

2011-2012 Season Play Guide TALES OF THE SHIMMERING SKY



Performances
at
Lexington
Children's
Theatre
January 24-27

10:00 & 11:45



**ON TOUR
TO SCHOOLS
February 6 -
May 19, 2012**



OUR MISSION TO SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The mission of Lexington Children's Theatre Education Department is to provide students of all ages with the means to actively explore the beauty, diversity, complexity and challenges of the world around them through the dramatic process. We strive for young people to develop their own creative voice, their imagination and their understanding of drama and its role in society.

FREE TEACHER PREVIEWS

Want to be more fully prepared to share the theatrical experience with your students? LCT offers teachers the opportunity to preview many of our Main Stage productions.

Each Preview lasts about two hours and includes a free performance of the play. Don't miss this chance to bring some drama into your classroom!

Call Jeremy (859-254-4546 x226)
to reserve your spot today!

Dear Educator,

Lexington Children's Theatre is proud to be producing our 73rd season of plays for young people and their families. As an organization that values the arts and education, we have created this resource for teachers called the Play Guide.

Our Play Guides are designed to be a valuable tool for teachers in two ways: helping you prepare your students for the enriching performance given by LCT, as well as serving as an educational tool for extending the production experience back into your classroom.

We designed each activity to assist in achieving the Kentucky Core Content (KCC) and to integrate the arts with your core curricular subjects.

Teachers are important voices as LCT. We rely heavily on your input. If you have comments or suggestions about our Play Guides, show selections or any of our programming your thoughts are greatly appreciated. Please look for the Teacher Response form that you will receive following a performance.

We are thrilled that you rely on LCT to provide your students a quality theatrical experience and we hope this resource aids you in extending our production into your classroom.

Play Synopsis

Tales of the Shimmering Sky brings you stories about the sky from around the world.

In “Brother Moon and Sister Sun,” the Sun and the Moon live together in a beautiful house. Their house is so luxurious that neither wish to leave it. Without the sun or the moon, life on Earth becomes cold and dark. The Snake decides to confront Sister Sun, but she refuses to shine. The Owl decides to try to reason with Brother Moon, but he refuses to shine. The Gopher decides to drive them out of their house...with fleas! Brother Moon and Sister Sun run out, scratching furiously. They agree to shine over the Earth, but don't want to leave their wonderful house empty. They take turns, giving us the sun during the day and the moon at night.



In “The Hare in the Moon,” Otter, Monkey and Hare are best friends. Hare wants to help her friends see that they can truly be good. One day, Hare convinces Otter and Monkey to give away their food to the needy. Otter has fresh fish to give and Monkey brings mangos, but all Hare has is grass. A starving human approaches Hare. She knows humans can't eat grass, so she offers herself to the beggar. The beggar reveals himself as a god testing Hare's goodness. He is impressed by her sacrifice, and honors Hare by flying her to the moon, leaving her impression in the moon's face. Hare's account of her experience inspires Otter and Monkey to do their best to be good.

In “After the Rain,” a farmer works very hard to keep his farm beautiful. A drought comes, but the farmer is not discouraged. He carries water from the well, but the well dries up, and the farm dwindles away. He asks the Chieftain for advice, who says if the village works together, they can call upon Mkunga Mburu, the god of thunder. They all chant, and Mkunga Mburu comes down, bestowing rain upon the land. Mkunga Mburu, sensing the people's pleasure, sends more and more rain to the earth. Soon the village is in danger of flooding, and the villagers beg Mkunga Mburu to stop. As he leaves, he creates a rainbow to remind the people that whenever the people need help, they will receive it.

Your Role in Our Play



You may wish to have a discussion with your class about your upcoming LCT experience and their role as audience members. Remind your students that theatre can only exist with an audience. Your students' energy and response directly affects the actors onstage. The quality of the performance depends as much on the audience as it does on each of the theatre professionals behind the scenes and onstage.

Young audiences should know that watching live theatre is not like watching more familiar forms of entertainment: they cannot pause or rewind us like a videotape, there are no commercials for bathroom breaks, nor can they turn up the volume to hear us if someone else is talking. Your

students are encouraged to listen and watch the play intently, so that they may laugh and cheer for their favorite characters when it is appropriate.

