room. While he's there he bounces on the bed and notices as he passes the mirror that he actually looks like a chihuahua and decides that he must really be a dog.
- Fantasizing as "Skippito Friskito", he travels to Mexico where he meets up with a group of chihuahuas who are in fear of the evil Alfredo Buzzito, a bumblebee who demands beans from the dogs. The dogs tell Skippito that he is the answer to the prophecy that a stranger will come and free them from their tormentor.
- When Skippyjon confronts Alfredo he doesn't act heroic but is humiliated and revealed to all as a kitten, not a chihuahua. All the chihuahuas are disappointed except Rosalita who convinces him that he can still defeat Alfredo.
- Skippito is inspired once more and with the help of all his friends, he battles the bumblebee and wins, piercing Alfredo till he bursts. At that

point, it is revealed that Alfredo is really the piñata from his closet that he has destroyed, and all the chihuahuas are bean bag toys for his birthday party. His family celebrates Skippyjon's wild imagination and all is forgiven.

### **Before Seeing the Play**

1. You may want to read some of the Skippyjon Jones stories and review the plots and characters with your students.
2. Discuss types of cats and dogs. In the story there are Siamese cats and Chihuahua dogs. What other kind of cat and dog breeds do you know? Who has a cat or a dog for a pet? Describe their behavior. Do they ever act like humans? Do they ever act like another kind of animal?
3. Discuss Spanish language words with the students. There are many Spanish words used in the play. What Spanish words do the children know? Ask if they know some common words such as amigo, gracias, frijoles, loco and por favor. You can find a list of words used in this production on the last page of this study guide.

### **After Seeing the Play**

1. Ask your students how the play was different from the Skippyjon Jones books you read. How was it the same? Discuss the costumes. How did the actors portray cats and dogs?
2. Why do you think Skippyjon always acts like other animals? How does he feel about his family? What do they think of him?
3. Skippyjon has a very active imagination. Describe how he uses his imagination to create Old Mexico in his bedroom. How are the props used to create characters?

### **Activities**

#### *Act like an animal*

In the play, Skippyjon acts like a bird, bat, moose, whale and a dog. Have your students pick an animal to research and then portray through physical action. Each student will learn about a particular animal's behavior and traits through research in books or online. The students can then create a poster with their research facts and a picture of the animal. Without revealing their subject, have the students take turns acting as their animal while the class tries to guess what it is.

### *Foreign Language*

*Word Wall-* Have students choose a favorite word, define it, translate it into Spanish and illustrate it. Hang up the illustrated “dictionary” pages on the wall.

### *Artistic Expression*

In the Skippyjon Jones stories, his closet becomes a new location for each adventure. Use your imagination to create the setting for a story out of your closet.

- Bring in an item from your closet and use it to start a story.
- Find a piece of clothing and turn it into a costume for a character.

### *Poetry Comparisons*

Make acrostic poems using the words *Siamese* and *Chihuahua*. To make a poem of this type, write the letters of each word on the side of a piece of paper, and then have the students use descriptive words that focus on the animals’ characteristics. An acrostic poem does not have to rhyme. For example:

Slinky  
Interesting  
Awesome  
Mouse-catcher  
Eats cat food  
Silly ears  
Eager

### *Fiesta Time!*

Plan a fiesta with your class, create piñatas using paper mache, balloons and tissue paper. Make Mexican themed decorations and invitations. Learn about Mexican food and make some for the party to share. Put students into groups for different tasks. Parents can help too!

