

The Whole World's A-Talkin'

Enrichment Works

Our Mission

Enrichment Works creates and presents theater to inspire learning.

Classroom Connections

Synopsis

A storyteller brings a magical compass to transport the audience around the world, with stories of from India, Korea and Ghana. In the first tale, Neelam, a clever Indian girl, devises a trap to catch a monster that is causing trouble in her village. After the monster convinces her to set him free, he tries to eat her. A jackal passing by questions the two and helps the girl to trap the monster again saving her village. The second story takes place in Korea, where Soon Jah wishes to help her husband to cope after having returned from war. The village's hermit tells her to retrieve a whisker from a living tiger in order to help her husband. She brings food to a nearby tiger and soon earns his trust and is able to attain the whisker. The hermit burns the whisker saying that if she can gain the trust of a tiger, she can help bring her husband out of the darkness with the same respect and tenderness. The final story is the tale of Ahmadou, a farmer in Ghana, who encounters a talking yam. Soon he finds all inanimate objects can talk and runs for fear. He meets a fisherman, weaver and bather who also encounter talking objects. They approach the chief of the village who helps them realize that all objects can speak, if we just listen.



Storyteller
Joyce Lee

About the Artists

Joyce Lee (Actor) is a graduate of NYU-TSOA (MFA), was trained and worked as a teaching artist for Lincoln Center Institute in New York for 17 years, and has worked the past 13 years as an arts administrator. She spent six years as the Director of Arts Education for Enrichment Works. Joyce is an award winning off-Broadway actress, having worked in New York with Target Margin, New Federal, Tribeca Theatre, as well as regionally at Milwaukee Rep, Missouri Rep, and Peoples' Light and Theatre Company in Malvern, Pennsylvania. TV credits include *Grey's Anatomy*, *Drake and Josh*, *Law and Order*, *Judging Amy*, *Cold Case*, and *Ed*. Joyce is a lifetime member of The Actor's Studio.

Brigitte Viellieu-Davis (playwright) has written numerous plays including "Fly Girl Fly," "Frida Liberada," "Pot O' Gold," and "Unreal City." She holds an M.F.A. in Acting from Carnegie Mellon University/Moscow Art Theatre and a B.A. from Purdue University. Brigitte has worked extensively in regional and Off-Broadway theater and has worked closely with some of the most exciting pioneers in socially relevant and activist theatre, including Eve Ensler (Brigitte played Eve in the Regional premieres of *The Good Body*) and Anna Deavere Smith & The Institute on the Arts & Civic Dialogue.

Discussion and Writing Questions

- List some qualities of the three main characters, Neelam, Soon Jah and Ahmadou. How are they similar? How would you compare and contrast yourself to these characters?
- What are some of the important lessons from each tale? Who would you consider to be the hero in each tale, and why?
- What would you have done if you were Neelam when the monster asked to be set free? Would you have trusted him? Why or why not?
- What advice would you have given the Korean woman about winning her husband's love back?
- In these tales, animals and objects speak with humans. What are some of the favorite objects in your house? What would these objects say to you?

Vocabulary Words

Compass
Disgrace
Hermit
Jackal
Meditate
Potion
Trepidation
Yam

Project Ideas

- What are some of the stories you were told growing up? Where did these stories originate? Choose one story and research its origins, and create a graphic organizer showing some of the main ideas in the story. Compare these ideas to other popular stories.
- Re-write one of the tales told during modern times. How would the main characters use technology? How would their beliefs of today change their actions?
- Choose one of the tales. List the main events and characters from the tale in a graphic organizer. Create a short comic book with pictures depicting the main events of the tale.
- Work with a group of classmates to create your own story. The tale should include an unusual talking item or animal which can help the main character learn a lesson. Prepare to share your new tale with your class.

Resources

Websites

- <http://folkmasa.org/yashpeh/yashpeh.htm> - Yashpeh International Folktale Collection. Contains list of books of international tales.
- <http://mocomi.com/fun/stories/international-folk-tales/> - Collection of international folk tales, arranged by grade.
- <http://frankrogers.home.mindspring.com/multi.html> - Collection of Multi-Cultural Children's Literature
- <https://www.teachervision.com/multicultural-literature/resource/54578.html> - Popular Multicultural Literature Resources (activities, printables, and background information)

Booklist

- Korean Children's Favorite Stories by Kim So-Un and Jeong Kyoung
- Sim Indian Children's Favorite Stories by Rosemarie Somaiah
- Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr and Ronald Himler
- Thirty-Three Multicultural Tales to Tell (American Storytelling) by Pleasant DeSpain (collection of stories from around the world)
- Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales by Nelson Mandela

Contact Us

Enrichment Works

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Standards and Learning

Enrichment Works is a theater company whose productions are designed to inspire children to learn by creating an emotional connection to educational subjects. “The Whole World’s A Talkin’” uses the Theater Content Standards of California to provide a positive theatrical experience. The performer interacts directly with students and asks them questions about the topic of the play, inviting students onstage to act out specific roles and events in the story.

Visual and Performing Arts Connections

1.0 Artistic Perception

Students process, analyze and respond to sensory information through language and skills unique to theatre. They learn theatrical vocabulary such as playwright, conflict, setting, script, etc. They analyze the elements of *The Whole World’s A Talkin’* by identifying the who, what, when, where and why of the story. Students are engaged through direct address by the actor, scenery, costumes, and stylized movement.

2.0 Creative Expression

In *The Whole World’s A Talkin’*, students learn tales from three different countries (Korea, India and Ghana) and learn different lessons from each. Their creativity is engaged as they encounter inanimate objects and animals in each tale who speak. Students help create, perform and participate in the performance through interaction with the actor. The entire audience participates at key points during the play to create different moods.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

The Whole World’s A Talkin’ helps students understand the role of theater. They take part as both spectator and participant as the story unfolds. They learn about different international tales, and have an understanding of different cultures within the tradition of storytelling. The theatre tradition of improvisation is utilized, allowing students to witness and respond to the actor’s guidance as he directs them to participate in the play with dialogue and action.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Audience interaction throughout the play allows students to maintain a high level of emotional connection to the three tales. Following the play, students participate in a Question and Answer session where they can criticize and query the actors/characters about the content of the play or the artistic choices made in this production. Students are given the opportunity to express how they felt as a participating impromptu actor during the performance. Post performance activities provided through study guides, are available to help students understand the character’s journey and events in the play.

5.0 Connections, Relationship, Applications

Activities will be provided through Classroom Connection guides in order to help them encourage students to connect what is learned in *The Whole World’s A Talkin’* to other subject areas. Through hands-on approaches, including improvisation and dramatization, students can explore concepts in other subject areas (e.g. ancient history, culture and belief systems) to learn how theatre can communicate content from other sources. Activities encourage students to learn more about the role of an actor, director and writer, and to use their imaginations and creativity to create their own tales.