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Paint

Marc Chagall's Colorful Musical Adventure!

**Book and Lyrics by
Robin Seidman**

**Music by
Spencer Stephens**

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RENTAL MATERIALS

An orchestration consisting of a **Piano/Vocal Score** will be loaned two months prior to the production **ONLY** on the receipt of the Licensing Fee quoted for all performances, the rental fee and a refundable deposit.

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PAINT premiered at the 13th Annual National Children's Theatre Festival in Coral Gables, Florida on April 23, 2008. The performance was directed by Earl Maudling, with sets by Kathy Trittschuh, costumes by Ananda Keator, lighting by Patrick Tennent, musical direction by David Estevez, sound by Alexander Herrin. The Production Stage Manager was Carlos Correa. The cast was as follows:

MARC	Lauren Kairalla
COW	Erika Johnson
PAPA	Kristian Cardenas
MAMA	Lauren Reppucci
UNCLE N / GOAT	Raymond Yanez
AUNT / MRS. GUZZENTEIT	Leslie McQueen
FISH / SCHOOLMASTER / CHICKEN / PONY	Joshua Robinson

HISTORY

Artist Marc Chagall, born in Vitebsk, July 7, 1887, may have adapted the Hassidim's philosophy that the vase of the world that God filled was shattered into innumerable objects, and that each of these contains a portion of divine love, where reality and legend combine. Chagall paints beyond mere representation. Nothing remains itself. An acrobat becomes a winged chicken, the clock folds softly over an arm, the fiddle changes to a green donkey face, women are stretched into comets, and a clown with an open umbrella is riding a four-headed monster.

CHARACTERS

(*Note: As in Chagall's paintings, nothing remains itself. With a wave of a paintbrush, **MARC** transforms objects through his imagination.)

COW - our narrator

MARC - Chagall as a child

MAMA - sturdy, energetic, finger tapper

AUNT - in clown attire

CHICKEN - (also plays puppets **FISH**, **MRS. GUZZENTEIT**)

PAPA - a weary figure in a prayer shawl

UNCLE N (Neuchensteinblattenbergcohen, has hooves and fur) - plays
GOAT, PONY

SET

A simple, fluid, colorfully lit set (for the non-touring shows) interspersed with interchangeable crates and a suggestion of a barrel for the fish puppet. A three ring effect, a moving circus of sorts, with perhaps an upside down shtetl roof, as could be found in Chagall's painting "I and the Village."

SUGGESTED PROPS

Blue violin, parasol, three circles of color attached with velcro to a cow, and palette, fish puppet in barrel.

SUGGESTED SLIDES ON PROJECTION

At open, black and white early Chagall sketches
Play's End: "I and My Village"

SUGGESTED PRE-SHOW MUSIC

Instrumental or vocal CD of lively songs
Chagall slides optional

BREAKDOWN OF SCENES

Scene 1 - The River

Scene 2 - Home/Store

Scene 3 - Russian School

Scene 4 - Home

Scene 5 - Uncle's Roof

Scene 6 - The Market

Scene 7 - Home

Scene 8 - Studio by river

Scene One

*(The River. COW plays the violin. Opening song -
MARC & COW.)*

COW.

IN A RUSSIAN VILLAGE
NEAR THE CITY OF MINSK
CLOSE TO THE RUSSIAN-POLISH BORDER
THERE LIVED A BOY, MARC CHAGALL

*(MARC enters, sketching with big piece of charcoal by the
river.)*

A would-be artist-

MARC. A so want-to-be artist!

COW.

WHO SKETCHES MY SPOTS
IN DIFFERENT LIGHTS

MARC.

I AM THE KING
OF BLACK AND WHITE

COW.

DID YOU EVER SEE HOOVES QUITE LIKE THIS
A FACE LIKE MINE YOU JUST WANT TO KISS! *(Smack!)*

MARC.

YOU ARE WHY I DRAW, MY VERY OWN MUSE

COW.