At the end of the play, applause is an opportunity for your students to thank the actors, while the actors are thanking you for the role they played as an audience.

Prepare for the Play



CULTURE MATCH

The tales told in the play are all old stories that come from different cultures around the world. Explore the cultures from the play. Write the name of these three cultures and the different categories on the board. Then read the items aloud and have students try to match the item with the culture. See how many they can guess correctly. To further this activity, have each student choose one of the cultures and draw a picture of some of the culture's characteristics.

	<u>Maidu</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>Maasai</u>
Continent	North America	Asia	Africa
Lives in	Underground Houses	Cities	Huts with sticks, grass, and mud
Speaks	Maidu	Hindi	Swahili, Maa
Art	Basket Weaving	Painting/Sculpture	Jewelry
Food	Acorns, Roots, Fish	Spices/Herbs, Meat	Beef, Milk

JUGGLING

The actors in *Tales of the Shimmering Sky* juggle. You can bring the circus into your classroom with these activities. You will need two scarves (or fabric or even tissues) for each student to do these activities. Start with these activities using one scarf:

Throwing & Catching: Hold the scarf by the end, PULL it up into the air and let go. Grab it to catch. Try to throw, clap your hands, and catch. How many times can you clap before you catch?

Body Catches: Throw the scarf up and catch it on your head. Try other body parts (elbows, shoulders, stomach, back, foot, etc.)

The Circle: (In this activity you need two scarves.) Hold one scarf in each hand. Throw one up, hand the other across to other hand, and catch the one that was thrown. This makes the scarves go around in a circle. Throw, hand, catch. Have everyone freeze in mid-juggle and change the direction of their circle. When students can make circles in both directions, have them do three circles clockwise and three counter-clockwise, and repeat.

Circle Toss: Have the class stand in a circle, everyone holding one scarf. On a signal, everyone will throw their scarf straight up and then move over one space to catch the scarf that comes down there. Try doing several throws consecutively. Then try having everyone move two spaces at a time.



What's in the Moon?

Many cultures tell stories about a man in the moon. There are stories from Japan, Korea, and India about seeing a hare (rabbit) in the moon. Still other cultures see a woman, a toad, a frog, a crab, a buffalo, or a dragon.

What do you see in the moon?

Using the moon's features, trace or draw a picture of what you see.



On a separate piece of paper, write a story describing how your moon's image came to be.

Here Come the Clowns!

Clowning is more than white make-up, red noses, and over-sized shoes. It is an art form that includes many popular icons, including **Sesame Street's** Bert and Ernie, Bugs Bunny, and Lucille Ball, and even Dean Martin.

Clowning encompasses various types of comedic performance that uses outlandish and exaggerated costumes and characterization. A clown's humor is often visual and incorporates many elements of physical comedy. Clowns focus on the character: creating a character that is fantastic, but remains honest, true, and identifiable.

While clowns include a large spectrum of performers, there are three main types of clowns: **whiteface**, **auguste**, and **character**.

Whiteface clowns are named for their traditionally white make-up. But most modern whiteface clowns do not use this type of make-up or any make-up at all. The whiteface clown is often serious and bossy. This clown is called the "straight-man." Although he is not attempting to be funny, his serious approach to situations sets up the humor. Popular examples of whiteface clowns include Bugs Bunny, Dean Martin, and Bert of Bert & Ernie.

Auguste clowns are often paired with whiteface clowns. The auguste clown is a joker or a fool. This clown may be the partner or servant of the whiteface clown. He/She is often asked to help or perform some task for his partner. The auguste has a hard time performing the task given which leads to funny situations. Ernie of Bert & Ernie is a prime example of an auguste clown, as well as Lucille Ball.

The **character clown** adopts a character of some type, such as a butcher, a baker, a policeman, a housewife or hobo. He/She uses this commonly known character to set up humorous situations to which the audience can relate. George Costanza on *Seinfeld* and Patrick Starfish on *SpongeBob SquarePants* are popular examples of character clowns. These clowns are most commonly seen in the United States as "tramp clowns" in circuses.

