

Big Theatre for Little People



Panadero: The Baker's Tale

By
José Cruz González

Student Matinee
2002-2003

Directed by
Graham Whitehead

A Co-Production with
Childsplay

SEASON



Dear Educators,

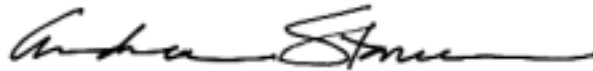
I have many good friends that I don't get to see every day because they live far away. Sometimes it makes me sad. Other times I am surprised by how I am reminded of them by the world around me. Hearing a song on the radio, glancing at a photograph or even looking at a cloud in the sky can make me feel like they're right here with me even though they're miles away.

In *Panadero*, Pepito loses a good friend and through a dream finds a way to bring her back into his heart. He soon realizes that she has been there all along. All he had to do was look at the world around him with a heart that remembers.

What follows on pages 3-10 are activities, articles and questions written for your students. Please feel free to adapt activities for your class, as they were designed for a wide range of students. For further information on this production or other Educational Programs please call (585) 232-1366 x3058.

I want to strongly urge you to attend our teacher workshop on **Thursday, March 27 from 4-5:30pm** at Geva Theatre Center. We will be bringing together some of the artists who created the show to speak first hand about their intentions and experiences with the production. We look forward to seeing you at the theatre.

Sincerely,



Andrea Stoner
Associate Director of Education
(585) 232-1366 x3058

"I brought two things with me when I left my beloved homeland." Abuela
"Memories of your country and a pocket full of seeds." Pepito

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Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Pepito

Abuela

Panadero

Madre

Modesto & Ridiculo

Little Girl Footsteps

Commandante Boots

Tirado

Sergeant Botas

The Great Sea Tortuga

Arm, Eye, Nose, Bi-Plane Pair of Shoes, Baby Manatee, Luna, Bumble Zapper

Synopsis – The Story of the Play

Panadero: The Baker's Tale is the story of a small Latino boy named Pepito who lives with his family in the United States. Pepito's grandmother fled to the USA from Guatemala to escape the military dictatorship. Pepito and his *abuela** have a close relationship filled with hours of storytelling of her Central American homeland. When his grandmother dies, Pepito mourns her in his own way - with a wonderful dream. Told by Panadero, the local *barrio* baker, the story takes Pepito to a strange and wonderful Central American country where beauty is outlawed by a pair of dictator boots and his *monstruo botas*. Pepito must defeat *Commandante* Boots and bring back beauty to a country in desperate need of it. The dream experience gives him the insight and energy to take up his grandmother's dream of making the *barrio* beautiful, and to create a new home in a new country while preserving the memory and love of the old.

*Words in italics are defined in the glossary on pg. 7

About the Playwright, José Cruz González

José Cruz González is Childsplay's playwright - in - residence. His plays *The Highest Heaven* (1999) and *Salt & Pepper* (2000) premiered at Childsplay. José currently teaches theatre at California State University at Los Angeles. This is his first time writing a puppet play. José often incorporates Spanish words and phrases into his scripts.



Photo from Childsplay's production of Panadero. Photo of Pepito. Photo credit: Jannine Doto.

Talk about the importance of learning from relatives. Do you have a favorite grandparent, aunt/uncle or even sibling who has taught you something important about life? What was it?

"He was a small boy with black curly hair and eyes as dark as a moon's eclipse." Panadero

From the Playwright, José Cruz González

Can you tell us about your inspiration for writing this play?

Panadero: *The Baker's Tale* began when my wife Cory told me about a little boy from her school who failed to show up to class one day. "When we called his home to verify his absence, his mother had assumed he had gone to school. The police were called and a search began. After an hour, the little boy was found walking down a busy street two miles away. When asked what he was doing, the boy replied that he wasn't happy living in the U.S. He wanted to go back to his grandmother's country. But before leaving, the boy went to a donut shop and bought two donuts before setting off on his journey home." The story resonated for me and a question emerged, "Is home a place where we hang our hat or is it a place we carry in our hearts?" *Panadero: The Baker's Tale* is an attempt to answer that question.

Why did you choose to write in both English and Spanish?

I chose to write both in English and Spanish because Pepito's family speaks both. I believe the use of English and Spanish also adds an authenticity to the play and it's fun for our young audience to discover some new cool words!

Authenticity: being the real thing

Does the production differ from your original conception of the play?

The production doesn't differ much from the original concept. I had originally conceived the play for three actors and lots of puppets. The play was meant to tour and last under an hour. The play did change a lot during the development process. I had to lose a number of wonderful puppet characters like a Puffin and Ustinov. Maybe they'll come back in another play!

Why do you choose to write plays for young audiences?

I love writing plays for young people. They are sometimes much more open and accepting than grown-ups. They'll take the leap with you but if you're not honest they'll call you on it. Writing for young people challenges me.

What do you enjoy most about play writing?

I love telling stories. My grandfather used to love telling them too. His stories were always entertaining and educational too. I also like writing. I like making things up and then working with a group of talented artists that make the play come to life. We get to play while we work hard to create a play.