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Judy Schachner is an award winning author of many children’s books including the Skippyjon Jones series which includes:

- Skippyjon Jones
- Skippyjon Jones in the Doghouse
- Skippyjon Jones in Mummy Trouble
- Skippyjon Jones and the Big Bones
- Skippyjon Jones, Lost in Space
- Skippyjon Jones, Class Action

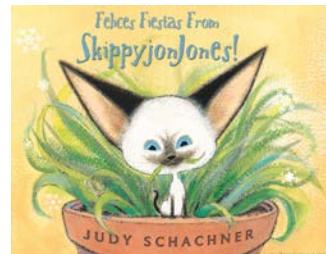
**Internet:**

- Learn about author Judy Schachner: <http://www.judithbyronschachner.com/>
- Play games, watch videos, color pictures and download a curriculum guide at: <http://www.skippyjonjones.com/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Skippyjon Jones

Complete the sentences using a word from the text box:



loco	bumblebee	bounce	fetch	beans
chihuahua	Siamese	piñata	bird	fiesta

1. Skippyjon Jones woke up and thought he was a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Skippyjon loved to \_\_\_\_\_ on his bed.
3. In the mirror, he thought he saw a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The other dogs were afraid of a \_\_\_\_\_ named Alfredo Buzzito.
5. Alfredo told the dogs to “Spill the \_\_\_\_\_.”
6. Alfredo was really a \_\_\_\_\_ in Skippyjon’s closet.
7. Skippyjon is really a \_\_\_\_\_ cat.
8. When Rosalita raced the other dogs, Skippyjon told her she was “born to \_\_\_\_\_.”
9. Instead of a birthday party, Skippyjon and his family decided to have a \_\_\_\_\_ instead.
10. At the end, Skippyjon and his family sang, “Let’s go crazy \_\_\_\_\_!”

## Skippyjon Jones Vocabulary

1. adios - goodbye
2. amigo - friend
3. ¡Ay, caramba! – oh my goodness!
4. bandito – bandit
5. besito - kiss
6. cabeza - head
7. comprende -understand
8. creada para buscar – born to fetch
9. el numero uno – number one
10. fiesta - party
11. frijoles - beans
12. gato - cat
13. gordo - fat
14. gracias - thank you
15. hola - hello
16. la luna – the moon
17. loco - crazy
18. muchacho - guy
19. noche - night
20. perdoname – sorry
21. perrito – small dog
22. peso - money
23. piñata – a decorated container with treats inside to be  
broken with a stick as a party game
24. por favor - please
25. por que - why
26. ¿que pasa? – what's up?
27. siesta – rest or nap
28. sombrero - hat
29. un tiempo de espera – time out
30. vamos / vamanos – let's go



## Program Information

### Theatreworks USA

Barbara Pasternack  
Artistic Director

Ken Arthur  
Producing Director

Presents

### SKIPPYJON JONES

Book and Lyrics by  
Kevin Del Aguila

Music by  
Eli Bolin

Based on the book by  
Judy Schachner  
Used with permission.

Scenic Design by  
Rob Odorisio

Costume Design by  
Tracy Christensen

Music Direction by  
Jeff Biering

Orchestrations by  
Frank Galgano & Matt Castle

Stage Manager  
Natalie King

Originally Directed by  
Peter Flynn

Originally Choreographed by  
Devanand Janki

Associate Director/Choreographer  
Veronica Reyes-How

Directed & Choreographed by  
Devanand Janki

### CAST (alphabetical by role)

Jezebel/Poquito Tito .....	Megan Dorn
Jilly Boo/Don Diego .....	Josh Adam Ramos
Ju Ju Bee/Rosalita .....	Jasmine Romero
Mama Junebug/Polka Dot-ito/Alfredo Buzzito .....	Brett Tubbs
Skippyjon Jones.....	Luis E. Mora

The taking of pictures and/or making of visual or sound recording is expressly forbidden.

Please check the houseboard for any program changes.

This program from Theatreworks USA is supported, in part, with public funds from  
the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency,  
and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



The actors and stage manager employed in this production are  
members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional  
actors and stage managers in the United States.



