STUDY GUIDE:
Students & Educators

New York Premiere

SHE PERSISTED, THE MUSICAL

script & lyrics by Adam Tobin
music by Deborah Wicks La Puma
adapted from the book written by Chelsea Clinton & illustrated by Alexandra Boiger
published by Philomel Books
music supervision by Macy Schmidt
Directed & Choreographed by MK Lawson

Heather Baird
Director of Education

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SECTION I: THE PLAY

Synopsis
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SYNOPSIS

This new musical, inspired by Chelsea Clinton’s best-selling book, *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World*, tells the story of a fourth-grade girl whose trip with her class to the museum turns into an adventure in time travel during which she meets inspirational women who are overcoming barriers and making history.

THEMES

Empowering Women
Overcoming Obstacles
Role Models
Feminism
Courage
Time
Dreams
SECTION II: THE CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Creative Biographies
Characters/Cast List
Behind the Scenes Look
ADAM TOBIN (Script & Lyrics) is the writer and lyricist of She Persisted, The Musical, adapted from Chelsea Clinton's children's book for Bay Area Children's Theatre. A Senior Lecturer teaching screenwriting and television at Stanford University, Tobin created the television series “About a Girl” and “Best Friend's Date” for Viacom's The-N network (now TeenNick), won an Emmy for writing on Discovery Channel's “Cash Cab,” and worked in script development for Jim Henson Pictures and The National Basketball Association. He has taught story seminars to DreamWorks Animation, Aardman Animation, and Blue Sky Studios. Tobin also performed with Los Angeles Theatresports and the comedy group The But Franklies, and was a founding member of the Stanford Improvisors. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Stanford in English and an MFA from USC School of Cinematic Arts in Screenwriting.

DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA (Music). A composer, music director and orchestrator, Deborah Wicks La Puma is one of the most produced Theatre for Young Audiences artists working today. With bestselling children's author Mo Willems she has created Elephant and Piggie's: We Are In A Play (The Kennedy Center), and Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience (Seattle Children's Theatre). Her many and diverse works with playwright Karen Zacarías include Ella Enchanted (based on the book by Gail Carson Levine), Olivério: A Brazilian Twist (The Kennedy Center), Frida Libre (La Jolla Playhouse), Looking for Roberto Clemente (Imagination Stage) and Einstein Is a Dummy (The Alliance Theatre). With playwright Doug Cooney, La Puma created Nobody’s Perfect (based on the book by Marlee Matlin), a bilingual musical in English and American Sign Language, commissioned by Very Special Arts and the Kennedy Center. Upcoming 2019 premieres include She Persisted, The Musical (based on the book by Chelsea Clinton) with Adam Tobin at Bay Area Children’s Theatre, and Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus: The Musical with Mo Willems at the Kennedy Center. Her adult works include the lyric opera Dakota Sky and the Mexican folk musical Perdita (based on Shakespeare's Winter's Tale) with Kathleen Cahill; and Cornerstone Theater Company's Making Paradise: The West Hollywood Musical. She received her MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, her Bachelor's degree from Stanford University, and she studied folk music with ethnomusicologist Alfredo López Mondragón. Her honors include the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, an NEA New American Works Grant, two Parents' Choice Awards, and a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Adaptation. A proud Mexican-American and "Navy brat" who grew up in Brazil, Portugal and California, La Puma is a member of TYA USA/ASSITEJ, ASCAP and The Dramatists Guild. Mother to three daughters and Mimi the Cat, La Puma lives in Southern California with her PR agent and loving husband, Chris.
CHELSEA CLINTON (Original Book Author). As vice chair of the Clinton Foundation, Chelsea Clinton works alongside the Foundation's leadership and partners to help create economic opportunity, improve public health, and inspire civic engagement and service across the United States and around the world. In particular, Chelsea focuses on promoting early brain and language development through the Too Small to Fail initiative, and uplifting/empowering female entrepreneurs and women-led businesses around the world through initiatives like the Caribbean-focused Women in Renewable Energy (WIRE) Network. She also serves on the boards of the Clinton Health Access Initiative and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. In addition to her Foundation work, Chelsea also teaches at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and has written several books for young readers, including The New York Times bestsellers She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World and She Persisted Around the World, as well as Start Now! You Can Make a Difference; Don't Let Them Disappear; and It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired & Get Going. She is also the co-author of The Book of Gutsy Women and Grandma's Gardens with her mom Hillary Clinton and of Governing Global Health: Who Runs the World and Why? with Devi Sridhar. Chelsea holds a Bachelor of Arts from Stanford, a Master of Public Health from Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health, and both a Master of Philosophy and a Doctorate in international relations from Oxford University. She lives with her husband Marc, their children Charlotte, Aidan and Jasper, and dog Soren in New York City.