I'M IN ALL HIS PICTURES, SUCH GOOD-LOOKING JEWS,
BIGGER THAN LIFE
I'M THE JOY OF HIS DAY
I'M THE QUEEN, THE WONDER OF THE WORLD
NOT JUST ANY HEIFER, AS SOME WOULD SAY!

MARC. Hey, Cow!

COW. Okay, I am a cow.

BUT NOT ANY COW.

MARC.

YOU REMIND ME OF MY RUSSIAN VILLAGE

(He puts a babushka on COW.)

YOU'RE IN EVERY CHARCOAL THAT I DRAW

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL COW IN THE FIELD

(He adorns her with a tallis.)

YOU'RE THE SHOPKEEPER'S WIFE

THE BUTCHER'S MEAL

COW.

OY!

BUT STOP SKETCHING ME, MARC, UPSIDE DOWN

(somersaults)

I'M THE ONLY FLYING COW AROUND!

MARC. Look what happens when I move my charcoal! My sketches come to life!

(He waves his charcoal and COW poses in silly positions, flies.)

COW. Stop MOO-ing your charcoal and imagining me on the rooftop! Flying's udderly exhausting! I'm afraid of heights and I'm getting cowsick!

(MARC waves his brush at the COW and she goes to the crate "roof." A FISH jumps out of the river.)

Stop that daydreaming this minute and get me down from here! And stop imagining fish!

FISH. Swim. Move your fins or something.

COW. I don't have fins. HELP! I'm falling!

MARC. Sorry, Cow, what should I sketch you?!

COW. An umbrella! Quick!

(She totters on the edge of the roof. MARC sketches her a black umbrella for her descent.)

MARC. I never thought of drawing flying animals before.
Thank you, Cow!

COW. That was a little scary, but very creative. Marc, you should be an (*whispers*) “artist!”

FISH. Better to paint my fellow fish than to catch us with a net. Yes, Marc, my friend. You should be an (*whispers*) “artist...!”

COW. Good-bye, Fish!

(*FISH swims away with attitude.*)

MARC. Cow, do you really think that I- Marc Chagall, a Jewish boy from a Russian village-who is not even allowed to say that word should be that word?

COW. Yes, but I don’t want to be just any old black and white cow, and you don’t want to sketch one. Here.

(*COW gives MARC a crude paintbrush.*)

MARC. A paintbrush?

COW. I made it for you from some old horse hairs I found in the barn.

MARC. My family doesn’t want me to be a painter. You know that.

COW. Fine, then. Sketch me in black and white like all the other cows.

MARC. I don’t want to sketch like everybody else.

COW. You already drew me flying. No other artist did that. But I am still an ordinary black and white.

MARC. I’ve got it! Stand in the field of flowers!

(*COLORS OF THE RAINBOW music begins.*)

COW. Think of your paintbrush as your magic wand. Go. Think of how you can make me stand out from the herd.

MARC. (*waves his paintbrush and COW’s spots change colors*)
Look at your spots!

COW.

(*COLORS OF THE RAINBOW*)

NOW I’M NOT ANY ORDINARY COW
SPOTS OF RED, YELLOW, AND BLUE!
COULD I BE ANY MORE BEAUTIFUL
ALL THIS COLOR MAKES ME MOO-OO! (*Moo!*)

MARC.

WE DID IT! NO MORE BLACK AND WHITE
THE PRIMARY COLORS, OH WHAT A SIGHT

COW & MARC.

THE COLORS OF THE RAINBOW

("Painting Dance." MARC touches paintbrush, transferring COW's spots to palette.)

MARC. *(MARC shows her his colored COW painting.)*

LOOK AT YOU NOW

COW.

YOUR FIRST COLOR PAINTING
AND I SHOWED YOU HOW!
WHAT DID I TELL YOU?
I'M NOT ANY OLD COW!

MARC. Yikes! Papa's coming!

COW. Throw down the paintbrush! You know Papa forbids
you from being an artist!

(PAPA enters.)

PAPA. Good morning, my favorite son. Alright, my only
son! Today is the most magical day of the year. Do you
know why?

MARC. Of course, Papa! It's my birthday!

PAPA. Yes, my wonderful boy! And I brought you what you
dream of more than anything in the world!