The Director and Choreographer are members of the  
STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS  
SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

"Be a Cat" .....	Skippyjon, Mama Junebug, Girls
"Skippyjon in His Room" .....	Skippyjon
"The Los Chimichangos Song" .....	Los Chimichangos, Skippyjon
"La Profecía" .....	Poquito Tito
"Crazy Loco" .....	Skippyjon, Los Chimichangos
"Born to Fetch" .....	Skippyjon, Rosalita, Don Diego, Fetchers
"Spill the Beans" .....	Alfredo, Skippyjon, Chimichangos
"No Way José" .....	Rosalita, Skippyjon
"The Fight" .....	Skippyjon, Alfredo, Chimichangos
"Skippito's Escape" .....	Skippyjon
"Skippyjon's Essay" .....	Mama Junebug
"Finale: Crazy Loco Reprise" .....	Company

## WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

(alphabetical by role)

**MEGAN DORN** (Jezebel/Poquito Tito) Regional: *The Sisters Rosensweig* (Tess Goode, Portland Stage Company), *Parade* (Iola Stover, The Neighborhood Playhouse), *Zip! Goes a Million* (Operetta Foundation, Los Angeles), and *A Christmas Carol* (Hanover Theatre). B.F.A. The Boston Conservatory. [www.megandorn.com](http://www.megandorn.com). Proud to be a member of AEA. Love to my family and to Marcus!

**JOSH ADAM RAMOS** (Jilly Boo/Don Diego) is in his third season with Theatreworks USA, having toured with *Fancy Nancy & Other Story Books* (2012) and *Skippyjon Jones* (2013). Favorite credits include: *Darling* (Pace New Musicals), *Oklahoma!* (NYMF), *The Waypoint* (Berkshire Fringe/MASS MoCA). Training: Pace University. Proud Equity member and Brooklyn resident. @joshadamramos

**JASMINE ROMERO** (Ju Ju Bee/Rosalita) Notable credits include: *Sesame Street* (Season 45), *In the Heights*, *Passing Strange* and *Sweet Charity*. Thanks and love to Mom, Dad, and Julio. Proud member of SAG/AFTRA and Actors Equity! [www.jasmineromero.net](http://www.jasmineromero.net)

**BRETT TUBBS** (Mama Junebug/Polka Dot-ito/Alfredo Buzzito) TheatreWorks USA and AEA debut! *Reunion...Epic in Miniature* (Wayside Theatre). *I Love You...Now Change*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *City of Angels* (Festival 56). *Rent*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Chicago*, *Spamalot*, *My Fair Lady* (Maine State Music Theatre). *Spamalot* (Fulton Theatre). Company member of dANCE.kontemporary (Ft. Wayne IN).

**LUIS E. MORA** (*Skippyjon Jones*) is thrilled to be touring the country with *Skippyjon Jones*! He grew up in Miami where he discovered a passion for the arts. Now he lives in New York where he recently finished a successful run of the new children's musical *Pedro Pan* and a number of staged readings. For my loud and beautiful familia. [www.luisemora.com](http://www.luisemora.com)

**ELI BOLIN** (Music) is the music director/composer and a founding member of the Story Pirates, a nationally-recognized arts education organization that performs songs and sketches adapted from the creative writing of children all over the country. With lyricist Sam Forman, he has scored the

musicals */ Sing!*, *Schmoozy Togetherness* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Roller Boogie* (ART, Cambridge), *Volleygirls*, *The Big Show* and the opening number of Theatreworks USA's *We the People*. He recently joined "Sesame Street" as a composer for its 42nd season. His music has been featured on MSNBC and Comedy Central Presents: Kristen Schaal.