ALEXANDRA BOIGER (Illustrator) grew up in Munich, Germany as the youngest of seven children. She studied Graphic Design at the Fachhochschule Augsburg before working in Feature Animation at Warner Brothers and DreamWorks. After working in animation, Alexandra decided to pursue a lifelong dream of becoming a children's book illustrator. She has illustrated many picture books, including She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World. Max and Marla was her debut as both author and illustrator. Alexandra now lives in Northern California with her husband and daughter.

MACY SCHMIDT (Music Supervisor) is an NYC-based Music Director, Orchestrator, and Copyist. Most recently, she worked on the Broadway production of TINA: The Tina Turner Musical. She spends much of her time on projects collaborating with contemporary musical theatre artists on musicals in development. Macy has taken her work across the globe as well, and recently returned from Asia, where she Music Directed for Shanghai Starz, an international musical theatre camp in Shanghai, China, and India, where she worked on the music team for the London-bound stage adaptation of Monsoon Wedding. Macy also serves as a faculty pianist at the Manhattan School of Music & Cap 21 Conservatory, and teaches Music Theory at Pace University. She is a passionate advocate for women in music. macyschmidtmusic.com
**MK LAWSON** (*Director, Choreographer*) is always happy to be back working for one of her favorite companies, having directed and choreographed the world premiere of *The Big One-Oh!* earlier this season. MK has choreographed 5 other amazing projects for Atlantic for Kids, and directed last season’s *James and the Giant Peach*. As a choreographer: award-winning productions for Florida Rep, White Plains Performing Arts Center, Ocean State Theatre Company, and Sharon Playhouse; numerous productions and events for NYU. As a director/choreographer: new musicals for the International Fringe Festival and NY Children’s Theatre Festival; *Celebration, Brigadoon* and *The Secret Garden* (NYU); upcoming immersive revival of *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Out of the Box Theatrics). As an Associate Director: *Romy and Michele’s High School Reunion* (world premiere at the 5th Avenue), *The Gentle Whisper of Trees* (Westport Country Playhouse), *Atlantis*: a new musical (world premiere at Virginia Rep), *Rock of Ages* 10th Anniversary production (New World Stages). If you wanna know more check out [mklawson.com](http://mklawson.com)!
CHARACTERS/CAST LIST

Auberth Bercy
Ruby Bridges/Bailey

Jianzi Colón-Soto
Sonia Sotomayer/Juno

Amanda Corday
Dr. Virginia Apgar/Sally Ride

Amber Jaunai
Naomi

Cynthia Nesbit
Harriet Tubman/Florence Griffith-Joyner

Heather Sawyer
Ms. Chan/Time
BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT REHEARSAL
SECTION III: YOUR STUDENTS AS AUDIENCE

Theater Vocabulary
She Persisted, the Musical Vocabulary
The Women of She Persisted, the Musical
THEATER VOCABULARY

TEACHER OBJECTIVE
To be able to discuss theater through a common, shared vocabulary.

