

Shizzy's Story

Enrichment Works

Our Mission

Enrichment Works creates and presents theater to inspire learning.

Classroom Connections

Synopsis

At a school assembly, Jason calls his friend Amir a terrorist. Principal Tagaki uses the incident as an opportunity to teach a valuable lesson on racism and prejudice. She shares her story of living as a little girl with her family in Long Beach, California when Japan bombs Pearl Harbor and America enters the Second World War. Her happy life is turned upside down when her family must quickly pack their belongings and move first to the Santa Anita racetrack and then to a Japanese Internment camp in Jerome, Arkansas. Living conditions at camp are terrible--blistering hot days, shared toilets, and disgusting cafeteria food. For the most part, people are trying to stay busy and stay positive.

Shizzy wants to follow the rules and keep the family intact, but her brother, an aspiring baseball player, is rebellious and angry at being at camp where he can't work or train. He challenges his teacher, Ms. Covey, when she teaches the Constitution, and he throws a snowball at one of the Military Police. Shizzy's strict father can't control Pete, so Shizzy tries to reign Pete in herself. In the end, it is Pete who comes to Shizzy aid to protect her and to remind her of who she is: Japanese AND American.



About the Artists

Alison Minami (playwright/actor) is an LA based playwright, actress and educator. She holds a Master's in Education and a Master's in Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts. She is member of Playground LA and of the Alliance of Los Angeles Playwrights. Most recently she had a reading of her play "Face to the Sun" at the Torrance Cultural Arts Foundation and a reading of "The Dreamers" at the East West Players and the Will Geer Theatrum Botanicum

Michael Hagiwara (director) has been working professionally as a actor for more than thirty years .He has performed in more than fifty shows locally and nationally. He also works in Film ,Television and Voiceover . As a director he has worked with several theatre companies including East West Players. The stories of Japanese Americans interned during WW II is very personal to Mike since both his parents families were interned during that time , one at Minadoka ,Idaho and the other at Amache , Colorado.

Ricky Pak (actor/set design) is the Artistic Director for the Circle Squared Collective, a company of artists with the goal to create art that is both innovative & accessible for a new generation. He has an MFA in Performance for TV, Film, & Theatre from CSULA. Ricky has been a member of SAG/AFTRA for 13 years. He is a former adjunct professor for acting at CSULA, Cypress College & University of Redlands. He is a teaching artist for the Tectonic Theater Project, known for their groundbreaking plays.

Loryce Hashimoto (actor) is an actor, writer, choreographer, voice actor and musician. She has performed in *A Jive Bombers Christmas*, *Nihonmachi: The Place to Be*, *Natsukashi No Kouhaku Uta Gassen*, and *J-Town Jazz Club*. Loryce is classically trained in Japanese Dance (Nihon Buyo) and the Shamisen (Classical and Folk Music.) She is a member of Minyo Station, a Jazz fusion band that combines Japanese folk music with Jazz/Rock/R&B.

Reuben Uy (actor) After years of working as an actor in the Philippines, Reuben is now based in Los Angeles. Selected credits include: TV: John Enochty in *Bosch*. Theater: Etienne in East West Players *La Cage Aux Folles*, Lartes in *Hamlet*, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Eilert Loevborg in *Hadda Gabler*, Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Luke in *Altar Boyz*. Film: JJ in *Metro Manila*, Audience Award winner in the 2013 Sundance Film Festival.

Discussion and Writing Questions

- Shizzy and her brother Pete had different personalities. They had different reactions to being moved to a camp. What were some of each sibling's behaviors and reactions to their new situation?
- Why were the Japanese Americans moved to the camps? Do you think the President made the right decision? Why or why not?
- Can you imagine a situation like the Japanese American internment happening in America today? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to learn about the Japanese American internment?
- What were some of the changes to Shizzy's family's life before, during and after internment.