MARC. Oh, Papa! Really?

PAPA. Today, my eldest son, you are, finally, at the wise age,
the grand age, the very important age, of Seven. Years.
Old.

MARC. And by eight I shall be a painter!

PAPA. PAINT? Jewish boys can't draw faces of people. It's
against our religion! That's why you are going to be a
fishmonger, like your Papa! And fish for delicious her-
ring. For you!

(hands MARC the fishing pole)

MARC. A fishing pole!

PAPA. I knew you'd love it!

MARC. But, Papa, I thought instead of a fishmonger, I would be a painter. I painted this picture of me and Cow for you. (*MARC gives PAPA a painting.*)

COW. Uh oh. Here goes!

(*GRAVEN IMAGES music.*)

PAPA.

PAINT!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE SECOND COMMANDMENT SAYS

(*MARC shrugs.*)

COW. Wash your hands before dinner?

PAPA.

WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO DRAW GRAVEN IMAGES.

COW. (*adorns scholarly cap/glasses*) Graven. The Jewish people thought it was wrong to paint peoples' faces.

MARC.

BUT WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT PAINTING OUR RUSSIAN TOWN?

COW.

COLORFUL, SO BEAUTIFUL, UPSIDE DOWN!

(*COW poses. MARC shushes COW.*)

PAPA. What, may I ask, is so terrible about being like your father? Being an assistant to a fishmonger is a perfectly respectable position.

MARC. You catch herring and herring smells!

COW. (*agreeing*) P.U! You've got that right!

PAPA.

ALL SEVEN OF YOUR SISTERS HONOR ME

AND KNOW THE THRILL OF FISHING!

THERE'S NO GREATER JOY FOR MY ONLY BOY

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MISSING!

MARC. Papa, my world only comes alive for me when I am painting!

PAPA. Fishing! We have spoken of it. The choice has been made!

(*Music ends.*)

MARC. But, Papa!

COW. Your imagination's getting you in trouble with Papa,
and since he feeds me, he is a very, VERY good guy!

PAPA. (COW catches the sweets PAPA throws her. He doesn't hear
her.) Got milk?

COW. Got hay?

PAPA. What you have to see, my son, is HERRING is a wonderful thing!

MARC & COW. BUT-!

PAPA.

(sings **KING OF HERRING**)

TO THE WAREHOUSE EACH DAY I GO
LIFTING BARRELS THAT SEEM LIKE PURE GOLD
SWIRLING, TWIRLING, GRAY FISHY SMELTS
THAT GOD CALLS HERRING.

(MARC uses his paint brush like a wand and suddenly a
dancing fish pops out of the barrel and joins him.)

COW. Brother! A dancing fish!

PAPA.

BEAUTIFUL HERRING!
MY REPUTATION THE VILLAGERS KNOW
RESPECT WHEREVER I GO

(VILLAGERS enter, stop center, sing, exit.)

VILLAGERS.

PAPA CHAGALL CATCHES THE BEST FISH IN TOWN
HE IS THE KING OF HERRING!

PAPA.

SO WHEN GROWN YOU'LL HAVE FISHERMAN'S FAME
LIKE YOUR PAPA, CARRY THE CHAGALL NAME
LEARN THE FAMILY TRADE, PLAY THE HERRING GAME
WHERE NO TWO FISH ARE EVER THE SAME!

TO THE STORE OWNERS EACH DAY I BRING
FISH SO TASTY THEY MAKE PEOPLE SING

(VILLAGERS enter.)

VILLAGERS.

PAPA CHAGALL CATCHES THE BEST FISH IN TOWN
HE IS THE KING OF HERRING!

(**VILLAGERS** *exit.*)

PAPA.

TO THE RAILROAD STATION EACH DAY I DELIVER
SLIMY HERRING THAT WIGGLES AND QUIVERS!

THE ODOR OF BRINE, IS FUMINGLY MINE
BUT GOD PROVIDES...HERRING GOLD FROM THE RIVER!