STUDENT GOAL
To understand that the most effective way to discuss theater and new ideas is through a shared vocabulary.

OVERTURE: An orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera, suite, play, oratorio, or other extended composition.

GHOST LIGHT: An electric light that is left energized on the stage of a theater when the theater is unoccupied and would otherwise be completely dark.

PROLOGUE: A separate introductory section of a literary or musical work.

VOICE OVER: A piece of narration in a movie or live performance, not accompanied by an image of the speaker.

REPRISE: A repeated passage in music.

NARRATOR: A person who delivers a commentary accompanying a movie, broadcast, piece of music, etc.

CURTAIN CALL: The appearance of one or more performers on stage after a performance to acknowledge the audience's applause.

FICTION: Literature in the form of prose, especially short stories and novels, that describes imaginary events and people.

GENDER NEUTRAL CASTING: Casting which allows actors to portray any character, irrespective of gender.
CHARACTERS: Individuals the audience learns about from their actions and reactions.

ENSEMBLE: A group of performers working together to create a complete production.

DIALOGUE: The exchange of speech between two or more characters that reveals the feelings of the character as well as the story of the play.

MONOLOGUE: A speech by one actor on stage that is intended to reveal the inner thoughts of the character the actor plays.

CHARACTER ARC: The change produced in a character by the events and other characters in the play.

MOOD: The overall feeling the play evokes.

COSTUME: The clothes, boots, etc., worn by the actors based on their character.

PROP: Objects used by an actor to enhance their character.

SET: The constructed environment of a play where the action takes place.

SOUND: Noises and music in the play.
SHE PERSISTED, THE MUSICAL VOCABULARY

ADAPTATION (THEATRICAL): When a material from one artistic medium (a book, a poem, a movie) is re-written or reimagined in a scripted form to be performed on stage.

EXHIBIT: A public display (a work of art or item of interest) in an art gallery or museum or at a trade fair.

PERSISTENCE: The act or fact of stubbornly continuing to do something—the ability to stick with something.
HARRIET TUBMAN
Harriet Tubman was born a slave, and her story could have ended there. Instead, she persisted, escaping from slavery and becoming the most famous “conductor” on the Underground Railroad. She risked her life many times to lead countless slaves to freedom, including her family, friends, and strangers; every person she led to freedom arrived safely.

“I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted.”

VIRGINIA APGAR
Inspired from an early age by her brothers’ childhood illness, Virginia Apgar was determined to be a doctor, long before many girls had such dreams. Even though she qualified to be a surgeon, the male head surgeon at her hospital discouraged her because she was a woman. Nevertheless, she persisted, becoming an anesthesiologist and creating the Apgar score to test a newborn baby’s health, which hospitals all over the world still use today.

“Nobody, but nobody, is going to stop breathing on me.”

RUBY BRIDGES
When Ruby Bridges was in kindergarten, many schools across America, particularly in the South, still refused African American students their equal right to an education. Ruby wouldn’t be treated like a second-class student, and she persisted, walking for weeks past angry, hateful protesters to integrate an all-white elementary school in New Orleans.

“That fateful walk to school began a journey, and we all must work together to continue moving forwards.”
SALLY RIDE
Sally Ride always believed women could succeed in any math or science career. Although not everyone agreed, she persisted, and became the first American woman in space. But that wasn’t enough for Sally. She traveled into space once more, and then created science and engineering programs specifically for girls so she could help generations of young women achieve their dreams, too—both on Earth and in outer space.

“Young girls need to see role models in whatever careers they may choose, just so they can picture themselves doing those jobs someday. You can’t be what you can’t see.”

FLORENCE GRIFFITH JOYNER
When, as a kid, Florence Griffith Joyner visited her father in the Mojave Desert, he would urge her to run faster and faster—to run as fast as a jackrabbit. Even when she had to leave college to help support her family, she persisted in her training on the track, then went back to school and got faster and faster; her unbroken world records in the 100-meter and 200-meter sprints set at the 1988 Summer Olympics mean she is still the fastest woman ever.