There are many stories, tales and myths about how things came to be in this world (Kipling's *Just So Stories* are an example). Pepito's abuela tells him a story of how the moon came to be. She told him that a big tortilla was thrown into the sky and became the moon. Write your own "origin myth" about how the sun and moon were created. Or choose your own ideas for origin stories! See if you can add some Spanish words (if writing in English) or some English words (if writing in Spanish). Read aloud to the rest of the class.

"Look Kid, you gotta save a country." Modesto

Guatemala

The name 'Guatemala' means land of the trees in the Maya-Toltec language. The country of Guatemala is in Central America, in between North and South America. The capital is Guatemala City, which is also the largest city in the country. Guatemala has both volcanoes and jungles and lots of different animals, including jaguars, pumas and monkeys.

Many Guatemalans are quite poor and live in rural areas. There are a lot of coffee, sugar, fruit and cacao plantations, with sugar, coffee and bananas being the biggest exports. Most Guatemalans are farmers or work on the plantations.

Mayan Indians were the first people to live in Guatemala. They were one of many indigenous people living in Central America when the Spanish arrived. The Mayan people were known for having an advanced writing system, accurate calendar, knowledge of astronomy and building pyramids.

Rural: the country

Export: to send to another country for sale

Indigenous: native people

Astronomy: science of studying the stars

There are several ocean creatures in Pepito's dream (the tortuga, the manatee, a shark). What kind of ocean creatures live off the coast of Guatemala? Choose an ocean creature and find a picture of it and at least five facts about it. Share with other students in the class.



Map of Guatemala above. Picture of Tikal, an ancient Mayan city, left.



"I decree that all things beautiful be deemed WRONG against the state." Commandante Boots

About Storytelling

All cultures have stories, legends and myths that they share. Families, too, pass stories down from generation to generation. Storytelling started as an oral tradition and eventually stories were documented in various ways: cave wall drawings, signals or sign

language and, of course, written language. Stories are told for entertainment, to teach a lesson, to help understand the origin of things or to help understand why things happen. Pepito's *abuela* teaches him about life through stories. She also gives him "worry dolls" to tell his troubles to. In Pepito's dream he meets The Modesto Brothers who are like worry dolls. The legend of the worry dolls comes from the Highland Indian villages of Guatemala. Worry

dolls are tiny dolls that usually live six to a box. The legend says that if you tell one worry to each doll and place it under your pillow while you sleep, your worries will go away.

Create a puppet from common objects (a sock, a clothespin, a toilet paper roll). Choose a character from the play and make your own version of a puppet for that character. Use crayons, markers, pipe cleaners, feathers, scraps of fabric or any other found objects that might be interesting to use.

About Puppets

There are many different puppet forms used in this production. Puppets can be made out of just about anything that an actor can bring to life. A doll can become a puppet just by manipulating its limbs and having its eyes focus on whomever or whatever it's talking to. Puppets can be as small as a finger puppet or so large that it takes more than one puppeteer to make it come alive. Puppets can be on sticks or rods, shadow puppets (light is used to project the puppet's shape onto a wall or screen), marionettes (puppets with strings), finger puppets, glove puppets (one character per finger or hand) and just about anything else that can be given life by the puppeteer. Children naturally create puppets with objects when they play.

Photo from Childsplay production of Panadero. From left Jeff Goodman (Pepito) and Christina Romano (Abuela). Photo credit: Jannine Doto.



"Her stories are like seeds. They'll grow in your heart and bloom."

Panadero

Spanish Glossary

Here are some definitions that might help you better understand the play.

Abula – grandmother

Barrio – neighborhood

Commandante – commander

El sol – the sun

Escuela – school

Estupido – stupid

Flores – flowers

Idiota – idiot

La luna – the moon

La playa – the beach

Monstruo botas – monster boots

Panaderia – bakery

Pan dulce – sweet bread

Quihubo – an informal greeting, like "hey"

Regalo – gift

Tirado – dirt cheap or thrown away

Tortuga – turtle

Trabajo – work

Zapatos – shoes

Keep a “dream journal.” Have a notebook handy near your bed so that when you wake up, you can write your dreams down!



Children from San Antonio Aguas Calientas. Photo credit: James D. Rudolph

Dreams and Fantasies

In Pepito’s story he has a fantastical dream. Sometimes we dream when we’re asleep, sometimes our minds wander and we daydream. Sometimes we fantasize about things we want or things we want to have happen to us. Think about how you dream when you sleep. Do you remember your dreams? Have you ever had the same dream more than once? Do your dreams ever seem very real or very scary? Think about daydreams. Do you ever find that your mind wanders when you are supposed to be concentrating on something (like the teacher, for example)? What sorts of things do you think about when this happens? Talk about movies and stories that have dream sequences in them.