(**VILLAGERS** *enter.*)

PAPA CHAGALL, CATCHES THE BEST FISH IN TOWN
HE'S THE KING OF...HERRING!

ALL.

LET THERE BE FISH!

MARC. (*resignedly*) Let there be fish?!

PAPA. That's my boy.

COW. Marc, you have to tell Papa how you feel about painting.

MARC. Papa, you know how when you're fishing, there is a river in front of you, and the chance of delicious herring, just under the surface?

PAPA. Me, my boat, and the endless possibilities!

MARC. And nobody catches herring like you, right?

PAPA. Papa Chagall catches the best fish in town!

MARC. That's how I feel when I draw. The blank canvas can be anything. It is my river of herring. And nobody could see those beautiful fish the way I do.

PAPA. Fishing and painting are nothing alike!

MARC. Your river is like my canvas!

PAPA. No. I'm sorry, Marc. Painting goes against our Jewishness.

MARC. But, Papa! Do you ever dream while you're fishing?

PAPA. Of course, but-

MARC. Well, I dream, too!

(**MARC** sings **WAITING FOR ME** as *Cast/Puppets act out lyrics.*)

WHILE I'M LYING FLAT
UNDER MY BED
HIDING
I'M LOST IN THOUGHT
I PEEK THROUGH
MY ATTIC WINDOW
LOOK WHAT I SEE!
ALL OF PAKOWSKAJA STREET
WAITING FOR ME!

PAPA. It's waiting for you to be a fishmonger, like your Papa!

MARC. No, Papa. Look over there!

GREEN RABBIS, PEASANTS
IN WHITE STOCKINGED FEET
A CHORUS OF CHICKENS
OUR TOPSY GAZE MEETS
THEY FLY ON MY ROOFTOP
PRAYER BOOKS IN HAND
STRUT PAST MY SWEET STARS
MY FLOATING HOUSE BAND.
THEY BLOW THEIR BEAKED NOSES
CONFETTI HONKS TO THE CLOUD
COTTON COLORED PAPER
MENORAHS BUZZ OUT LOUD

PAPA. Menorahs don't buzz and chickens don't fly!

MARC. But herring has a certain magic, don't you think?

PAPA. Of course. Maybe herring...!

MARC.

GAZING ON THE SABBATH
I'M HERE, ABOVE THE TOWN.
PERCHED ON MY ROOFTOP
FLYING UPSIDE DOWN.
THE TOWN SNAPS APART
LIKE A VIOLIN'S STRINGS

SWEET SOUNDS SPLASH THE CANVAS
 A VERITABLE DREAM.
 RUSSIA APPEARS
 LIKE A PAPER BALLOON.
 POP!
 IT'S WAITING!

PAPA. You need streams to fish in.

COW. Tell him how art is waiting. Like herring are waiting for him!

MARC.

ART IS WAITING-
 LOOK OUTSIDE, IT'S WAITING,

COW & MARC.

ART IS WAITING!

MARC. Like fish are waiting for you, Papa!

WAITING... FOR ME!

PAPA. It is a wonderful thing to take joy in what you do during the day.

MARC. So you understand! You will allow me to paint?

PAPA. I will allow you to ask your Mama's permission.

MARC. But she'll never say yes! She'll be so disappointed in me!

COW. We have no choice but to ask her. The Jewish mother is the one who decides everything in the home. *(to PAPA)* No offense.

MARC. The cow says that the Jewish mother decides everything in the home. No offense, Papa!

PAPA. *(packs up fishing gear and puts his arm around MARC)* I hate to admit it, Son, but when the Cow's right, she's right.

(PAPA shrugs beffudedly. Exits. MARC waves paintbrush with a "woosh!")

COW. I'm right - now I'm in a good MOOD! Wave your paintbrush to take us to Mama's store in the marketplace to ask her the all-important art question!

(WAITING FOR ME reprise. MARC and COW fly to MAMA's store. The set changes around them.)

Scene Two

(MARC tries to get past GOAT at store's door.)

MARC. Excuse me, Goat.

COW. Moooooove!

MARC. Will you let us in, if I paint you a picture? Here.