“When anyone tells me I can’t do anything... I’m just not listening anymore.”

SONIA SOTOMAYOR
Watching fictional judges on television inspired Sonia Sotomayor to want to be a real-life judge when she grew up. She knew she’d have to speak English as well as she spoke Spanish, study hard in school and manage her diabetes before she could one day wear a judge’s robe with a gavel in hand. She persisted, eventually becoming a Supreme Court justice and the first-ever Latina to sit on America’s highest court.

“I have never had to face anything that could overwhelm the native optimism and stubborn perseverance I was blessed with.”
SECTION IV: YOUR STUDENTS AS ACTORS
Reading a Scene for Understanding
Scene/Character Analysis
READING A SCENE FOR UNDERSTANDING

GRADES 5+
TEACHER OBJECTIVE
To introduce the Practical Aesthetics “tools” for breaking down a scene. To understand the character and the story of the scene by relating the character's actions to the student's own life.

STUDENT GOAL
To understand that an important part of creating a simple, honest character involves knowing what that character wants.

THE ATLANTIC TECHNIQUE EXERCISE

STEP ONE
Divide the students in pairs. Ask the students to select which character they want to portray.

STEP TWO
Allow the students time to read the scene silently to themselves.

STEP THREE
Ask the students to read the Introduction to the Practical Aesthetic Introduction sheet and have the students answer the four questions on the Scene Analysis Worksheet.

NOTE: The four questions and the students’ answers to them form the basis for the Practical Aesthetics scene analysis; and enables the actor to create a simple, honest character. They’re simply being honest to their own experiences!

STEP FOUR
After the students have completed the question worksheet, ask each pair of actors to read the scene in the front of the classroom for an audience. The students should incorporate the ideas from the worksheet as they read the scene.
SHE PERSISTED, THE MUSICAL SCENE:

NAOMI
Sally Ride! Where are you going?

SALLY RIDE
Space. Not directly. We’ve got a lot of work first. The mission leaves in June of 1983. You up for it?

NAOMI
You mean, really go to space? Zero gravity? Look back at the earth?

SALLY RIDE
That’s the plan.

NAOMI
I bet you were dreaming of this your whole life.

SALLY RIDE
Not really. I wanted to be a pro tennis player.

NAOMI
So, I don’t need to decide right now what I’m going to be? I don’t have to be perfect at it already?

SALLY RIDE
Of course not, you’re a kid! You don’t have to be perfect at anything. You can mess up and learn and grow. But you know what else you can do?

NAOMI
What’s that?

SALLY RIDE
Dream. Let’s go.
THE ATLANTIC TECHNIQUE INTRODUCTION

ANALYSIS
Script analysis is the process of breaking down a beat within a scene. We ask four questions in order to do this:
1. What is the character literally doing?
2. What does the character want?
3. What is the essential ACTION?
4. What is that action like to me? It is AS-IF...

LITERAL: In this step, the actor determines what the character he or she is playing is literally doing according to the text.

PURPOSE: An actor has to travel far—think of this preparation as the road map.

WANT: In this step, the actor identifies the goal of the character in the scene, specifically what the character wants from the other character/s in the scene. The given circumstances of the story inform the WANT.

PURPOSE: To focus the actor on the characters’ interaction.

ACTION: Playing an ACTION is the physical pursuit of a goal. Defining the ACTION of the scene allows the actor to determine what result or CAP he or she is looking for from the other actor/s in the scene.

EXAMPLES:
• Put someone in their place | • Beg someone for forgiveness | • Get a favor
• Get someone to let me off the hook | • Force someone to face the facts
• Inspire someone to greatness | • Get someone to see the light

PURPOSE: Using an action gives the actor a task and a specific point of view. The Atlantic Acting School teaches that the Action creates character.
**AS-IF:** In this step, the actor personalizes the action by finding a real-life situation in which they would behave according to the action they have chosen for the scene.