**KEVIN DEL AGUILA** (Book & Lyrics) is bookwriter of the off-Broadway hit *Altar Boyz* (Outer Critics Award, Lortel and Drama Desk noms.) and lyricist of *Click, Clack, Moo* (Lortel and Drama Desk noms.). Other works as a writer/lyricist include Nickelodeon's *Storytime Live*, and musical versions of the children's books *Lilly's Big Day*, *I Have to Go*, and *Duck for President*. Up next: stage adaptation of the film *Madagascar* for DreamWorks. [www.delaguila.info](http://www.delaguila.info)

**DEVANAND JANKI** (Director & Choreographer) Off-B'way: *Zanna, Don't!* (Winner Lortel, Callaway and GLAAD Awards), *Yellow Brick Road* (Callaway Award nom.), *Junie B. Jones* (Lortel nom.), *Henry and Mudge* (Lortel nom.), *Cupid and Psyche* and *Romantic Poetry*. Broadway concerts for the Actors Fund: *Hair*, *Funny Girl*, *Dreamgirls* (Assoc.) and *Seth Rudetsky's Broadway 101*. Lincoln Center: *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Babes in Toyland* and *Anything Goes* in concert (Choreo. Assist.); Artistic Assoc. for BC/EFA's Broadway Bares. Regional: *Rent*, *Aladdin*, *Barrio Grrrl!*, *Asphalt Beach*, *Full Monty*, *Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Man of La Mancha*. TYA tours: *Nate the Great*, *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*, *Jack Sprat Low Fat World Tour*, *Berenstain Bears*. [www.devanandjanki.com](http://www.devanandjanki.com)

**VERONICA REYES-HOW** (Associate Director/Choreographer) has directed & choreographed for Theatreworks USA, Unity Stage Company and the Barrow Group's Core Artist Ensemble, and recently finished her first short film. She also works as an actor. Notable credits are the national tour of *Rent*, *Spelling Bee*, various commercials for Kraft Cheese, Chef Boyardee, and a host for the AOL show *The Savings Experiment*.

**JEFF BIERING** (Music Director) Off-Broadway: *Danny and Sylvia*, *Naked Boys Singing*, *Splendora*, *The Talk of the Town*. National tour: *Sweet Charity*. Most recent: *An Evening with*

Danny Kaye -- Washington, DC and LA. Elsewhere, as musical director, arranger, orchestrator, composer and performer: *Spamalot*, *Pump Boys & Dinettes* and *The Drowsy Chaperone* at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina; many projects for Theatreworks USA, including orchestrations for one of their newest works, *The Teacher from the Black Lagoon*; lots of casino productions in Atlantic City, Reno, and some other unlikely places; three European tours of *A Christmas Carol*; many projects for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, including a Christmas extravaganza in the Charmin Toilets in Times Square; solo concerts all over the country with Emily Skinner. Jeff recently composed opening and closing numbers for the annual Cougar Ball in NYC, a benefit for the Actors' Fund of America.

**NATALIE KING** (Stage Manager) is pleased to be touring again with Theatreworks USA, most recently having worked on *Teacher from the Black Lagoon & Other Storybooks* and *The Lightning Thief*. She received her BA in Dance from Oberlin College and has performed with a variety of fledgling and professional choreographers including Pat Graney, Xiao Yu, and Calder Singer. She is currently a performer with the international children's touring company the *Hudson Vagabond Puppets*.

**THEATREWORKS USA** (Producer) founded in 1961, is America's foremost professional theatre for young and family audiences. Its mission is to create imaginative and thought-provoking shows that are educational, entertaining and thought-provoking. Their 2014-2015 touring repertoire includes *Charlotte's Web*; *A Christmas Carol*; *Click, Clack, Moo*; *Curious George*; *Fly Guy & Other Stories*; *Freedom Train*; *Junie B. Jones*; *Skippyjon Jones*; *The Lightning Thief*; *The Teacher From the Black Lagoon & Other Story Books* and *We The People*. Theatreworks' honors include a Drama Desk Award, Off-Broadway's Lucille Lortel Award, the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation Award, the William M. Dawson Award for Programmatic Excellence given by the Association of Performing Arts Presenters and the Medal of Honor from the Actors' Fund of America. [www.TWUSA.org](http://www.TWUSA.org)

**ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION**, founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the U.S. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Equity seeks to foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. [www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org)