Clowns use various styles of comedy in performance. Slapstick and other forms of physical comedy are the most common. Slapstick is a form of physical comedy in which absurd action and often exaggerated physical violence are used in equally absurd situations. The word *slapstick* comes from a special type of club that was used in commedia dell'arte (traveling comic troupes) to create a smacking sound during comedic stage combat.



Extend the Experience

WHAT DID YOU SEE?

Divide your class into three groups. Assign each group one of the stories from the play – “Sister Sun and Brother Moon,” “The Hare in the Moon,” or “After the Rain.” Instruct each group to make three frozen pictures, or tableaux, showing us the image without words or movement. The first picture will represent the beginning of the story, the second the middle, and the third the end. Have each group present their images to the class. Allow the class to respond by guessing which moment the group chose to portray in each image.



COME OUT NOW!

In “Sister Sun and Brother Moon,” the animals try many different tactics to get the Sun and the Moon to leave their house and shine over Earth. Use this activity to help your class practice strategy. With your class, brainstorm a list of tactics and write them on the board. Some tactics may include flattery, bribery, temper tantrums, discussion, asking, begging, and threatening. Define each of these tactics with your class so everyone knows what the tactics are. Leave them on the board. Choose one student to hide in a corner or under his desk. Have that student, “the hider,” silently choose one of the tactics from the board. He will tell you, but only you. Invite another student, “the friend,” to try various tactics to get the hider out from his hiding place. The hider will only come out when the specific tactic he chose is used. If students get stuck, you may side-coach them by helping them act out tactics they have not yet tried or encouraging them to be even bigger with their chosen tactics.

YOU CAN HELP!

All three of the stories in the play talk about helping others when they need help. With your students, brainstorm a list of ways they could help others. Not only do the stories teach to help those near to you, but also to work together to help the greater community. Ask the students to think about people in their community that are in need (i.e. people who are orphans, homeless, or low-income). Then make a list of ways to help people in need in the community.

Help your community by starting a charity drive for a shelter or another charitable organization. The students may bring canned food, clothing, or wrapped toys. Encourage students to get their friends and families involved too.



If you need some suggestions on where to find families in need, a good place to start is with the coordinator of your school’s family resource center. If your school does not have one, here are some organizations we recommend:

www.godspantry.org
www.toysfortots.org

www1.salvationarmy.org
www.uwbg.org

Suggested Reading

Tales of the Shimmering Sky by Susan Milord

This book takes us on an incredible adventure into the mysteries of the day and night, sun, moon and stars, the seasons and the weather from many different countries and cultures.

Around the World in 80 Tales by Saviour Pirotta

Richly illustrated tales from many different traditions give young people the opportunity to learn and enjoy other cultures.

Grandmothers' Stories by Burleigh Muten

Wise old women from varying cultures are showcased in this book that highlights the positive qualities of the grandmother character.

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears by Verna Aardema

Mosquito sets off a chain of events that causes a jungle disaster. This African "Why" story gives us a new understanding of our inclination to smash the mosquitoes that come our way.

John Henry by Julius Lester

In this retelling of a popular American folktale, John Henry comes to life with his incredible strength.



LCT Teaches in your School!

Let LCT's professional artists bring their extensive experience into your classroom. An LCT residency program is designed to offer young people the opportunity to learn in a dynamic, fun and challenging way. LCT tailors a residency to the needs of your students, curriculum and budget. We offer residencies that range from a one time visit to a month long intensive program.

- Performance Workshops - Two week intensive unit culminating in a performance. LCT provides all scripts, costumes, props and scenery.
- Kentucky Core Content - Elements of Drama - This residency is a one time visit to assist students in preparation for the KCC testing.
- Spotlight on Reading - Students will explore popular literature through drama, creative writing, art and movement.
- Science and Art - Students can explore a variety of scientific concepts using drama. Experience the wonders of nature, animals, bugs, weather, plants, recycling, or the rain forest through the use of role-play, movement and pantomime.

Call 254-4546 x233 or x226 TODAY!