**EXAMPLE:** Get a favor. It’s AS-IF I forgot to do my science homework and I’m asking my teacher for an extra day to hand it in.

**PURPOSE:** To gain personal insight and urgency to the scene or beat.

**TACTICS & TOOLS:** Different ways an actor goes about getting his action.

**EXAMPLE:** Plead, joke, demand, inspire, challenge, reason, encourage.

**LIVING IN THE MOMENT:** Reacting impulsively to what the other actor in the scene is doing, from the point of view of the chosen action.
**SCENE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET**

Here are your “tools” for understanding your character:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT IS MY CHARACTER LITERALLY DOING?</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING NAOMI...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING SALLY RIDE...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naomi is literally meeting Sally Ride and talking about going to space</td>
<td>Sally Ride is literally talking to Naomi about her own journey of getting to space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT DOES MY CHARACTER WANT?</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING NAOMI...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING SALLY RIDE...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naomi wants Sally Ride to let her know that everything is going to be okay</td>
<td>Sally Ride wants Naomi to say that she is dying to go to space with her</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT IS THE ACTION I’M GOING TO PLAY?</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING NAOMI...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING SALLY RIDE...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To get someone to take me under their wing</td>
<td>To get someone to rise to a challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE AS-IF...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING NAOMI...</th>
<th>IF YOU’RE PLAYING SALLY RIDE...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's as if I'm talking to my older sister about helping me study for a big test</td>
<td>It's as if I'm talking to my best friend about finally trying out for the basketball team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION V | YOUR STUDENTS AS ARTISTS

Post Theater Creative Response Activity: Role Models
Drawing to Write Activity

Creating Your Own Review: Thumbs Up Or Thumbs Down?
Common Core & DOE Theater Blueprint
POST THEATER CREATIVE RESPONSE ACTIVITY: ROLE MODELS

GRADES 3-6
TEACHER OBJECTIVE
To engage students in lively writing exercise using the topic and a central theme of *She Persisted, the Musical*: role models.

STUDENT GOAL
To create a letter about or to a role model.

MATERIALS
Paper for writing, pen or pencil.

STEP ONE
Discuss the iconic women portrayed in *She Persisted, The Musical* and why they are considered role models.

STEP TWO
Have the students begin to brainstorm their own personal role models. Ask the students to write a letter to that person or to someone else about that person. Allow 15-minutes for this free write.

STEP THREE
Ask the students to share their letters, offering positive feedback after each share.

STEP FIVE
As additional writing practice, have students revise their work to ensure that every sentence is active and the writing is rich and descriptive.

STEP SIX
You may choose to take it to the publishing phase and put together an anthology of student letters.
DRAWING TO WRITE ACTIVITY

GRADES 2-4

TEACHER OBJECTIVE
Facilitate the students' abilities to gather details by having them write a story based on an original drawing. Encourage the students to develop their own creative insight by using these drawings as triggers for short written scenes.

STUDENT GOAL
To understand that recalling vivid details of an experience is a great artistic “tool.”

MATERIALS
Pencils, crayons, markers, drawing paper, writing paper.

MOTIVATION
Discuss the following concepts with your students:

Does adding small details to your drawing make it more interesting to look at? Do these small details help your drawing tell a good story? Why?

Do details in writing a story make it more interesting? Believable? Funny?

STEP ONE
Using the art materials, ask students to draw scenes/tableaus of them meeting a woman who changed history, like Naomi does when she meets the historical figures in the gallery in She Persisted, the Musical.

STEP TWO
Use the students' individual drawings to inspire ideas for a written story about the images in their drawings.

STEP FOUR
Each student should create six lines of dialogue for each character.

STEP FIVE
Have the students work with a partner to rehearse and then read their scenes aloud to the class.
CREATING YOUR OWN REVIEW: THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?