Vocabulary Words

Allegiance

Ancestry

Internment Camp

Kimono

Propaganda

Stereotype

Terrorist

Traitor

Project Ideas

- Shizzy and her brother had many identities - Japanese, American, Football player and more. Draw or write a short essay describing or depicting your different identities.
- The United Nations has a "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," which was finalized after the Japanese internment ended. Look at some of the human rights listed in the document. Did the internment process conflict with any of these rights?
 - <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- Imagine you and your family had to move to an internment camp. What would you bring with you? Draw or write what you would pack in your suitcase, and why.
- Pretend Shizzy or Pete is one of your friends from school and they were placed in an internment camp. Write them a letter telling them how you feel about the situation.

Resources

Websites

- A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the US Constitution (Smithsonian) <http://amhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/non-flash/index.html>
- Dear Miss Breed: Letters from Camp (Japanese American National Museum) <http://www.janm.org/exhibits/breed/title.htm>
- Life in a WWII Japanese Internment Camp (Smithsonian) <http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/internment/#>
- Japanese Relocation: Using Historical Footage (Teaching History) <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/24313>
- Japanese American Internment - Teaching With Primary Sources (Library of Congress) http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/internment/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf
- Japanese Internment (Center for Global Education, Asia Society) <https://asiasociety.org/education/japanese-american-internment>

Booklist

- Fish for Jimmy by Katie Yamasaki <https://www.amazon.com/Fish-Jimmy-Inspired-Experience-Internment/dp/0823423751/>
- The Bracelet by Yoshiko Uchida <https://www.amazon.com/Bracelet-Yoshiko-Uchida/dp/039922503X/>
- The Journal of Ben Uchida by Barry Denenberg <https://www.amazon.com/Journal-Ben-Uchida-Citizen-Internment/dp/0590485318/>
- Thin Wood Walls by David Patneaude <https://www.amazon.com/Thin-Wood-Walls-David-Patneaude/dp/0618809155/>
- Under the Blood-Red Sun by Graham Salisbury <https://www.amazon.com/Under-Blood-Red-Sun-Prisoners-Empire/dp/0385386559/>

Contact Us

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Standards and Learning

This performance of “Shizzie’s Story broadens the students’ understanding of the Japanese American internment by creating an emotional connection to the topic. The performance uses the Theatre Arts, and History/Social Studies Common Core Standards of California to create a bridge to the past and open new avenues for learning and appreciating Japanese American history. The play is enhanced with music from the World War II era.

Visual and Performing Arts Connections

1.0 Artistic Perception

Students will process, analyze and respond to sensory information through the language and skills unique to the theatre. They will learn theatrical vocabulary such as playwright, audience, director, setting, script, etc. They will observe a formal work of theatre and will analyze the elements of Shizzie’s Story by identifying who, what, where, when and why of the story.

2.0 Creative Expression

During the performance of Shizzie’s Story students will observe the artists to see how emotional traits are portrayed. They will see how the playwright included Japanese verbal and musical influences to set the scene of the play. They will see how a costume transforms a performer into a character and how a performer can assume the parts of several characters.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Shizzie’s Story will help students understand the historical significance of the Japanese American internment and how the theatre can develop a cultural understanding. They will learn how a decision by a government can affect individuals. They will learn how society has changed over the years. The background music will introduce students to the musical style of a different time period.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Students will respond to, analyze and derive meaning from theatre arts. Shizzie’s Story uses audience emotion to maintain a high level of connection to the story. Post-assembly activities provide the students with an understanding of the character and events. Students will be able to explain and show how the performer was able to portray emotions and feelings.

5.0 Connections, Relationship, Applications

Activities will be provided to the teachers to help them encourage students to connect what is learned in Shizzie’s Story to other subject areas. Students will see how theatre arts can communicate information on history and society. Activities will enhance the desire of the students to read and write about this topic. Students will be enthusiastic about seeking out and enjoying additional stories and information related to World War II and the Japanese American internment.