

AT THIS STAGE™

LESSONS THAT PERFORM

BE PREPARED : PLANNING THE PERFECT PARADE

Rick Pomer | Creative Director of Macy's Branded Entertainment
Anna Raful | Performer and former Macy's Parade Participant
Grades | 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

BACKGROUND

CREATIVE INSIGHT

Producing the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade every year is a monumental undertaking and an ongoing effort. It's important to know what you know and leverage that. Then, you put your energy into the things you don't know, and that's where collaboration comes into play. After 93 years, it's important to come up with things that are new and exciting. It is critical to maintain the balance between keeping things fresh and relevant while retaining familiar favorites attendees look forward to year after year.

We create a theme, so that everything is cohesive. Bands are selected 18 months in advance because they travel to New York from all over the country. We have production of the parade down to a science. We know when things should kick off uptown and how long it will take to make it to the finish line on 34th Street. And, we're always thinking about the next parade, the parade after that, and all the anniversaries and milestones we can commemorate in future parades." — Rick Pomer, creative director, Macy's Branded Entertainment.



ABOUT THE EXPERTS

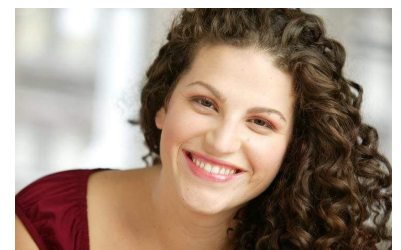


SPECIAL GUEST:

Rick Pomer is a longtime Macy's creative executive spanning 3 decades with the company, specializing in branding and special projects. Currently leading a team of talented artists and designers responsible for creating the magic behind The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Macy's Santaland, Macy's Flower Show and Macy's 4th of July Fireworks. Prior to this, Rick started his career as a copywriter at Macy's, growing to become a creative lead for various teams devoted to brand and special events marketing. Rick's current focus is to elevate the entertainment and production values of Macy's iconic events and push those properties to new horizons.

MODERATOR:

Anna Raful is an accomplished performer, teaching artist and the Director/Choreographer for Camp Broadway's Shining Stars in New York and across the country. She is a graduate of Emerson College with a BFA in Musical Theater. As an actor, Anna has toured the country with various shows, as well as performing regionally throughout New York state. Some of her favorite roles include: Nieve Que in *SkippyJon Jones: Snow What?*, Mazeppa in *Gypsy*, and Sarraghina in *Nine*.



OFFICIAL SOURCES

The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade will be broadcast on NBC-TV on Thursday, Nov. 26, from 9 a.m. to noon EST.

<https://www.nbc.com/macys-thanksgiving-day-parade>

Macy's Parade Official Website

<https://www.macys.com/social/parade/>



For more information on AT THIS STAGE, visit CampBroadway.com/AtThisStage

PHOTO CREDITS: Balloon Images from <https://www.macys.com/social/parade/lineup/balloons/> Macy's Image: [Wikimedia](https://www.wikimedia.org/)

BACKGROUND

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE

Macy's (originally R. H. Macy & Co.) was founded in New York City by Rowland Hussey Macy in 1859 as a small dry goods store. In its nearly two centuries in operation, Macy's has pioneered several components of the modern department store, including on site tailoring, dining, and elaborate window dressings. The first-ever Macy's Day Parade took place in 1924 on Christmas. Macy's employees dressed as clowns, cowboys, and other fun costumes, and traveled with Central Park zoo animals and creative floats from Herald Square (New York's 34th Street) to Harlem, a nearly 6-mile march. More than 250,000 New Yorker attended.

In 1927, Felix the Cat became the first giant balloon to fly in the parade. Despite the Great Depression, the event continued to grow through the 1930's. The first national radio broadcast of the Macy's Parade Thanksgiving took place in 1932. Soon thereafter, Disney introduced a giant balloon of Mickey Mouse and by 1939, those who were fortunate enough to own a television could see the broadcast on NBC-TV. It was suspended from 1942-1944 for World War II when rubber and helium used for the floats and balloons was donated to the American military. The parade was back in 1945 to the delight of over two million people. It has been a popular New York City event ever since.

Today this massive event covers a 2.5-mile parade route (from 77th & Central Park West south to 34th Street-Herald Square) and features 8,000 volunteers. Parade highlights including 26 iconic floats with 400 escorts, 16 giant character helium balloons managed by 1,600 handlers, 40 novelty balloon heads and trycaloons, 11 marching bands from across the country, 1,000 clowns, 22 stilt walkers, 4 Broadway shows, the Radio City Rockettes® and the one and only, Santa Claus. Over 3.5 million spectators enjoy the parade in New York along with the viewing audience of over 50 million who tune in for this official start of the holiday season.