GRADES 3-5

TEACHER OBJECTIVE
To introduce the critical thinking skills involved in expressing one’s personal opinion.

STUDENT GOAL
To understand that the 4 Ws can be used to critically describe an artistic experience. To enhance the literacy skills of the 4 Ws and sequencing in writing.

MATERIALS
Paper, pen, copy of She Persisted, the Musical program, attached worksheets.

STEP ONE
Review the four W’s (who, what where, when). For example: Who-Naomi.

STEP TWO
Review the “Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down” worksheet with your students. Remember there is no right or wrong response. Each student’s review will be based on individual opinion.

STEP THREE
Using the “Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down” worksheet, ask the students to write their review in three paragraphs - beginning, middle and conclusion.

STEP FOUR
Post the reviews in the classroom.
THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?

WHO: ___________________________________________________________

WHAT: ___________________________________________________________

WHERE: ___________________________________________________________

WHEN: ___________________________________________________________

List some images that first spring to mind when you think about the play:

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

List some words or phrases that will remind you of points you want to make:

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
What did you think of the play? What was your opinion?

How do you think the costumes, lights, and music affected the performance?

How might you start your paper?
ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
Theater conveys the significance individuals place on their life choices.

For example:
Theater conveys the meaning behind an individual’s struggle to have his or her life or life choices validated by family, friends, community, and the broader world.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Does the direction and staging reinforce the theme of “time” in She Persisted, The Musical?

Do you accept the concept put forward in She Persisted, The Musical that a person can overcome challenges they may be presented with persistence?

SOURCES:

Additional Research:
Skyler Hoffman
Esme Zohn

STRAND BENCHMARKS
THEATER MAKING: ACTING
Benchmark: Students increase their ability as imaginative actors while continuing to participate as collaborative ensemble members. Students demonstrate the ability to reflect on and think critically about their own work.

THEATER MAKING: PLAYWRITING/PLAY MAKING
Benchmark: Students refine their ability as playwrights to express point of view and personal vision.

DEVELOPING THEATER LITERACY
Benchmark: Students develop skills as critics by analyzing the critical writings of others.

MAKING CONNECTIONS THROUGH THEATER
Benchmark: Students demonstrate a capacity for deep personal connection to theater and a realization of the meaning and messages of theater.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
Benchmark: Students invigorate and broaden their understanding of theater through collaborative partnerships with theater professionals.
SECTION VI | THE ATLANTIC LEGACY

Atlantic Theater Company & Atlantic Acting School

Founded as an ensemble of impassioned student artists in 1985, Atlantic Theater Company has grown into a powerhouse off-Broadway company. We challenge, inspire, and awaken audiences with truthful storytelling presented across our two venues, the Linda Gross Theater and the intimate Stage 2 black-box. As a producer of compelling new works, we are committed to championing the stories from new and established artists alike, amplifying the voices of emerging playwrights through our deeply collaborative programs and initiatives.

At Atlantic, our aim is singular—to empower simple and honest storytelling that fosters greater understanding of our shared world. We are a family of artists dedicated to exploring essential truths onstage, be it a show at Atlantic Theater Company or a class at Atlantic Acting School. As a producer, presenter, and educator of theater, we are driven by the belief that theater can challenge and transform our ways of thinking and urge us to reflect on our role in society. From our Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning productions to our community-based education programs, we are committed to uncovering and celebrating the stories of our varied human existence.

At Atlantic Acting School, we equip our students with the physical, emotional, and tactical tools of acting to discover their truths, and prepare them for success beyond our doors. From our full-time and evening conservatories to our NYU Tisch studio, and our after-school and summer programs for kids and teens, our immersive, learn-by-doing approach is central to an Atlantic Acting education. We have mentored and trained outstanding artists for more than 30 years. No matter their age or background, our students learn to break through their creative comfort zones in service to bringing essential human stories to life.