“They’re Guatemalan Worry Dolls. They’re supposed to help you when you’re worried about something.” Abuela

About the Production

Edie Whitset is the set designer. The set designer works with the director to decide what kind of scenery is needed for the play. Notice how such devices as periaktoi (revolving prisms with painted scenery), papel picado (meaning “pierced paper”, brightly colored tissue paper cut-outs used as decoration for festivities like Dia de Los Muertos), and play boards (the surfaces used for performing scenes with puppets) are incorporated. This is what she had to say about designing the set for *Panadero*:

I had a great time doing the show and was inspired by lots of things, including Mexican street graphics, tourism posters, Guatemalan crafts, graffiti, Oaxacan wood carvings, barrio architecture and colors.

You can see what inspired Edie’s designs at <http://home.attbi.com/~3bie1/page2.html>.

The puppets were designed by Puppet Master Douglas N. Paasch from Seattle. Notice the many types of puppets used in the play and how the actors manipulate them or bring them to life. Notice how your focus as an audience member remains on the puppet even though you can often see the actor.

The music was composed and performed by Zarco Guerrero who is a longtime Phoenix area resident and a visual and performing artist. Listen for ways in which the music adds to the mood of the play, how the rhythm accompanies the action, how the style of the music suggests the culture in the story.

Dia de Los Muertos:
a festival known as the Day of the Dead, celebrated in Mexico in the beginning of November.

Oaxacan: *an area of Mexico known for its folk art*

Make a worry doll by using an old fashioned clothespin (the kind without a spring). For pants, wrap each prong individually with fabric and for a skirt wrap both prongs. Toothpicks or string can be glued on for arms. Add a face with markers and hair or a hat with fabric or fake fur!



Photo from Childsplay's production of Panadero: The Baker's Tale. Photo of Pepito and Madre. Photo credit: Jannine Doto.

“They stole my country and they broke my heart.” Abuela

People dress differently depending on where they live.

Things like weather, culture, geography and income all affect how people dress. Compare pictures of clothing styles that might be worn by people in Rochester vs. pictures of clothing that might be worn by people in Guatemala.



Photos of Childsplay's production of Panadero: The Baker's Tale. Top photo of Pepito. Bottom photo of Christina Romano as La Luna. Photo credit: Jannine Doto

"I smell boy." Commandante Boots

The Audience – The Final Piece

“The public sometimes thinks an artist is a television set – something comes out, nothing goes back. They don’t realize that if they can hear me, then I can hear them – their coughs, the electronic beeps from their wristwatches, the squeaking of their shoes.... The art of performance depends on the relationship between the musician and the audience. In the concert hall, each motionless listener is part of the performance. The concentration of the player charges the electric tension in the auditorium and returns to him magnified....The audience grows together and becomes a group. There’s the impression of a journey undertaken together and a goal achieved.” **Pianist Alfred Brendel**

This is a quote from a musician, but everything he says applies to the theatre, too. When you come to see a play, the actors are aware of you. Unlike a movie or a television show, the audience can affect or influence what happens on stage. Actors can hear the audience laugh, cry, become restless, or become still and silent with concentration. The mood of the audience can affect the mood of the performance – this is why we say that no two performances are alike, because no two audiences are the same.

We hope you enjoy the show. While you sit in the audience, please remember that you are a part of the theatre journey. You do not take that journey alone; please respect the people who are on the journey with you and allow them to enjoy the play also.

The audience is the final piece of the process – without an audience, the actors would still be rehearsing. By adding the audience the play becomes a performance!

Tell Us What You Think

Please write to us or send us pictures! We will be posting selected student responses to the play on our website, **www.gevatheatre.org**. We are always interested in knowing what our audiences think about our plays, especially...

- The most fun part
- The part that surprised you
- The most exciting part
- The part you talked about on the bus on the way back to school
- The first thing you told your family about the play when you got home
- The part you’d like to see again
- The part you thought about the most after
- The moment where you noticed the set
- The minute where you noticed a costume
- The most interesting sound you heard
- The part where something unexpected happened

“A little trabajo doesn’t hurt anyone.” Abuela

For Younger Readers

The Most Beautiful Place in the World by Anne Cameron

Mama and Papa Have a Store by Amerlia Carling

For Older Readers

Trouble Dolls: A Guatemalan Legend by Suzanne Simons

Grab Hands and Run by Frances Temple

Rigoberta Menchu: Defending Human Rights in Guatemala by Michael Silverstone

For Teachers

Making Puppets Come Alive: How to Learn and Teach Hand Puppetry by Larry Engler and Carol Fijan

Making Shadow Puppets (Kids Can Do It) by Jill Bryant

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Special Thanks to
American Airlines
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This study guide
was written by
both Childsplay
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"Look to the beauty inside." The Great Sea Tortuga

Tickets Still Available for Public Performances



By José Cruz González
Directed by Graham Whitehead
Co-Production with Childsplay

May 3rd and 10th at 11:00am and 2:00pm
May 4th and 11th at 1:00pm and 4:00pm

Recommended for young people ages 6-10 and their families

Tickets available by calling 232-Geva (4382)
or buy online at www.gevatheatre.org



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