(MARC twirls his paintbrush and the GOAT talks.)

GOAT. I look faaaaab!

COW. You painted a talking goat! Now look what your imagination did!

GOAT. He can't help but paint me. Is this a puss or what?

COW. Or what!

GOAT. Who asked you? *(to MARC)* Now just paint me three pennyworth of herring. That's all I ask. Three measly, itsy bitsy slithery grey eely tasty...mmmm!

FISH. Can't catch me!

(FISH swims teasingly in front of GOAT who jumps but falls.)

GOAT. Naaaa, nobody listens to me around here! Even though I'm in a lot of Marc's paintings!

(GOAT, COW, MARC, FISH, MRS. GUZZENTEIT enter with MAMA, who is holding a barrel of fish.)

MAMA. What's a goat doing in the store? Marc, stop painting Goats!

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. Painting! The son of Papa Chagall! Little Chagall will have the best fish in town, just like his Papa.

MARC. Yes, Mrs. Guzzenteit.

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. UNLESS-he's interested in an opportunity!

MAMA. Is there something you heard in the market?

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. Naturally, I am not the kind who likes to repeat what others say, but when I WAS talking to your Aunt Relly-

MARC. Is Aunt Relly the aunt with the nose like a pickle?

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. She comes from a long line of women with noses like pickles.

MAMA. Aunt Relly's the one married to the butcher you keep sketching on our rooftop eating carrots. Here, put the herring in a sack for Mrs. Guzzenteit, will you?

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. Your Aunt Relly told me about an opportunity very close in your family! Did you know your aunt's cousin's sister's brother's neighbor's wife's friend's brother is a photographer! A proper profession for a boy, photography.

MARC. Thank you for thinking of me.

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. Naturally, who else do I have time to think of but other people?

MARC. Actually, photography isn't what I'm really interested in.

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. I SEE!

COW. THAT's how you're going to tell her!

MAMA. (*works busily*) Stack the pears in the crate, will you, Marc?

COW. I would like some grass if you don't mind imagining me some, Marc.

(**MARC** waves his brush and grass appears.)

Thank you!

GOAT. And I, just a little, bittle piece of herring!

FISH. (*taunting with a goat sound*) Naa naaa naaa naaa na!

(**GOAT** jumps at **FISH** and falls again.)

COW. This grass is MOO-LICIOUS!

MAMA. Take the cow out of the store, will you, Honey?

(**COW** disguises herself with a prayer shawl and yarmulke.)

GOAT. Hear that? Take the COW out of the store. Goats rule.

COW. Not 'til you show her the picture you painted!

MARC. Okay. Okay, already. For you.

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. A PAINTING!

MARC. Mama, look. It's Papa with his fish.

(COW hands picture to MARC who hands it to MAMA.)

MAMA. Not looking, not looking! Drawing and inking, Marc, instead of learning your Talmud!

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. A shanda! A disgrace! A Jewish boy can't be an artist! Draw graven images, pictures of people! Our people forbid it!

MARC. But I want to show the world the people of our town of Belorussia.

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. Thank you for the herring, Mama Chagall, but your son, your son—he should think about the opportunity mentioned by your close, close family, your own sister's cousin's brother's neighbor's wife's friend! Photography is not like drawing faces. With a camera, the image is already there.

MAMA. Mrs. G. is right. A wonderful job it is, to be a photographer!

MRS. GUZZENTEIT. Thank you for the herring! And this other word, this ARTIST! Oy, may you all live and be well. As a photographer! Goat, stop that!

(MRS. GUZZENTEIT exits, swinging her sack of herring as GOAT begs. PAPA enters.)

PAPA. So what business did Mrs. Guzzenteit have that wasn't her business?

MAMA. She knows of an opportunity for our Marc to be a photographer.

PAPA. What is so wrong about our son being an assistant to a fishmonger?

MAMA. Herring is very well and good and everything, but-

PAPA. GOOD! Why-

(MAMA pets GOAT who sticks out his tongue at COW.)

(MAMA, PAPA sing IT'S NO WAY TO EARN A LIVING)

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