MACY'S PARADE BY THE NUMBERS

- 72,000** - Square footage of the Parade Studio's Moonachie, NJ headquarters
- 50,000+** - Hours of labor from the Parade Studio team of approximately 27 painters, carpenters, animators, sculptors, welders, scenic/costume designers, electricians, and engineers
- 4,200** - Costumes for clowns, characters, and balloon handlers
- 2,640** - Feet of tubular steel needed for the creation of the Macy's Singing Tree, the most steel ever sourced for a Macy's Parade float
- 375** - Paint brushes and 240 gallons of paint to create the floats
- 300** - Pounds of glitter
- 90** - Makeup artists to decorate the faces of over 1,000 clowns on Parade Day

LESSON PLAN

Workshop Title: Be PREPARED: Planning the Perfect Parade
Host: Anna Raful, Performer and former Macy's Parade Participant
Expert: Rick Pomer, Creative Director of Macy's Branded Entertainment
Standards: ELA, Life Skills and Character Studies
Grades: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

SESSION OVERVIEW

The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is synonymous with Thanksgiving and one of most renown entertainment events in the world that features over 8,000 volunteers. Rick Pomer is the man behind the magic that is created by Macy's Branded Entertainment, a team of 30 event specialists who work in New York City and another group 30 designers, engineers and crafts people who work Macy's Parade Studio in the Moonachie, N.J. This session of AT THIS STAGE will give students insight into the logistics and coordination that goes into the planning and presenting of America's favorite annual parade that spans 2.5 miles through the streets of Manhattan.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Gain insight into the important history and traditions of the parade
- Understand the coordination of logistics that goes into planning one of the nation's major holiday events
- Discover the varied jobs essential to produce a parade
- Understand the depth and breadth of the parade production needs
- Plan out their own event using essential information and skills

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are the elements and jobs essential to planning an event?
- How may one apply the insight and skills from producing a major holiday spectacle to create their own celebratory event?

CREATIVE CONTEXT

7 TIPS FOR PRODUCING A SUCCESSFUL PARADE

- *Determine a parade theme.*
- *Set the date, time, place, and size of the event.*
- *Form a planning team to coordinate the logistics.*
- *Organize all the expenses into an event budget and find supporters.*
- *Establish and distribute participation guidelines.*
- *Coordinate the event schedule.*
- *Promote the parade to the press and the public to generate excitement.*

VOCABULARY

contingency (*noun*) a future event or circumstance which is possible but cannot be predicted with certainty.

formation (*noun*) a structure or arrangement of something.

groundwork (*noun*) early work which forms the basis for further work.

logistics (*noun*) the detailed coordination of a complex operation involving many people, facilities, or supplies.

rehearsal (*noun*) a practice or trial performance of a play or other work for later public performance.

teamwork (*noun*) the combined action of a group of people, especially when effective and efficient.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED: CCSS [Grades 5-12 • Writing: 2, 4, 7, 9, 10 • Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 4, 6]

National Core Arts Standards: ANCHOR STANDARD 8 • NYC Blueprint - Working With Community & Cultural Resources

CLASS ACTIVITY

DO NOW:

Parades Go By (10 minutes)

Write the word "PARADE" in large letters on the board, a large sheet of paper, or a digital whiteboard/jamboard and ask students to list all of the components of a parade they can think of surrounding the word "PARADE." When that task is complete, review the elements, adding more if necessary, and then ask students to list the people needed to complete each of those components.

ASSESSMENT: *Discuss with students the types of parades they have viewed and know about. Ask them to share which roles they would like to take on either as planners, preparers, or performers.*

MAIN ACTIVITY:

I Love a Parade (30 minutes)

PART 1: Students should take time to reflect upon the information from the session and the Do Now activity to brainstorm what kind of parade they would like to create and what the scale of the event would be.

PART 2: Students will use the information from the session and the tips for producing a successful parade to plan out their own parade event. Students should be clear on a theme and a clear purpose for the parade so all of the elements are cohesive. Ask students to break their plans up into clear sections on **theme, event information, planning team, expenses, participation guidelines** and **event schedule**.

ASSESSMENT: *Encourage students to first share their plans with a classmate and then ask students to share their plans in a formal fashion to the class. Survey the class for positive feedback on the events presented and perhaps vote on the event they would most like to be a part of or attend. As a follow up activity, have students to create the press release for their event or for a classmate's.*



Images Courtesy of Macy's Branded Entertainment

SESSION NOTES

STUDENT NAME: _____

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE: How would you define a parade? What are the essential elements?

MEET THE ARTIST: What does it take to produce the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade? What surprised you in what you heard about the process?

SESSION LESSON: Discuss a parade you attended or were a part of: What was it celebrating or commemorating? Where was it held? Who and what was featured in the parade?

LESSON EXTENSION: Where would your skills be best utilized in a parade organization, preparation and presentation?

REFLECTIONS

QUESTION: Why do you think the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade has endured for so long as a tradition?

CONNECTION: Explore famous parades in American history: What events have been celebrated in this fashion in the past and what were they like?

APPLICATION: Describe the parade that would celebrate something in your own life, your family history or your community:

EXPLORATION: Research a parade from another culture or country. How are their celebrations similar and different from the ones you're familiar with?